

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRIT

The significance of an experiential encounter with God

David du Plessis (1905-1987), the South African who earned an international reputation as ‘Mr Pentecost’ for his activities in representing the Pentecostal movement among ministers and leaders of mainline churches, tells of a conference where he addressed a group of theologians and commended them for their theology. The problem was, he said, they had the truth on ice. Like a T-bone steak in the freezer, it needed to be taken out and set on fire!¹ In this, he expressed the heart of Pentecostal teaching and practice. This was the spirit of Pentecost.

Peter Hocken, a Catholic Charismatic and former Secretary of the inter-denominational Society for Pentecostal Studies in the U.S., recently suggested that each of the major streams of Christianity could be identified by its understanding of the major source of authority, especially for the individual.²

Referring to Leslie Newbiggen’s concept that the Catholic Church can be seen to exist where there is an acknowledged Apostolic Succession, the Protestant churches where Scripture is rightly expounded and the Pentecostal churches where the Spirit is recognisably present, he suggested that the salient features of each stream could be identified by asking the simple question, ‘Where is the ultimate source of authority seen to lie?’ In the resultant discussion, something like the following, admittedly over-simplified, schema emerged —

¹ D. du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go*, Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1970, pp.16f.

² Conference on Pentecostal and Charismatic Research in Europe, Zurich, 5 July 1991.

Table 14.1 Sources of authority

Church	Perceived Authority	Authentication
Catholic/Orthodox	Tradition	Sacraments
Protestant/Evangelical	Scripture	Faith
Protestant/Liberal	Reason	Social action
Pentecostal/Charismatic	Experience	Charismata

Obviously, there are many exceptions to this. Scripture, for example, could be included as an authority in every case and faith could be listed as a response. But what is illustrated here is the distinguishing element or emphasis of each one, or, in other words, that quality by which it is generally perceived to be distinguishable from other branches of the Christian Church.

Historically, it can be shown that, from the beginning, spiritual experience has been the distinguishing factor of the Pentecostal movement. Interestingly, and perhaps unwittingly, the movement has tapped into what is a major factor in the religious attitudes of society at large.

Cheryl Bridges Johns argues that Pentecostalism interprets reality from the basis of an ‘affective experience with God which generates an apocalyptic horizon.’³ In this apocalyptic horizon, she suggests, the experience of God is ‘fused to all other perceptions in the space-time continuum.’ While this might generally be perceived as a pre-critical world-view, she suggests that ‘para-critical’ may be a more helpful term and that Pentecostalism has actually anticipated the postmodern revolution, by opening windows on the realms of reality which exist outside objective, scientific knowledge.⁴ A Pentecostal world-view, she argues, is trans-rational because for Pentecostals, truth is not limited to reason. For them, to know God is experientially to encounter God. She goes on to point out that Pentecostals see a functional correspondence between spirit and body. She quotes Stephen Land who describes Pentecostals

³ C.B.Johns, ‘Healing and Deliverance: a Pentecostal Perspective’ in *Concilium*, 1996/3, 45ff.

⁴ See also Jackie Johns, ‘Pentecostalism and the Postmodern Worldview,’ *Journal Of Pentecostal Theology* 78, 1995, p.87.

as having a ‘total body life’ of worship.⁵

Mark Stibbe similarly argues that Pentecostal hermeneutic takes its form from the original Pentecost sermon of Peter (Acts 2), where he uses the experience of the initial outpouring of the Spirit as a springboard from which to launch his exposition of corroborating Old Testament texts.⁶

Religious experiences

Neville Knight has suggested that nearly half the population have personal experiences of a religious nature.⁷ The following is a brief summary of the findings reported by Knight, in which the date of the survey, the country concerned and the percentage claiming a religious experience at some time in their lives is reported —

Table 14.2: Religious experiences

Date	Country	Percentage reporting religious experience
1970	USA	20.5%
1975	USA	35%
1978	Britain	32%
1978	USA	31%
1978	USA	35%
1983	Australia	44%
1985	Britain	33%
1985	USA	43%
1987	Britain	48%

⁵ Stephen J.Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: a Passion for the Kingdom* Sheffield, 1993 quoted in C.B.Johns, ‘Healing and Deliverance: a Pentecostal Perspective’ in *Concilium*, 1996/3, 45ff.

⁶ Mark Stibbe, ‘Interpreting the Word in the Power of the Spirit,’ in *Σκεψις* Autumn 1996, Supplement to *Anglicans for Renewal* Derby, England: Anglican Renewal Ministries, 1996.

⁷ N.Knight, *A Comparative Review of Literature on Religious Experience*, unpublished paper, Studying Australian Christianity Conference, Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, Sydney, 14-16 July 1993.

Knight indicates that different researchers use different guidelines and categories in defining religious experience. So these figures do not specify the exact nature or frequency of the experiences concerned. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how many people, especially in Australia, report them. Interestingly, Knight points out that church attendance does not necessarily reflect the incidence of religious experience. Or, to put it differently, there are many people who are open to or aware of a personal encounter or sensation which they call religious, who are not avowedly Christian. They may have little interest in the church, but they have not necessarily rejected God. A decade ago, Peter Kaldor similarly reported that some 30% of Australians acknowledged 'an awareness of a spiritual power.'⁸ In 1995, Philip Hughes arrived at a similar finding.⁹ A 1998 popular survey indicated that 42% of Australians claimed a paranormal experience.¹⁰ The popular conception is that, in Western society, it is reason that determines our actions. In fact, people often act emotionally or intuitively.¹¹

The studies quoted, admittedly limited in Australia, suggest that for a large segment of the population, some kind of experiential, spiritual encounter is significant. To some extent, education is essential for the mind to respond to a religious message, even if only minimally. The affections, however, can be touched regardless of educational background. So children or people who speak a different language can experience the numinous even if they are intellectually limited by circumstances or abilities. There are recent, frequently documented cases of Muslims, Hindus and others turning to Christ as a result of visions and supernatural revelations.¹² These provide striking examples of the power of spiritual experience to awaken faith. George Otis Jr suggests that

⁸ P.Kaldor, *Who Goes Where? Who Doesn't Care?* Homebush West: Lancer, 1987, p.33.

⁹ P., C.Thompson, R.Pryor and G.Bouma (eds), *Believe It or Not: Australian Spirituality and the Churches in the 90s* Kew: Christian Research Association, 1995, p.33.

¹⁰ 'A Question of Faith,' *Sunday Telegraph* 15 March 1998, pp.54f.

¹¹ One only has to peruse the pages of the popular magazines to see evidence of this. Not only in Australia, but in every country I have visited, there are regular horoscopes, dream-interpretations, clairvoyants and the like. In one recent issue of a popular women's magazine (*Women's Day*, 1996), eight of 104 pages in one issue were devoted to occult and paranormal topics.

¹² George Otis Jr, *The Last of the Giants* New York: Chosen, 1991, pp.156ff; B.Chant, *Breaking the Power of the Past* Miranda: Tabor, 1995, pp.163ff.

these phenomena fall into three categories — dreams and visitations, miraculous healings and special deliverances, both physical and spiritual.¹³

Nevertheless, the Australian figures show that the number of people reporting a religious experience actually increases with the degree of education. The percentage of 13-14 year-olds was 37%. But of those educated to 17-19 years, the figure was 48%; and for those educated to 20+ years, 45%. A similar pattern was evident for upper middle class people as against unskilled workers. Given that it has been traditional to argue that spiritual experience is a childhood or adolescent phenomenon,¹⁴ these figures are somewhat unexpected. But they are consistent with the fact that education does broaden the mind — and this, no doubt, includes less rigid parameters in our expectations of God.

There have been many attempts to categorise religious experience. Knight quotes several approaches, including Stark's four types (confirming, responsive, ecstatic and revelational) and Hay's view that there are two main strands, the numinous and the mystical.¹⁵

For Pentecostals, personal experience can be classified biblically under several heads —

- tranquil — a deep sense of peace and tranquility (Philippians 4:6-7)
- ecstatic — joy, excitement, fervour (1 Peter 1:8)
- intimate — closeness to the Lord, a sense of God's presence (Romans 5:5; James 4:8)
- empowering — renewed strength, a feeling of confidence, competence (Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 3:4-6)
- motivational — feelings of enthusiasm, dedication (Philippians 3:7-11)
- loving — a sense of oneness, overflowing love for and fellowship with others (John 15:34f; Philippians 1:9)
- reassuring — acceptance, warmth, well-being (Romans 8:17; 1 John

¹³ Otis, 1991, pp.156ff.

¹⁴ eg by William James in his classic volume, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902).

¹⁵ See also the brief discussion in P. Wiebe, *Visions of Jesus: Direct Encounters from the New Testament to Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.7) in which he notes Caroline Franks Davis's six categories of religious experience as quasi-sensory, visionary, revelatory, interpretive, regenerative and numinous.

4:13,17f)¹⁶

Another way of identifying charismatic experience might be —

- individual — involving oneself alone in a close, personal experience with God that cannot be easily shared
- corporate — involving others in an experience that needs to be jointly celebrated

A third approach would be to distinguish between genuine religious and pseudo-religious experiences, in other words, between those which are spiritual in origin as against those which are socially or psychologically induced.¹⁷

The place of experience in Pentecostalism

In the fledgling Pentecostal movement, the need for men and women to have a meaningful and identifiable encounter with God was a primary focus. From the earliest days, it was understood that ‘true’ Christianity was marked by an observable and biblically-justified manifestation of faith. Jean-Daniel Pluss argues that Pentecostal theology did not form the seed bed for Pentecostal experience, but rather the reverse —

Some have tried to elevate the phenomenon of speaking in tongues to the level of a doctrine, and thereby they seemed to forget that speaking in tongues is primarily a symbol of God’s Spirit of blessing.

In the beginning there was an experience and a testimony, then came an explanation in the form of a theological construct.¹⁸

Historically, this view might be arguable, but it does reflect the Pentecostal focus. In 1925, *Good News* magazine published an article by English Pentecostal patriarch, Donald Gee entitled, ‘A Plea for Experience,’ in which he argued that experience was essential to successful ministry. A man with an

¹⁶ These categories are based on personal impressions over many years of ministry, but seem consistent with historical research. There is scope for more detailed and scholarly research in this area.

¹⁷ This is a fascinating and complex area for investigation but falls outside the scope of this study. See J.Court, ‘Discerning between the emotional, the psychotic and the spiritual,’ *Renewal Journal*, Strathpine, Qld, #7 1996:1, pp.53ff.

¹⁸ Jean-Daniel Pluss, ‘Azusa and Other Myths: The Long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Belief and Back Again,’ *Pneuma*, 15:1 #2 Fall 1993 p.192.

experience would never be intimidated by one who had only an argument. There were those who warned of the dangers of basing the Christian life on experiences, but through all the ages, revival had rested on the shoulders of just such people. Thousands of Pentecostal people were currently testifying of a 'mighty experience' of God that had changed their lives — including speaking in tongues — and were not ashamed of it. Then he concluded, 'We suggest that those who have no personal experience of these things might well speak more softly at times.'¹⁹

Gee is careful to stress that the Scriptures remain paramount, and that to ignore them is to court disaster, but his unapologetic stance here is illustrative of the widespread attitude of Pentecostals that, far from being embarrassed about charismatic phenomena, they saw them as strengths. On another occasion, Gee suggested that just as it was impossible to be baptised in water on dry land, it was impossible to receive the Spirit on dry formality. Receiving the Spirit was a definite experience and you would know when it happened.²⁰ Christianity was a 'divine intoxication,' wrote James Black.²¹

A 1923 testimonial at Good News Hall said, 'You can take many things from a man, but there is one thing you can never take, and that is his experience.'²² Two years later, *Good News* included without comment the simple assertion, 'You cannot have a spiritual blessing without a material manifestation.'²³ Another writer asserted, 'An ideal Pentecostal Church is a demonstrative church.'²⁴ F.B. Van Eyk had no doubt of it —

I tell you, 'Experiment is the test of truth' — no man can argue an experience away, and I know that, just as God baptised the Apostle Paul with the Holy Ghost, He has graciously and mercifully baptised me. Glory be to God! ... My plea is for

¹⁹ GN 16:11 Nov 1925, pp.8f. See Appendix Eleven for a selection from the text of the article.

²⁰ AE 7:2 January 1941, p.9.

²¹ J Black, 'Tumultuous spirit,' AE 7:7 June 1941, p.4.

²² J.Russell, 'Saved to Serve,' GN 14:10 November 1923, p.13; John Russell, 'A Testimony given at N.Melbourne March 8, 1924,' GN 15:5 May 1924, p.7.

²³ GN 17:7 July 1926, p.10.

²⁴ GN 17:3 March 1926, p. 14.

experience, and experience is the only test.²⁵

Evangelist William Booth-Clibborn, lamented, 'Many of us have too much of our religion in our heads and not enough in our hearts.'²⁶ AFM pastor Edwin Ridgway wrote, 'Let us press on and have a definite experience, one that measures up to the Word of God, so that we will not be among the foolish virgins when the Bridegroom comes.'²⁷ One evangelist affirmed that she would only count converts if she had reason to believe they had 'found the Lord in a real experience.'²⁸

For Evangelicals, this emphasis on experience, far from being a strength, was a weakness. G.H.Morling, Principal of the Baptist Theological College of New South Wales from 1921 to 1960, wrote —

The Pentecostal movement seriously disturbs scriptural balance and proportion. It exalts religious experience unduly, giving a place of improper prominence to the feelings as against the will which is ever primary. Not ecstasy, but action, best expresses loyalty to Christ.²⁹

Notwithstanding Morling's reservations, there were experiences in abundance in the early Pentecostal meetings. Nellie Robson was sitting in Good News Hall with three other women. Three times she clearly heard her name called, but it was none of the others who spoke.³⁰ A minister's wife lay for two hours, her arms outstretched in the form of a cross, groaning and crying as if she were being crucified.³¹ Walking home from a meeting one night, a Perth woman found herself laughing heartily and then nearly sank to the ground as she began speaking in tongues.³² Another man lay on the floor for hours and then was

²⁵ F.B.Van Eyk, 'The far reaching results of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit,' GN 17:12 Dec 1926, p.5; GN 18:2 Feb 1927 12.

²⁶ GN 20:7 July 1929, p.6.

²⁷ GN 20:12 Dec 1929, p.6.

²⁸ GN 20:3 March 1929 p.15.

²⁹ G.H.Morling, *Pentecostalism* Baptist Department of Evangelism, n.d., p.15.

³⁰ N.Robson, 'Showing Mercy Unto Thousands of them that Love Me,' GN 1:5 January 1913, p.24.

³¹ J.Lancaster, 'Manifestations,' GN 18:11 November 1927, p.7.

³² C.Cousins, 'Ask and Ye shall Receive,' GN 17:2 February 1926, p.11.

'too helplessly drunk' to stand up.³³ A Queensland woman testified to three and a half hours of 'shakings' before she received the Spirit.³⁴ In Yungaburra, Queensland, in 1930, for over half an hour the group all listened to the sound of a full orchestra playing 'heavenly music.'³⁵ F.B. Van Eyk spoke of singing in the Spirit, where the congregation all sang together in tongues, with neither leadership nor accompaniment. 'Its modulations, rhythm, harmony, expression and time are altogether beyond description,' he said. Singers were carried beyond their normal range and ordinary people sounded like trained vocalists.³⁶ On another occasion, in Perth, for two minutes, 'the Holy Spirit blew so wonderfully that all felt the terrific force, violence, and awfulness of the wind.' This was followed by laughter and singing in the Spirit.³⁷ One man related how an angel had hovered over his bed when he was nearly dying of diphtheria — he felt the wind over his face. After that, he recovered quickly.³⁸ Lancaster related that on more than one occasion she had seen people lifted from one place to another 'as though they were feathers.'³⁹ When Len Jones preached in Cessnock, 'like a mighty gale the Spirit of God swept over the audience' until scores of people were lying prostrate on the floor.⁴⁰ When one family found themselves with no money even for food, a grey and white bird alighted in front of them with a piece of paper in its beak which it dropped. It was a ten shilling note. Other money was slipped under their door anonymously and by the end of the week the food shelves were full and there were seven pounds left over.⁴¹

On more than one occasion, Lancaster defended unusual physical behaviour by pointing out that actions such as 'travail,' trembling, lifting of hands, shaking, acting as a fool, behaving as though drunk, praying all night, sighing, speaking

³³ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.16.

³⁴ GN 19:3 March 1928, p.12.

³⁵ GN 21:11 November 1930, p.11.

³⁶ GN 1:6 October 1932, p.21.

³⁷ E.Anstis, 'Revelation,' GN 22:3 March 1931, p.16.

³⁸ GN 22:11 November 1931, p.13.

³⁹ GN 22:11 November 1931, p.13.

⁴⁰ GC 1:9 February 1933, p.71.

⁴¹ GN 18:4 April 1927, p.16.

with stammering lips and other tongues and generally 'extraordinary' behaviour were all to be found in the Bible.⁴² It was an exercise in proof texting rather than in sound exegesis, but it was not entirely without validity.

Visions

The most common numinous experience was the seeing of visions. There were dozens of reports of these. One woman saw herself as ascending to meet Jesus but being dragged back by a relative. This was interpreted as a warning to those who would seek to frustrate the faith of others.⁴³ William Sloan of Freeburgh, Victoria, saw a vision of a dove dropping a full cob of corn on his head when hands were laid on him.⁴⁴ Doris Warburton appeared to grasp some unseen object. 'I've got it,' she exclaimed. 'The rain, the rain, the beautiful golden rain; enough for all; you can have a bucketful...'⁴⁵ When Tom Sharman's wife first came to Good News Hall in 1911, through laying on of hands, their daughter was healed of toothache and, although no one came near their son who was 'dying in hospital' from typhoid and pneumonia, at the same hour that prayers were offered at the Hall, he recovered. All this made Tom Sharman angry rather than convinced. That night as he was lying smoking in bed, he saw a vision of two men struggling followed by an appearance of Christ. The message was plain — if he gave up the struggle, peace and blessing would be his. Finally, he yielded. He threw his pipe in the fire and, although largely illiterate, found he could read the Bible. Because he had no education, God 'taught (him) by visions.' There are five members of the Sharman family in Pentecostal ministry today.⁴⁶

In Melbourne, on 31 July 1914, K. Matthews foretold that the Japanese would overrun Australia, occupying the cities on the Eastern seaboard. The

⁴² GN 17:8 August 1926, p.15; GN 18:11 November 1927, p.7; GN 18:12 December 1927, p.15.

⁴³ GN 19:2 February 1928, p.29.

⁴⁴ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.16; *Alpine Observer* 19 May 1922.

⁴⁵ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.17.

⁴⁶ (H.T.) Sharman, 'Unmerited Favour,' GN 15:1 January 1924, p.15; *Assemblies of God in Australia Directory 1995* Mitcham: Assemblies of God in Australia, 1995, p.32. Although no initials are given in this article, Sharman is probably the Harold T (Tom) Sharman referred to in GN 19:6 June 1928, p.11 and GN 16:4 April 1925, p.11..

immediate future was to be enveloped in war and the great Day of Tribulation was near. On 30 September 1914, she prophesied that the nations would be let loose at one another in punishment for rejecting His Son. She was so appalled by what she heard coming from her own lips, that she cried, 'Don't, Lord, don't! Dear Lord, spare them!' It would be nearly thirty years till the Japanese attacked Australia's shores, but there was sufficient apprehension for her to be taken seriously.⁴⁷

One woman was worried about going through the Great Tribulation, but a voice woke her one night assuring her that at that time she would be 'enjoying herself with Jesus'. Another woman saw herself and her family walking on a narrow path surrounded by deep chasms. She was terrified the path was too narrow for them all, but she saw the words 'Cling to Me' before her in golden letters. 'Perhaps,' said her husband, 'we are on the broad path and thinking too much of this world.'⁴⁸

William Lane of Maryborough saw a vision of Christ stretched on a cross midway between heaven and earth. Harriet Weldon saw a hand with its thumb severed — a warning against division in the church. A seven year old boy described a picture of crowds of angels descending upon him. Samuel Hack saw the people in his church walking through a door through a fountain of blood and being stripped and cleansed of everything that was of the world. Another saw horses as in Zechariah chapter one, and this was understood as a presage of troubled times. Another saw himself under a cloudburst but did not get wet — it was spiritual rain. To another, the word SOON was written on the wall, an indication of the return of Christ. A woman beheld a man going off to get water while an outstretched hand, firm and soft, drew her upwards. The lesson was plain: not to leave it too late to gain the water of life.⁴⁹

Dora Morris watched herself trying to climb a ladder, but needed help to reach the middle rung. Lancaster suggested this was the baptism in the Holy Spirit

⁴⁷ GN 15:7 July 1924, p.10.

⁴⁸ GN 18:10 October 1927, p.10;

⁴⁹ GN 18:3 March 1927, p.14; GN 18:7 July 1927, p.10; GN 15:6 June 1924, p.7; GN 15:8 August 1924, p.12; GN 16:2 February 1925, p.9; GN 16:5 May 1925, p.4;

and that there were more rungs beyond that for which Dora should reach.⁵⁰ One of the sisters saw an angel hovering over her bed as a result of which she felt called to a ministry of visiting the sick.⁵¹ Robert Davis beheld Christ being crucified between two thieves and could hear the drip-drip-drip of blood on the linoleum floor. The thieves faded and he saw only Jesus. This led to his conversion and to many years of service as an elder and pastor.⁵²

A man had an extended vision of a group of his friends being burned in a terrible fire; then he was confronted by Christ who showed him the prints in His hands and feet. As a result he was baptised in water and filled with the Spirit. Later he also saw a bewitching woman but realised she was the seductive 'Babylon the Great.' On other occasions, he saw Italian and Russian troops marshalled and realised there was 'a terrible time coming'.⁵³ During the opening prayer at a Sunday evening service, in Mackay in 1928, Annie Dennis could see war lords holding back straining dogs of war. The leading one for Australia was Japan. It was time to prepare our hearts to be overcomers.⁵⁴

Being baptised in the Holy Spirit

The primacy of the experiential is most obvious in early Pentecostalism through being baptised in the Holy Spirit. The earliest extant Australian published statement on this topic was written by Thomas James Ames, the leader of the first Pentecostal assembly formed in Adelaide (c.1909).⁵⁵ Around 1909, he began to publish a 12-page periodical called *Pentecostal Times*.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ GN 17:4 April 1926, p.12.

⁵¹ GN 22:10 October 1931, p. 17. It is interesting that in this vision the angel was a female; only male angels are mentioned in Scripture.

⁵² GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.17f; R.Davis, personal interview, n.d..

⁵³ GN 22:3 March 1931, p.16.

⁵⁴ GN 19:11 November 1928, p.14. There was general apprehension about Japan after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. These utterances were set against this backdrop.

⁵⁵ GN 17:5 May 1926, p.18. For background on Ames see Appendix Ten.

⁵⁶ *Pentecostal Times* Adelaide, n.d. Only two issues survive in the Mortlock Library, Adelaide, where they are dated '1907?' This date seems too early, as there is an extract in the first issue from the *Latter Rain Evangel*, a journal first published in Chicago, Ill, in October 1908 and in the second issue from *Confidence*, an English magazine which to my knowledge also began in 1908. There is also a testimony from *The Apostolic Faith*. This would suggest a date of 1909 at the earliest for *Pentecostal Times*.

This was basically a collection of articles from overseas Pentecostal magazines, with one or two testimonies from local people and a couple of pieces by Ames himself. The Foreword to the first issue declared uncompromisingly that 'the power of the Apostolic Church was its Pentecost' and that the problem with the Church today was that overall it had relegated Pentecost to the past.

The *Times* found its way interstate and in 1924, was criticised in another journal for its belief in 'manifestations, signs and wonders.' There were excellent people connected with the Pentecostal movement, said the writer, and his sympathies lay with their desire for more spiritual power. Generally, Christians had given too little attention to the command to be filled with the Spirit. But these good people were making the mistake of looking for manifestations as an end in themselves. And anyone acquainted with history knew there was danger attendant on such phenomena.⁵⁷

Ames had answered these objections from the beginning. Two full pages in the first issue were devoted to a study entitled, 'What is the Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost?' It was a challenging, but thoughtfully reasoned piece in which he asserted that baptism in the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues was 'a pivotal doctrine in the Pentecostal movement.'⁵⁸ This teaching had drawn a great deal of criticism. Others had claimed various alternative experiences, but none satisfied the Scriptures. The Spirit had always worked in manifold ways, but there was 'no experience that could be compared with the glorious baptism'. The devil hated the doctrine of tongues because he knew that it was 'the evidence of the baptism' and when people believed in it, they would be filled with God's Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit should not be confused with feelings or the stirring of the emotions, although there might well be unusual manifestations. It was evident that in the days of the Apostles, people spoke in tongues when they were filled with the Spirit. If this was the case then, was it a mistake to believe it should be so today?

Ames then examined the record of Acts showing how in each of the significant

⁵⁷ A.S.Kentish, 'Manifestations,' GN 15:11 November 1924, pp.9ff.

⁵⁸ PT #1, p.11. Subsequent references are from this source.

passages detailing an effusion of the Spirit, glossolalia was present. Chapter two related how all the disciples were filled with the Spirit. It was not that they were blessed or happy or had their emotions stirred or felt more love or liberty. No, they spoke in tongues. If this was the sign given then, why should we not expect it today? The Samaritan believers (Acts 8:17)⁵⁹ clearly did not go through an empty ceremony, being told they had received the Spirit when in fact nothing had happened. They, too, received something so powerful that Simon Magus was willing to part with his money to pay for it. The Roman centurion Cornelius and his family spoke in tongues (Acts 10:44ff)⁶⁰ and received the same Spirit in the same way as the original disciples. The Ephesian believers likewise experienced tongues (Acts 19:6).⁶¹ So Ames throws out a challenge—

Will someone be good enough to inform us why the Apostles in all these cases did not tell these converts simply to believe they had received the Holy Spirit and they would have Him? If the theories of today are right, these folks would have been taught that it was wrong for them to expect to feel anything or to expect any sign to follow; that the true way of faith was to simply take for granted that because God had promised a thing they had it, and that it was unbelief to expect to receive any tangible experience.⁶²

This early conviction that the experience of receiving the Spirit was a required part of Christian initiation was the cornerstone of Pentecostal theology. So Ames concludes —

We have set forth the Scriptural way of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost — not, as the opposers accuse us of doing — of receiving the gift of tongues — but of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is evidenced in all cases by the speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. Is it not sad that the one Scriptural way of receiving the Holy Ghost is being criticised and condemned by

⁵⁹ Acts 8:17 — ‘And then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost’ (AV).

⁶⁰ Acts 10:44ff — ‘While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word... For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God’ (AV).

⁶¹ Acts 19:6 — ‘And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied’ (AV).

⁶² PT #1, p.12.

the leading religious teachers ...?⁶³

When they spoke in tongues, the early Pentecostals believed that the Spirit of God was speaking through them. It was not just an outburst of ecstasy. To them, they were uttering words given by God Himself. In the report of the first recorded Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit in Australia, Richard Beaglehole tells how the Spirit took possession of his throat and tongue and spoke through him in other tongues.⁶⁴ Pentecostal patriarch Alex Buchanan described his experience in the same way.⁶⁵ Another thought it a miracle that God should take her tongue and make it speak a language she had never heard before.⁶⁶ Similar expressions occur regularly in published stories and testimonies.

Ames's approach was to become the standard for Pentecostal apologetics. Consistently, passages from the Acts of the Apostles were used as a basis for teaching and seen as precedents on which contemporary understanding and experience could be based.⁶⁷

Edwin Ridgway, a prominent member at Good News Hall, followed a similar approach. It was possible to have the Holy Spirit within, he argued, yet not to have the full measure of the Spirit, as the parable of the Virgins clearly showed. Jesus promised not only a well of water, but also rivers of living water. He told His disciples to wait until the Spirit came on them in power. The Samaritans believed but did not initially receive the Spirit. The Ephesian believers had repented and then were baptised but still needed the Spirit. The sign of the coming of the Spirit in New Testament times was speaking in tongues, which occurred at Pentecost, at Caesarea, at Ephesus and at Corinth. God gave the Holy Spirit to those who obeyed him.⁶⁸

Pioneer evangelist Florrie Mortomore taught that through the Old Testament prophets and the words of Jesus, God had promised to send His Spirit. When

⁶³ PT #1, p.12.

⁶⁴ R.Beaglehole, 'God Baptised in Portland, Victoria, nearly Fifty Years Ago!' GN 1:1 April 1910, p.4. See Chapter Three for details of Beaglehole.

⁶⁵ W.Alick [sic] Buchanan, 'God Blesses a Farmer's Son,' GN 1:5 January 1913, p.20.

⁶⁶ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.13.

⁶⁷ 'A Bible reading on Water and Spirit Baptism,' GN 16:8 August 1925, p.16.

⁶⁸ E.Ridgway, 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,' GN 17:6 June 1926, pp.8f.

the Spirit came at Pentecost, marvellous phenomena were evident and there were astounding results — the sick were healed and the dead raised (Acts 3:8; 8:7; 9:37ff)⁶⁹. And what was the effect of this? First, wonder, then mockery and finally persecution! But it was not strange that men should oppose God's work, for 'the natural man' usually did. It was clear that Christian believers already possessed the Spirit of Jesus (Romans 8:9) but it was also important to be baptised in the Spirit. In fact, although we became partakers of eternal life through the atonement of Christ, 'we would not be your friends if we did not tell you' that it was only by being baptised in the Spirit that you became a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). In fact, it was impossible to become part of Christ's body in any other way.⁷⁰

It was not enough to say you had experienced great joy or great power in prayer. The apostles experienced such things before they were baptised in the Spirit. It was necessary to repent and be baptised so that God could send His Spirit. How could we know when we were baptised in the Spirit? In the same way that Peter and Cornelius and Paul knew, through speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:4ff; 10:44ff; 19:6). God did not change (Malachi 3:6). Jesus promised that believers would speak in tongues (Mark 16:17).⁷¹

We may have plenty of fruit trees and labourers, but without the rain they were useless. God was pouring out the 'latter rain' (Hosea 6:3) and it was now time to ask the Lord for it (Zechariah 10:1). God would not refuse to answer for He had promised to pour water on the thirsty (Isaiah 44:3).⁷² There were now

⁶⁹ Acts 3:8 — 'And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God' (AV); Acts 8:7 — 'For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed' (AV); Acts 9:37ff — 'And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick and died... But Peter... kneeled down, and prayed... And she opened her eyes' (AV).

⁷⁰ Romans 8:9 — 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his' (AV); 1 Corinthians 12:13 — 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit' (AV) It should be noted that Pentecostals today do not take this position. All believers are freely recognised as being members of the Body of Christ (ie the Church). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is seen as an empowering experience, not a saving one. See B.Chant, *Creative Living* South Plympton, SA: Tabor, 1986, pp.251ff.

⁷¹ The Acts passages have already been quoted above. Malachi 3:6 reads, 'I am the Lord, I change not' (AV). According to Mark 16:17, Jesus said — 'And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues' (AV).

⁷² Hosea 6:3 — 'He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth'

some 200,000 believers around the world who spoke in tongues.

Then followed a personal testimony of Mortomore's own experience with an urgent exhortation to seek the Spirit in order to be ready for the Lord's coming again.⁷³

The most lucid teaching on baptism in the Holy Spirit was given by John A.D. Adams, a former New Zealand barrister, now resident in Melbourne and at one time President of the Apostolic Faith Mission based at Good News Hall. From February 1928 to May 1928, *Good News* included a series of articles on the subject which were later published in book form, describing the Pentecostal position in the careful, plodding fashion of a legal document. First Adams examined biblical promises of the baptism in the Spirit; then he noted how they had been fulfilled in the early church. By cataloguing the signs and wonders they performed, he showed how the coming of the Spirit had transformed the first Christians. A brief study of spiritual gifts followed and then an argument for the baptism of the Spirit. Like others before him, he showed how there was a pattern in the book of Acts of the sign of glossolalia. The rest of the 71 pages were devoted to answering charges and summoning witnesses in support of his case.⁷⁴

F.B. Van Eyk was also a strong advocate for the Pentecostal position. There was no doubt about his enthusiasm for his subject. Like Ames, Mortomore and Adams, Van Eyk used the record of the Acts of the Apostles as his foundation. Just as Jesus baptised various groups of early believers with the Spirit, so it was His prerogative still to do so today.⁷⁵ It was also plain that the usual sign of the Spirit's coming was speaking in tongues. There was also a strong connection grammatically in Acts 19:6 between the phrases 'the Holy Ghost came on them' and 'they spoke with tongues.' It was quite clear that no one in Apostolic times ever thought of a baptism in the Spirit without tongues.

(AV); Zechariah 10:1 — 'Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain' (AV); Isaiah 44:3 — 'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground' (AV).

⁷³ F. Mortomore, 'In the Last Days,' GN 16:1 January 1925, pp.8-10.

⁷⁴ Adams, *Scriptural Statement*, n.d.

⁷⁵ F.B. Van Eyk, 'The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Its Initial Evidence,' FGE 1:1 May 1932, pp.3,4.

This being so, note the infinite value of this sign of the sovereign grace of God. It serves as a landmark locating the honest man who thinks he has the baptism; the dishonest man who poses as having the baptism when he does not possess it; and acts as an impetus to the honest seeker, urging the uncertain soul to seek until he consciously and intelligently receives the baptism.

In one of her few signed articles, Lancaster addressed the question, ‘What’s the Use of Tongues?’ Her answers were simple and straightforward and always undergirded by biblical texts.⁷⁶ Firstly, tongues proved that Jesus spoke the truth, for He foretold that believers would speak in tongues (Mark 16:17). She did not mince matters. Those who had passed from death to life loved the brothers (1 John 3:14). If readers did not love those who spoke in tongues, they were still under condemnation of death! Secondly, tongues were a sign to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:21f). On the day of Pentecost, they demonstrated that the One they had crucified was alive again. Thirdly, tongues edified those who spoke (1 Corinthians 14:4). Fourthly, God was worshipped through tongues as they were worshipping ‘in spirit’ (John 4:23f). Next, tongues were for speaking ‘mysteries’ which God was revealing to the Church and used in exorcism and healing. Paul needed to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18) and expressed his desire that all believers should do so (1 Corinthians 14:5). Were tongues only for the establishing of the church? Well, in that case, they were still needed. The gifts that Christ gave after His ascension were to remain until we all came into unity and perfection (Ephesians 4:8,13). Yes, there were counterfeit gifts, but this was no reason for avoiding the genuine. If we asked in faith, God would give us the Holy Spirit, not a counterfeit (Luke 11:11-13)⁷⁷. Must it be written of the readers that they refused to receive God’s Spirit? Tongue-speaking was the cry of the new-born babe in Christ. The Father loved to hear his children cry to Him. An objector might ask, Should not everything be done decently and in order? Certainly, but ‘in God’s order, not in man’s.’

⁷⁶ I have not quoted all the following biblical references as the text basically conveys the sense of them.

⁷⁷ Luke 11:13 — ‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?’ (AV).

There was disorder at Pentecost, but it was the work of God.⁷⁸

It was common to refer to being baptised in the Spirit as being ‘sealed’ with the Spirit. Based on Ephesians 1:13,14,⁷⁹ this was the understanding that the fullness of the Spirit was a ‘seal’ or guarantee of true conversion. In Brisbane, two brothers who were ‘very hungry’ were both sealed by the Lord. In Melbourne, several were guided to the meetings ‘as though led by an invisible hand’ and were sealed. In Cairns, A.J. Deacon, who became one of the stalwarts of the church there, was sealed, after much prayer.⁸⁰ In Maryborough, there were ten people sealed at Easter 1928, with a total of 94 by the middle of the year.⁸¹ At the 1930 Christmas Convention at Good News Hall, on Christmas morning, a ‘big six-foot-one unemployed convert — formerly a Roman Catholic communist’ was ‘sealed’ with the Spirit, as was nine-year-old May Lancaster and a group of her friends.⁸² A Salvation Army believer lamented that she was not ‘truly sealed,’ attended Good News Hall and was filled with the Spirit. The result was that she no longer had any doubts — she had received the guarantee of her faith and knew that Jesus was real.⁸³ So the Lord knew those who were His through the ‘seal’ of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴

‘Brother’ Barnes argued that without such a God-given utterance, believers would be tempted to stop short of being filled, mistaking ‘a wealth of feeling’ for the baptism in the Spirit.⁸⁵ Emotion in itself was not enough.

Demarcation

This concept was to become the point of demarcation between Pentecostalism

⁷⁸ J.Lancaster, ‘What’s the Use of Tongues?’ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.7ff; GN 24:7 July 1933, pp.4f. The reprinting of this article 20 years after its first publication indicates that Lancaster had not shifted her position on this subject.

⁷⁹ ‘In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory’ (AV).

⁸⁰ GN 18:4 April 1927, p.13.

⁸¹ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.13.

⁸² GN 22:3 March 1931, p.10.

⁸³ ‘Where there is No Vision the People Perish,’ GN 24:9 September 1933, p.9.

⁸⁴ J.Lancaster, ‘What’s the Use of Tongues?’ GN 24:7 July 1933, p.5.

⁸⁵ ‘Brother’ Barnes, ‘The Promise of the Father,’ GN 19:7 July 1928, p.14.

and other revival movements. While there had been many revival movements over the years marked by varieties of emotional phenomena, none of them had enshrined such experiences in a biblical doctrine before. Wesleyanism had come closest to it, with its teaching of a climactic experience of Christian perfection. But as this concept was moved to the periphery of Methodist belief, so the experiential side of Methodism languished. Outbursts of emotion and passion do not commonly occur in isolation. The stimulus is usually the build-up of fervour and excitement in revival gatherings. Religious experience waxes or wanes with the tide of revival. When the awakening subsides, so do the experiences. This is well demonstrated historically. From the days of the second century Montanists, through the Middle Ages, with groups like the Cathars and the Templars, into the Reformation period, with the Anabaptists and later the so-called French Prophets, through the Wesleyan revival and the great Awakening, into the various nineteenth century revival movements such as the 1859 revivals and evangelical awakenings and on into early twentieth century phenomena such as the 1904-1905 Welsh revival, religious experience and emotional responses to faith are common.⁸⁶ There are detailed records of every kind of emotional outburst one can imagine. Among the Anabaptists, for example, there were extremists whose behaviour included 'wild shouts and clamours,' dancing to the point of exhaustion, wild agitations, visions, falling to the ground, lying there as if dead, trembling and the like.⁸⁷ The French Prophets fell into states of ecstasy. They were said to fall to the ground, to lie speechless, to shake and tremble, to foam at the mouth, to speak in unknown tongues, to make animal noises, to experience bodily convulsions.⁸⁸ During the Great Awakening in New England, there were times when whole congregations moaned and cried out to God with shrieking and weeping. People experienced visions and revelations.⁸⁹ In George Whitefield's meetings there were sometimes faintings, tears and cries of agony. With James Davenport, there were 'wild ungovernable efforts of enthusiastic zeal and

⁸⁶ See Douglas (ed), 1978; M.Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; Jones, 1995.

⁸⁷ Knox, 1987, p.124.

⁸⁸ Knox, 1987, p.360.

⁸⁹ Murray, 1987, pp.169, 217, 220.

fury,' with fainting, sobbing and weeping. Charles Chauncy accused the revivalists of 'vehement preaching,' unrestrained laughter and 'excesses and extravagances.'⁹⁰ Clearly, many of these descriptions depict the behaviour of extremists. For most people, there were less dramatic responses such as those of Sarah Edwards, who was so overcome with a 'lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ's excellent and transcendent love,' she was unable to stand on her feet, and had to sit for several hours, while she conversed with some friends about the glories of the gospel.⁹¹

John Wesley generally discouraged excesses of emotion, but nevertheless, they were not uncommon in his meetings.⁹² In the Welsh Revival, outbursts of emotion were common. Early in the ministry of Evan Roberts, he 'experienced that unique atmosphere created when an entire village was filled with uncontrollable excitement.' Strong men lay prostrate weeping over their sins; people fainted, climbed through the windows to get into crowded meetings, confessed their sins publicly and sang with fervour. There was crying, sobbing, weeping, shouting praises to God, agonising over sin and fervent prayer. There were also extremists who 'barked at the devil,' danced and prophesied.⁹³

Because of the nature of things — that such emotional expressions were usually tied very closely with either the ministry of a certain person or the gathering of people in certain places — such phenomena were usually short-lived. So Lambert writes of Catharism that its fall was as dramatic as its rise.⁹⁴ The Anabaptists survive today under names such as Mennonites, but the wild expressions of faith displayed by some of them in the sixteenth century are no longer to be observed. Today, tranquility and quiet simplicity of life are their hallmarks. Similarly, the Great Awakening was relatively brief. Its more overt

⁹⁰ R.L.Bushman (ed), *The Great Awakening: Documents on the Revival of Religion, 1740-1745*, New York: Atheneum, 1970, pp.27, 49, 118. It should be noted that some of these descriptions come from enemies of the Awakening and may be exaggerated. See also Murray, 1987, pp.224ff.

⁹¹ J.Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in The Works of Jonathan Edwards* Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, (1834) 1984, Vol I, pp.lxiiff.

⁹² See Chapter Three.

⁹³ Jones, 1995, pp.50, 71f, 125, 158; Evans, 1987

⁹⁴ Lambert, 1992, p.125. For an understanding of radical and non-conformist medieval movements, Lambert's book, which is possibly the best single volume on the subject, should be consulted.

expressions of fervour quickly died away. Jonathan Edwards, for example, was dismissed by his Northampton congregation within a decade of the height of the Awakening for requiring evidence of Christian conversion before admitting people to the sacrament of communion.⁹⁵ It seems incredible that there should have been such a turnaround in such a relatively short time. Gaustad writes —

The suddenness with which the blessings of heaven fell on New England soil in 1741 is comparable only to the abruptness with which those showers were withdrawn. And the ending appeared as inexplicable as the beginning ... in New England, that flood of religious anxieties, interests, reformations, excesses, exhortings, and conversions known as the Great Awakening lasted something less than two years. Its effects, to be sure, were felt in theology, denominational structure, education, and even politics into the nineteenth century ... The ‘great and extraordinary Work of God’ itself, however, was powerfully and speedily accomplished ... From our vantage point, no special perspicacity is required to conclude that the religious intensity of 1741 could not long be maintained. The dreadful concern, the traumatic awakenings, the accelerated devotion — these by their nature are of limited duration. The fever pitch must soon pass, else the patient dies.⁹⁶

As Gaustad himself clearly shows, the reasons for the decline were more complex than this. But the fact remains that the emotional expressions of revival movements tend to be short-lived.⁹⁷

In his classic work on the subject, Catholic scholar Ronald Knox concludes that religious enthusiasm cannot be sustained over a long period.⁹⁸

Edwards early identified the causes of attrition as spiritual pride and a preoccupation with false experiences.⁹⁹ In his later writings, notably his *Treatise on the Religious Affections*, he probed more deeply, examining the whole question of the place of the will and the emotions in religious life.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Murray, 1987, pp.326ff.

⁹⁶ E.S.Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1965, p.1; see also Bushman (ed), 1970.

⁹⁷ K.Chant, *Better than Revival* Kingswood: Ken Chant Ministries, 1994, p.67.

⁹⁸ Knox, 1987, p.565.

⁹⁹ Edwards, Vol 1, 1984, p.lxxviii.

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, 1986. In my unpublished monograph entitled *Jonathan Edwards and Revival*

While he strongly advocated the validity of the stirring of the affections, Edwards also made it plain that emotional expression was actually irrelevant to genuine faith and proved nothing. 'It is no sign,' he wrote, 'one way or the other, that religious affections are very great or raised very high.'¹⁰¹

Although he considered many issues, for Edwards, there were three primary standards by which the genuineness of religious experience might be gauged. The first was the primacy of Christ. The only justification for any manifestations was great joy or overwhelming wonder at the excellence of the Person and work of Christ. Secondly, the text of Scripture. Only those experiences which were 'agreeable to the Word of God' were acceptable.¹⁰² Edwards was careful to point out that it was the whole testimony of Scripture, not just isolated passages, which must be considered. Edwards's third test was consistent Christian living. It was not the level of experience, but the quality of upright life, that was important. Christian practice was 'the principle sign' by which we could assess both our own and others' genuineness as Christians.¹⁰³

Not that other evidences were of no value. There might be many indications, for example, that a fig tree was a fig tree, but the greatest was that it bore figs! So, no matter what revelations, divine encounters, emotional experiences and the like we might have, if they did not result in holy, upright, consistent living, they were to be disregarded. To the end, Edwards refused to deny the validity of spiritual experience. But he was well aware of the many pitfalls, and especially the immense difficulties of separating the true from the false. Interestingly, Max Weber, a scholar of a very different kind, also pointed out that for early Christians it was their morality that validated their 'irrational charismatic gifts' and 'pneumatic achievements.'¹⁰⁴

In Australia, non-Pentecostal Christians tended to be apprehensive about the validity of experience. It was too subjective, too susceptible to uncontrolled variables, too prone to deception or imitation. They were suspicious of

Phenomena I have examined the writings of Edwards on this subject in some detail.

¹⁰¹ Edwards, 1986, p.54.

¹⁰² Edwards, 1986, pp.71,206

¹⁰³ Edwards, 1986, p.363.

¹⁰⁴ Weber, 1965, p.178.

experience which was not authenticated by doctrine. Although in the late nineteenth century, among Sydney Anglicans, there had been an openness both to revival and revivalism, there was a retreat from subjectivism in the early twentieth century, which resulted in later generations of Evangelicals remaining cautious about emphases on experientialism.¹⁰⁵ The Pentecostals, on the other hand, were suspicious of a sterile evangelical orthodoxy that left people's hearts untouched, of doctrine without authenticating experience. One frustrated Pentecostal believer referred to 'that type of modern refinement that abhors fever-heat of enthusiasm as if it were a plague' and to the 'modern thought virus' that lowered the spiritual pulse.¹⁰⁶ For Evangelicals, authenticity was judged by adherence to Scripture; for Pentecostals, it was experience that authenticated the Scripture.

Discerning the genuine

Pentecostals knew from the earliest days that emotions in themselves could be deceptive. So experiences such as shaking, falling, trembling, weeping, laughing and the like were never seen as authoritative or determinative. There was no doubt that such manifestations were expected, and generally approved. But there were qualifications. Firstly, every manifestation had to be verified by Scripture. So attempts were early made to document what was acceptable. John Coombe, the first man in Melbourne to receive the Spirit, pointed out that silence was not necessarily more spiritual than noise — indeed, the reverse may well have been true. The Day of Pentecost was nothing if not noisy. In fact, shouting, crying aloud, speaking with other tongues, laughing, groaning and clapping hands — but not screaming — were all clearly described in Scripture as acceptable acts of worship. It was sad that more believers were not ready to shout, 'Glory to God.' Similarly, lifting of the hands, falling prostrate, dancing and kneeling were all biblical practices; but while falling on one's face in worship was proper, lying on the back was 'unseemly.' Laying on of hands also had biblical warrant, but striking or hitting people did not! It was the Spirit, not the flesh, that brought life. And it was essential to 'adhere closely to

¹⁰⁵ Lawton, 1990, pp.96ff; Piggin, 1996, p.102.

¹⁰⁶ 'Brother' Barnes, 'The Promise of the Father,' GN 19:7 July 1928, pp.14f.

the Word.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting that in the Australian Pentecostal records, I can find no reference to any of the bizarre behaviour of earlier revivals such as making animal noises or entering catatonic states. They seemed well aware of the need to set up boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

As early as 1913, Lancaster was calling people to take a stand on the Bible. God had purified His Word and therefore they loved it and could love no other. If any brothers set up any strange Word demanding that it be worshipped or that people be cut off, they would choose the latter with rejoicing.¹⁰⁸

Ten years later, in a series on Christian living, Lancaster was equally firm in her adherence to the canon of Scripture as the only rule of faith — ‘Never believe what you feel if it contradicts God’s Word,’ she wrote. ‘Ask yourself, ‘Can what I feel be true if God’s Word is true,’ and if both cannot be true, believe God’.¹⁰⁹

Lancaster was accused of exercising inadequate restraints on people’s behaviour.¹¹⁰ However, there seems little evidence to justify this charge.

Adelaide’s Pauline Heath, a sensitive soul who prized intimacy with God, also warned of the dangers of depending on experience alone. It was faith, not feeling, that pleases God, she said. To seek emotional experiences was ‘allowing a feeling to usurp the place of the Word of God and of faith in that Word.’¹¹¹ John Adams, President of the Apostolic Faith Mission, noted the need to read all Scripture in the light of the context and warned against misusing or loosely handling the words of the Bible.¹¹² Queensland pioneer Will Enticknap told his hearers that it was a ‘Pentecostal failure’ to make experience an end in itself. Evangelism had to be our primary aim. ‘If our roots

¹⁰⁷ J.Coombe, ‘Waiting Meetings.’

¹⁰⁸ GN 1:5 Jan 1913, p.6.

¹⁰⁹ GN 15:9 Sep 1924, p.20.

¹¹⁰ C. and M. Gadge, personal interview, 2 March 1992 — ‘Mrs Lancaster was very, very afraid of quenching the Holy Spirit — that was a weak spot as far as I was concerned ... Sometimes extravagant things took place.’

¹¹¹ ‘Faith or Feeling,’ AN 8:4 June 1937, p.2.

¹¹² Adams, *Scriptural Evidence*, p.3.

are in Pentecost,' he said, 'our fruit should be to the ends of the earth.'¹¹³ The precept, 'Fact before feeling,' continued to be laid down in the years that followed.¹¹⁴ In this regard, G.H.Morling seemed surprisingly ill-informed when he wrote—

It (Pentecostalism) does not hold in true perspective the Fact of Christ and the Fact of the Spirit. The emphasis upon the word 'pentecostal' tends to alter the New Testament stress upon the pre-eminence of Christ Whom it is the 'loved and lovely' work of the Holy Spirit to glorify.

It appears to regard the Holy Spirit unduly as an Impersonal External Power that comes upon us rather than as a Person of the Godhead Who dwells within us.¹¹⁵

Even a cursory examination of Pentecostal preaching and practice shows the inaccuracy of this allegation.

Secondly, as the many recorded testimonies show, people's experience of the Spirit consistently made them more devoted to Christ and more upright in their lifestyle. This was regarded as an essential outcome. These early Pentecostals may have had little knowledge of Jonathan Edwards, but their conclusions were very similar to his. Pentecostals also understood that it was not necessary to be in a crowd to experience the power of God. While numinous encounters commonly occurred in gatherings of believers, they could also occur in isolation. For the primary focus was on an encounter with the Holy Spirit — which was not dependent on the presence of others. One woman described extravagant experiences of sighing, groaning, stretching, gasping, twisting and prostration all when she was in her own home, quite alone. Later she again fell on her face and shook violently in a home meeting. It was humiliating but she felt that God was dealing with her to make her pliable. The next morning in her own home, she was filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, without the other phenomena.¹¹⁶ Another told how he had received the Spirit alone in bed

¹¹³ W.Enticknap, 'Finding the Fruit,' sermon notes, n.d.

¹¹⁴ RE May 1935, p.231.

¹¹⁵ Morling, *Pentecostalism*, p.15.

¹¹⁶ E.M.W., 'From a Lady Preacher,' GN 18:12 December 1927, p.15.

at night, in the country, far from any meetings.¹¹⁷ Ruby Anstis of Perth recalled how she was sitting at the tea table when she was ‘filled with Holy Laughter.’ She tried to stop it by stuffing a handkerchief in her mouth. Eventually, she ‘got down to prayer’ and was soon speaking in tongues.¹¹⁸

The significance of glossolalia

Thirdly, there was the conviction that glossolalia was the distinctive sign of the Spirit’s coming. They understood that tongue-speaking was divine in origin, and hence more durable and valuable than ecstatic phenomena. Unlike Knox, who put glossolalia in the same category as physical sensations and hysterical behaviour, the early Pentecostals believed that tongues were different. While it was an extraordinary privilege to speak in tongues, and it overwhelmed one with a sense of divine favour, it was in itself neither ecstatic nor emotional. It was a spiritual gift which was explained and advocated in Scripture. Every experience was secondary to the one great experience of being baptised in the Spirit. No matter how intense or exciting or fulfilling it might be, only the infilling of the Spirit accompanied by glossolalia was ultimately acceptable. Tongue-speaking was not an option. Everyone who was truly baptised in the Spirit was expected to do it. This lent an insistent element to the experience. It was not like laughter or tears or trembling or feelings of joy or love which might vary from person to person. It was a phenomenon which every believer was required to experience — especially if they wanted to be truly a member of the body of Christ and participate in the rapture.¹¹⁹ The evidence indicates that most believers did.¹²⁰

Because the ‘evidence’ of glossolalia was embedded in the movement as a

¹¹⁷ J.Jolly, ‘He Shall Baptise,’ GN 12:8 September 1923, p.10.

¹¹⁸ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.20.

¹¹⁹ This aspect of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is dealt with fully in the Chapter Six.

¹²⁰ It is impossible to know now, decades later, what percentage of people did in fact speak in tongues. My own observation of the post-war years is that glossolalia was almost universal among Pentecostals in the 1950s and 1960s. It seems fair to assume that this was also the position in the 1920s and 1930s. To my knowledge, all Australian Pentecostal denominations currently require their pastors to speak in tongues as a condition of ordination. It is interesting to note that in recent years, there has been less insistence among charismatic and ‘Third Wave’ movements on glossolalia and a broader acceptance of other ‘manifestations’ or gifts. To what extent this will affect the Pentecostal movement is not yet clear.

non-negotiable practice, the place of religious experience was secured. As long as this doctrine remained, so would people go on being impelled into an experiential encounter with God. The movement is not yet a century old and so in historical terms, this thesis has yet to be tested by the passing of the years. Yet it has already outlasted most earlier revival movements. Knox asserts that 'there is no Christianity with a hundred years of history that does not become, to a more or less degree, institutional.'¹²¹ While Pentecostalism in Australia has followed the apparently inexorable pattern of all movements in this regard and is clearly institutionalised in a more sophisticated fashion than it was at the beginning, the emphasis on religious experience remains dominant.

Early Pentecostal testimonies regularly highlight the transforming and renewing effect of Spirit-baptism. The earliest surviving testimony is of Richard Beaglehole (1870). 'Oh the heights and depths of the glory of God!' he said.¹²² In 1910, Winnie Andrews, the first 'Pentecostal secretary' in Australia, told how the Spirit had come upon her in 1908 'in mighty power' and her heart was filled with love. It was not an experience just of the moment. Two years later, the sense of wonder was still present. She seemed hardly able to contain her joy—

Oh, what love, joy and peace filled my soul! I had never experienced anything like it before. Praise the dear Lord! It is so lovely to feel the sweet spirit of Jesus moving within me. It has been a blessed life to me ever since. Praise Him!

The dear Lord helps me and gives me victory over all my trials. Praise Him! And oh! He is working mightily in our midst. Glory to His name! He's the very same Jesus! The wonder-working Jesus! Our dear Heavenly Father and sweet Jesus are very dear to me. Glory!¹²³

In 1912, E.Jolly told how she had been warned that her tongues were one of the lying wonders to be performed by the Antichrist. But was the Antichrist going to point people to Jesus? Furthermore, since her baptism, she had been

¹²¹ Knox, 1987, p.590.

¹²² R.Beaglehole, 'God Baptised in Portland, Victoria, Nearly Fifty Years Ago!' GN 1:1 April 1910, pp.3f.

¹²³ W.Andrews, 'A Methodist Sunday School Scholar's Testimony,' GN 1:1 April 1910, p.6.

healed of a long-standing chest complaint, she had undergone a painless delivery of her baby and her husband, who had spoken in Chinese at his baptism, and her children, had received 'instant deliverance' from influenza.¹²⁴

Eliza Sloan, of Freeburgh, Victoria, was so thrilled with the Spirit's coming that her 'whole being was enraptured.' For days, she was rejoicing, praising God, preaching to her neighbours and witnessing about Christ. So exuberant was she that neighbours thought she had lost her reason.¹²⁵ William Booth-Clibborn told how he felt transported to heaven. Twenty years after the event, he was still speaking of the glory, the relish, the ecstasy, the laughter, the blessing, the transport, the refreshing and the bliss he experienced.¹²⁶

Sometimes, the work of the Spirit and human, physical responses seemed to become rather tangled. A.F.Silcock reported that the Spirit caused 'all kinds of physical and facial exercises' and 'various inbreathings and exercises of the tongue.' But then came glossolalia — and in song, in which the tones ranged from baritone to falsetto, 'going through modulations more difficult than chromatics.' But after this, there were 'rich and varied experiences' and it was impossible to describe the joy and grace of it.¹²⁷ M.A.Alway told how she received a sense of joy that was different from any other experience.¹²⁸ Caroline Mortomore related how after she prayed for thirteen months, the Holy Spirit came upon her 'with the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues and magnifying God'—

So wonderful an experience! The joy was indescribable, and the Lord was SO near. It was something beautiful! I cannot put all this precious experience into words ... I now know more of my Lord and have a more intense love for Christ, with a greater desire to serve Him.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ E.Jolly, 'He Shall Baptise You with the Holy Spirit,' GN 1:5 January 1913, p.3.

¹²⁵ GN 1:1 April 1910, p.10.

¹²⁶ W.Booth-Clibborn, 'How "The Rest and the Refreshing" Came to Me,' GN 20:7 July 1929, p.7.

¹²⁷ A.F.Silcock, 'I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance,' GN 1:1 April 1910, pp.11ff.

¹²⁸ M.A.Alway, 'Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever,' GN 1:1 April 1910, pp.14f.

¹²⁹ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.12.

It was no flash in the pan. Since that time, members of the Mortomore family have served God faithfully in various parts of Australia.¹³⁰ Alex Buchanan told how he was so full of joy that his shouts caused one woman to flee the room and then he was baptised in the Spirit, speaking, singing and praying in tongues.¹³¹ When the Buchanan family came to Good News Hall in 1925, 'Pa' Buchanan was singing the doxology with uplifted hands at the end of the service when he fell down 'full length at the feet of Jesus.' Within ten minutes he was speaking in tongues. Soon his six-year-old daughter also 'lay prostrate under that holy weight of Power' and she, too, was worshiping God in a new tongue.¹³² Beatrice Douglas spoke of indescribable joy when she received the Spirit and expressed her yearning to do the will of God all the days of her life.¹³³

The stories seem to pile up one on the other. E.Jenkins, who had been a member of the Churches of Christ for 35 years, after speaking in tongues for the first time in 1925, lay on the floor for over two hours worshipping and praising God. 'Oh!' he wrote, 'I can never forget the infilling. No pen can write, neither can the tongue tell the joy and happiness that filled me. It was glorious to be praising and blessing God.'¹³⁴ A young widow with a five-year-old son came home to find her room flooded with light. The little boy cried, 'Oh, mamma!' and after 'a few moments ecstatic wonder' she found herself praying in a new tongue.¹³⁵ Another man brought his wife and five children to a meeting and then found himself on his knees 'under the power of God'. His wife was very worried about what was happening to him, but when he finally 'came through, speaking in tongues,' she realised God was with him. It was not always so dramatic. One woman received the Spirit as she sat quietly in her chair.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ See Chapter Twelve.

¹³¹ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.20.

¹³² GN 16:9 September 1925, p.16.

¹³³ B.Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' GN 17:3 March 1926, pp.16f.

¹³⁴ E.Jenkins, 'When Ye Seek Me with your Whole Heart You Shall Find Me,' GN 17:5 May 1926, pp.10f.

¹³⁵ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12.

¹³⁶ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12.

In 1928, the following report appeared in *Good News*, describing meetings in the North Queensland town of Rockhampton in which one woman had ‘terrible shakings’ in her body for three and a half hours and finally spoke in tongues¹³⁷

A Christadelphian testified gladly to being deeply convinced of the pre-existence of Christ.¹³⁸ ‘Experience has put an end to all (doubt) forever,’ he wrote. Soon he was baptised in the Spirit and speaking in tongues.¹³⁹

Some people’s experiences stretched credulity. Charles Prickett claimed that he had been healed from leukemia two years previously when Jesus personally visited him; that his conversion was the result of an angelic visitation; and that when he was baptised in the Spirit, the power of God was so ‘heavy’ it bent the legs of the bed on which he was lying and threw a cup and saucer across the room, while he felt himself engulfed in some kind of spiritual flame. Lancaster commented that the Bible spoke of ‘diversities of operations’ and that she did not doubt that Prickett’s experiences, although ‘in some cases unique,’ were genuine.¹⁴⁰

On occasion, there were claims of xenolalia. At Good News Hall in 1926, one man spoke in ‘pure Zulu,’ a claim confirmed by someone who had lived many years in South Africa. Another spoke ‘fluently’ in the Hebrew language.¹⁴¹ Dolly Cridge was told she was speaking Italian.¹⁴² In the Ovens Valley there were reports of both Indian and Chinese people understanding utterances in tongues.¹⁴³ John Russell, whose father spoke Hindustani, believed he was speaking the same language.¹⁴⁴ Another believed he spoke in Chinese, because he saw a vision of multitudes of Chinese people before him as he preached to

¹³⁷ GN 19:3 March 1928.

¹³⁸ Christadelphians do not believe in the Trinity and hence the eternal pre-existence of Christ with the Father.

¹³⁹ F.Bryan, ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit,’ GN 18:2 February, 1927, pp.12f. Note that some words are obscured in this article through fire damage.

¹⁴⁰ C.Prickett, ‘How I Was Healed,’ GN 17:12 December 1926, p.15.

¹⁴¹ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12.

¹⁴² GN 1:1 April 1910, p.16.

¹⁴³ M.Jackson, personal communication, 8 May 1992.

¹⁴⁴ J.Russell, ‘Saved to Serve,’ GN 14:10 November 1923, p.13.

them in their own tongue.¹⁴⁵ These claims were not usually verifiable, although attempts were sometimes made to check them.¹⁴⁶

Laughter was often present when the Spirit came. One person told how the night before she received the Spirit she did nothing but 'laugh in the Spirit.'¹⁴⁷ J.L. Wilson related that she was so full of joy her laughter actually hindered her from speaking in tongues. But then the new language just 'seemed to bubble over,' she fell to the floor and was soon 'bathing in the sunshine of God's love, talking in tongues.'¹⁴⁸ Owen French laughed in anticipation at what the Lord was about to do in his life, as did those around him. Three days later, he spoke in tongues.¹⁴⁹

A 'lady preacher' struggled to find words to describe her joy and delight at being baptised in the Spirit—

With my hands upraised, vainly did I try to utter words of praise and worship in my own language, but the Spirit took hold and my words were taken from me and a new tongue given (Is 28:11). I was upon my knees, still with hands upraised, the stammering rapidly becoming clearer and clearer, while I became most blessedly conscious of being in the most wondrous communion with my God that I had ever known in my life... In the afternoon, I was again before the Lord, this time standing with upraised hands; and now the Spirit was singing through me! Oh, the glory, the joy, the wonder of it all! It almost took my breath away... I saw nothing; but oh, how much I felt! ... For days my joy was so great I could not

¹⁴⁵ P.H. Scarisbrick, 'Personal Testimony of P.H. Scarisbrick,' GN 19:8 August 1928, p.15.

¹⁴⁶ George Burns, in his presidential address to the first Advisory Council Conference of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Brisbane in 1929, told how his wife spoke in tongues and interpreted — 'Neither of us had any knowledge of any part of it except the last word 'Yah,' which was rightly interpreted as Jehovah. This was the message: 'Touto! Touto! Touto! Helikos esti Yah!' And the interpretation given was: 'Sing! Sing! Sing! Great is Jehovah.' When I reached home I looked in *Young's Analytical Concordance* and to our joy we found that the message was perfect Greek with the last word in Hebrew.' Burns's enthusiasm o'erleapt itself here. While the latter part could be taken to mean, 'Great is Jehovah,' the first part is not an instruction to sing. It was hardly 'perfect' Greek. Nevertheless, for him it was a startling proof of the validity of glossolalia. As the printed version of this message was 'stenographically reported' by Leila Buchanan, it is conceivable, although unlikely, she may have got the words wrong, although none of the common Greek words for 'sing' seem to have any similarity to *touto* (which is the neuter singular demonstrative pronoun). See G. Burns, 'We Preach,' GN 20:3 Mar 1929, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ GN 18:1 January 1927, p.13.

¹⁴⁸ GN 18:6 September 1927, p.17.

¹⁴⁹ O. French, 'The Spirit of Adoption,' GN 23:3 March 1932, p.9.

refrain from speaking in tongues.¹⁵⁰

Another woman told how words could not express the wonderful peace and joy that filled her and how three months later she was still ‘filled to overflowing’ with an indescribable peace.¹⁵¹ Struck with a sense of wonder, yet another was amazed that God should fill such a one as her with His own Spirit ‘not for a moment or an hour, day, week, or month; but *forever*.’¹⁵² Not everyone was enthused about such behaviour. ‘If you want to see a good pantomime,’ said one man, ‘you should visit a Pentecostal church.’¹⁵³

One of the most fascinating approaches to the baptism of the Spirit was an address by medical practitioner, Mina Brawner. She enumerated common objections to the baptism in the Holy Spirit — that those involved were mentally disturbed; that the experience was from Satan; that there was so much counterfeit behaviour that it was wise to reject it all.¹⁵⁴ But Paul was called ‘mad,’ Jesus was also told he ‘had a devil,’ and it was plainly foolish to reject the whole because of one troubling part. When a farmer reaped a crop, there was much noise and dust and chaff, but the farmer did not reject the grain on this account. This was harvest time and the grain had to be secured.

Moreover, those who were baptised in the Spirit could hardly be demon-controlled, as they had a passion to win souls, a hunger for the Word of God, a rejection of the pursuits of this world, and an ability to pray that plainly came from God.

Through the central nervous system, we could control bodily actions while the sympathetic nervous system had control over involuntary actions. So where was the human spirit to be found? God would not have put it where it could be controlled by the human will. Nor would it be located in a part of the body that could be lost, such as the hand. As a surgeon, Brawner had never understood where to find the spirit, but it was certainly there (Job 32:8). It was only after

¹⁵⁰ E.M.W., ‘From a Lady Preacher,’ GN 18:12 December 1927, p.15.

¹⁵¹ GN 20:11 November 1929, p.12.

¹⁵² GN 18:6 June 1927, p.13.

¹⁵³ Quoted by C.Tanswell, interview, 20 December 1993.

¹⁵⁴ eg J.Russell, ‘A Straight Testimony,’ GN 17:7 July 1926, ‘I had been warned to keep away from them, and told it was all of the Devil. One Baptist minister especially warned me ...’

she had been baptised in the Holy Spirit that she found the answer — the solar plexus or ‘abdominal brain’. This centre was not subject to the will but it was the seat of the emotions. This is why bodily changes sometimes occurred when the Spirit came — flushing, sweating and the like. Furthermore, Jesus said that when the Spirit came, rivers of living water would flow from the belly.

The last member to yield was the tongue. It sputtered and stammered and joined the disordered speech of the battlefield, but finally gave way to the Spirit. This was like raising the flag of victory. Then the speaker listened with as much interest as other hearers, for the words did not come from the intellect, but from ‘the highest centre of man, the innermost being, or his heart.’ Doctrines were held in the head; the Spirit occupied the heart. Doctrines divided, but the Holy Spirit united the people of God.¹⁵⁵

Children and the Spirit

Children were often numbered among those who received the Spirit. This was further proof that an experience of God could be more wide-reaching in its impact than an understanding of doctrine. At the Easter convention at Good News Hall in 1926, a six-year-old boy lay on the floor for hours praising God and a girl of five years was also ‘under the power of the Spirit’. On a trip to Queensland in 1927, Lancaster reported that a ‘special feature’ of her visit was ‘the manner in which the Holy Ghost arrested the youths and children’. Hedley Ridgway told how at the age of six he and his brother had chosen to miss a school concert so they could have ‘a little tarrying meeting’ of their own. It was there he was baptised in the Spirit. At one of Mina Brawner’s meetings, a dozen youngsters between the ages of nine and 15 were ‘slain by the Spirit, crying to the Lord to humble them, cleanse them and give them power,’ and six of them were baptised in the Spirit.¹⁵⁶ In Atherton, an eleven-year-old spoke in tongues. Jeannie Lancaster was especially delighted when her nine-year-old grand-daughter Esther May was blessed — and even more so when the next day little May gathered some of her friends together and the Spirit came on them also. Not long after this, May was writing out passages from the Bible

¹⁵⁵ M.Brawner, ‘The Baptism of the Holy Spirit from a Medical Standpoint,’ GN 24:3, March 1933, pp.6f.

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter Fourteen for more on children and the Spirit..

and dropping them in the street in the hope people would read them. Two years later, after a long illness, she passed away . During her last days, she asked people to help her lift her hands in prayer . ‘Hold them up for me,’ she pleaded. ‘I must get the victory.’ A ten-year-old wrote to Lancaster, ‘Please, when may I come to the Hall to be baptised, I mean, first in water, second in the Holy Spirit.’ Gladys Banks, aged fourteen, told how she and her friend had received the Spirit. It was, she said, ‘the gate of heaven to our souls’. In Cairns, in 1927, a Sunday School picnic was taken as an opportunity to baptise four of the older children in Freshwater Creek. In Melbourne, a boy of nine was baptised in water. Was he too young? ‘Any child who is old enough to know when he is doing wrong must be allowed the privilege of doing right,’ said Lancaster.¹⁵⁷

Tarry meetings

It was usual, but not mandatory, to be baptised in the Spirit at a ‘tarry meeting’. Based on the instructions of Jesus that His disciples should ‘tarry’ in Jerusalem until they were empowered by the Spirit,¹⁵⁸ the concept was conveyed that it was still necessary today to spend time ‘tarrying’ or waiting for the Spirit to come. Often, tarrying allowed people to examine their hearts and prepare their lives for the infilling. God had imposed a set of conditions to be satisfied, taught Florrie Mortomore, before the Spirit would come, namely repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38)¹⁵⁹. This meant not only being sorry for sin but forsaking it as well. When these conditions were fulfilled, God would immediately pour out His Spirit. If, however, He delayed, this was to teach us patience. So it was necessary to tarry until we received, for God would keep His promise (Luke 11:13).¹⁶⁰ One man told how he had tarried for six days at Good News Hall and then remembered a disagreement with a neighbour. So he

¹⁵⁷ GN 17:5 May 1926, p.12; GN 18:3 March 1927, p.10; GN 18:7 July 1927, p.12; GN 21:7 July 1920, p.2; GN 21:11 November 1930, p.12; GN 22:3 March 1931, pp.10.15,17; GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.16; GN 18:4 April 1927, p.13; GN 23:1 January 1932, p.10.

¹⁵⁸ Luke 24:49 — ‘And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high’ (AV).

¹⁵⁹ Acts 2:28 — ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’ (AV).

¹⁶⁰ F.Mortomore, ‘In the Last Days,’ GN 16:1 January 1925, p.9.

took a train journey to sort this matter out, was laughed at for his pains, but nevertheless felt at ease. That night he received the Spirit.¹⁶¹

In an article apparently written by Jeannie Lancaster, seekers for the infilling of the Spirit were instructed to observe the following —

- Hand yourself over to the hands of the Lord
- Repent and confess all sin in heart and life
- Ask God to purify your motives
- Keep your eyes on Jesus
- Lay hold of the promise of Acts 1:5
- Spend all the time you can in prayer and praise
- Plead the blood of the Lamb over evil spirits
- Don't expect your experiences to be the same as those of others
- Tarry until you are endued with power from on high
- Yield to any manifestation of the Spirit (eg shaking of lips)
- Let the Holy Spirit do as He pleases with your body
- Then you will speak in an unknown tongue

Lancaster pointed out that it was not hard to receive the Spirit — when there was faith in the blood of Christ for cleansing it was really 'very easy.' Nevertheless, this did not mean there was no need to tarry. The biblical command still applied. It was true that some received almost immediately, but others waited a long time. The reason for this may have been that 'some of us die hard, and God has to use various ways to kill us to our own opinions.' Also, some did not 'get the full revelation of Jesus' they longed for straight away.¹⁶²

Tarrying meetings were a priority. At the Hall, it was common practice to devote the Christmas holiday break to this end. On 24 December 1924, ten days of tarrying began, and even before it started 'the rain' was 'already falling.'¹⁶³ One woman told how she had tarried for nine days before receiving

¹⁶¹ J.Jolly, 'He Shall Baptise,' GN 12:8 September 1923, p.10.

¹⁶² J.Lancaster(?), 'Help to Seekers of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost,' GN 21:10 October 1930, p.11.

¹⁶³ GN 15:12 December 1924, p.22.

the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁴ Tarrying could be hard work, but it was not always so. An anonymous report told how a young woman ‘had a lovely time’ sitting in the tarry room as she sang in tongues and how one Saturday night the congregation ‘spent a happy time before the Lord, tarrying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost.’¹⁶⁵ In Perth, in 1928, the secretary claimed that the house was literally shaken while they prayed.¹⁶⁶ In Townsville, Leila Buchanan wrote to her mother, Jeannie Lancaster, that when she and her husband Alex conducted a tarry meeting, ‘the power of God swept over the whole company shaking all like aspen leaves in the wind.’¹⁶⁷ A former member of the Exclusive Brethren found it hard to accept Pentecostal teaching. But he was convinced by a young man in a tarry meeting whose face was full of light and joy and by others who laughed, sang and danced in the Spirit.¹⁶⁸ Gus Jansen, who confessed to being of rather a reserved nature, experienced joy, merriment and love in a Boxing Day tarry meeting at Good News Hall.¹⁶⁹ Heather Burrows ‘really got to know the Lord through tarry meetings.’¹⁷⁰ ‘The tarry meetings had a tremendous significance,’ said Stan Douglas. ‘There was that touch of God that hallowed the atmosphere.’¹⁷¹

F.E.Emery of Rockhampton had thought that love was the ‘seal’ spoken of by the apostles, but now realised the seal was speaking in tongues, and ‘how wonderfully the Scriptures opened up!’ After a Van Eyk meeting in Rockhampton, she responded to the invitation to stay for a time of prayer. Van Eyk simply told people to ‘get busy with God.’ It was not easy—

You can imagine the stiff, respectable, spoiled child of the Church letting go all pride and ceremony, and getting down humbly before God, pleading for His

¹⁶⁴ GN 17:3 March 196, p.17.

¹⁶⁵ GN 18:2 February 1927, p.11.

¹⁶⁶ A.Kilpatrick, ‘A Cheering Report,’ GN 19:7 July 1928, p.13.

¹⁶⁷ GN 19:9 September 1928, p.11.

¹⁶⁸ O.French, ‘The Spirit of Adoption,’ GN 23:3 March 1932, p.9.

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix Ten.

¹⁷⁰ H.Hoskin, personal interview, 21 November 1997.

¹⁷¹ S.Douglas, personal interview, 21 November 1989.

blessing.¹⁷²

After several days, involving putting things right and extended prayer, the Spirit filled her with ‘wonderful love.’

Different

The spirit of Pentecost was not just a matter of the heart. What people experienced internally was expected to show externally. Spirit-filled Christians were *different*. The Wesleyan quest for perfection and the evangelical emphasis on holiness remained at the core of Pentecostal piety. Naturally, sins such as murder, adultery, theft, drunkenness, assault and the like were eschewed. But equally to be avoided were practices such as playing cards, ballroom dancing, smoking and bodily adornment such as cosmetics and jewellery. These were seen as signs of the imminent return of Christ. There had never been a time when people were more wickedly ‘pleasure mad.’ Would God allow feasting, drinking, dancing, theatre-going and smoking to go on forever? No, the ‘cup of iniquity was full to overflowing. An anonymous testimony in *Good News* told how the young woman concerned used to indulge in worldly amusements ‘such as dancing, theatre-going, unclean, suggestive picture shows, card-playing and many other attractive follies.’ She saw no harm in such things, but now she had accepted Christ she had joy, peace and satisfaction in her soul.¹⁷³ Beatrice Douglas testified that she had seen a vision of Christ on the cross and day by day tried to surrender everything to Him — even to the point of removing a ring from her finger and a gold bangle from her wrist. She had ‘almost worshiped’ the bangle but later discovered that ‘God had forbidden His children to adorn themselves with gold.’¹⁷⁴ While this girl’s action was a spontaneous response to her own experience of faith, there was ‘plenty of preaching’ against such practices.¹⁷⁵ Iris George recalled, ‘We were all young and they were pulling us into line all the time. Separation [from the world] was the thing ... No movies, no radio, no lipstick, no hair colour, no

¹⁷² F.E.Emery, ‘A Testimony to the Experimental Baptism of the Holy Spirit,’ GN 19:4 April 1928, p.13. Following details are also from this source.

¹⁷³ GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.14f.

¹⁷⁴ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.15.

¹⁷⁵ E.Michalk, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

powder, no nothing.¹⁷⁶

In the Apostolic Church, a woman wearing makeup might be turned away at the door and instructed to come back when she had removed it.¹⁷⁷ C.L.Greenwood's son Les used to have a crystal set with the wire connected to the mattress under his bed so his father would not know about it. Given that his father preached against radio, the theatre, dancing, the use of cosmetics and the like, this seems to have been a wise move.¹⁷⁸

There was no doubt about the evils of smoking. At one meeting, a young man dropped his cigarettes into the stove after quoting Revelation 21:27.¹⁷⁹ If the cigarettes didn't go into the fire, those who smoked them would, said *Good News*.¹⁸⁰ In 1932, 'Brother Hills' told how he had been saved from smoking, drinking and violence. 'The Lord has done wonderful things for me — He has made a new man of me,' he said.¹⁸¹ When Gustav Bernhard ('Ben') Michalk (1884-1967) was converted at Parkes in 1916, he continued to smoke his pipe until one day, as he was lighting up, he heard the voice of God saying, 'You don't want that thing any more.' He promptly nailed it to the fork of a pine tree where it remained visible for years until the tree grew over it.¹⁸²

In a stern editorial, Jeannie Lancaster denounced popular reading materials —

We cannot speak too strongly in condemnation of the ordinary literature of the present day. It is truly appalling. Go to the nearest bookstall, pick up the first book you see and ... you will almost certainly be shocked by its contents.¹⁸³

In Adelaide, too, novel-reading was frowned upon. It was questionable and

¹⁷⁶ I.George, personal interview, 12 June 1990.

¹⁷⁷ K.Kirwan, personal interview, 11 September 1991.

¹⁷⁸ H.Dwight, personal interview, 12 June 1990. Hazel Dwight is Greenwood's daughter.

¹⁷⁹ 'Nothing unclean ... shall come into it (the new Jerusalem).'

¹⁸⁰ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.12.

¹⁸¹ GN 23:5 May 1932, p.12. On one occasion, it was suggested that even insanity might be caused by smoking — GN 24:7 July 1933, p.3.

¹⁸² L.Michalk, personal interview, 18 December 1993. To this day, 'Ben' Michalk's Bible carries the inscription in his own hand writing: 'Gustav Bernhard Michalk. Baptised in the Holy Spirit 18 October 1916. Glory to Jesus. Mark 1:8. Act 2:4.'

¹⁸³ GN 20:3 March 1929, p.18.

therefore probably wrong.¹⁸⁴

This was not just blind fundamentalism. The main purpose in reading was ‘to elevate, to foster a desire for nobler things’. A book that developed the intellect and satisfied the soul was fine. But if it did not, the remedy was simple — ‘Burn it!’ At Richmond Temple, people used to sing a little song that ran, ‘There’ll be no smoking there, in my Father’s house.’ Other verses substituted ‘dancing’ or ‘lipstick’ for ‘smoking.’ The final stanza said, ‘But Jesus will be there ...’¹⁸⁵ Another song used in F.B. Van Eyk’s meetings had these lyrics—

Heaven is a clean place
No tobacco there
All the folks are holy
Over there
If you refuse to do God’s will
The Book says you’ll be filthy still.
There’s a very noxious weed
Filled with appetite and greed
Chewed by goats and worms and foolish men;
It discolours tooth and tongue
In the aged and in the young
It is time we put this poison under ban.
Heaven is a clean place ...¹⁸⁶

Cinemas were certainly inappropriate. There were at least 20 reasons why Christians should not attend them. In general, they resulted in lowered moral standards. But the major reason was that when Christ came again, He ‘would not like to find you there.’¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, the arguments supporting the case against children being exposed to moving pictures were very similar to those raised today against their exposure to television.¹⁸⁸ Jazz music was also

¹⁸⁴ AN, September 1937, p.4.

¹⁸⁵ K.Lowe, personal interview, 12 June 1990; F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

¹⁸⁶ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

¹⁸⁷ GN 21:1 January 1930, p.19.

¹⁸⁸ ‘The Sin-ema and Children,’ GN 23:12 December 1932, Supplement p.3.

denounced. 'It will spoil your taste, will kill your prayer life, and undermine your spiritual life,' said a prominent Christian musician.¹⁸⁹ In the early days, even school concerts or local community shows were forbidden¹⁹⁰ and sport was frowned upon as a waste of valuable time and energy.¹⁹¹ Florrie Mortomore saw such worldly pleasures as sufficient to disqualify believers from the rewards of overcomers.¹⁹²

Sunday observance was strongly emphasised. Sunday work, shopping and entertainment were all frowned upon. In some cases, the use of public transport was disapproved and people were encouraged to cook their Sunday meals in advance on Saturday.¹⁹³

Another expression of holiness was tithing, that is the giving of one tenth of one's income to the Lord. In Richmond Temple, there was a large 'tithe box' at the front of the auditorium. During the service, the people would walk to the front in joyful procession to place their offerings.¹⁹⁴ For Apostolics, compulsory tithing was one of the unalterable tenets of the Church. Again, this was not just rigid legalism. The concept was that everything one owned now belonged to God. So tithing was simply returning to God a portion of what was his. Even threepence spent on a milk shake might be considered indulging the flesh.¹⁹⁵

The fundamental issue was that of commitment. Spirit-filled Christians were expected to be totally dedicated to the work of God. Any flirtation with the world was considered immoral. But it was more than this. When the Spirit came, there was such joy, such wonder, such fulfilment, that people genuinely found little attraction in popular pleasures. For them it was literally more enjoyable to be at a prayer meeting than in a cinema or a dance hall. The spirit of Pentecost was more dynamic than the spirit of the world. Eileen Michalk

¹⁸⁹ GN 23:6 June 1932, p.11.

¹⁹⁰ C.Tanswell, personal interview, 20 December 1993.

¹⁹¹ L.Wahlquist, personal interview, 19 November 1991.

¹⁹² F.Mortomore, 'The Dragon's Plot,' GN 14: 10, November 1923, p.3.

¹⁹³ K.Conner, personal interview, 6 June 1991.

¹⁹⁴ K.A.Lowe, personal interview, 12 June 1990.

¹⁹⁵ N.Fabian, personal interview, August 1991.

remembers how it was during her childhood in Parkes, NSW—

My parents had a real joy ... They just prayed all the time. I remember wishing we could have someone in our house and it wouldn't turn into a prayer meeting! ... They'd say, 'Before you go ...' and you'd know it would be two hours later before they would. You'd go to sleep on the floor. Goodness me, they seemed to be so hungry for more and more of God ... There was an enthusiasm about those men that was wonderful ... On the way home [from a prayer meeting] you'd be with a group of people and they'd always be talking about the Lord. And then you'd stand under a lamp post nearest the next person's home and they'd have another chat. I was often almost asleep sitting in the gutter ... They just really talked so much of the Lord's coming and their love for God. Their commitment was incredible. I mean rail, hail or shine, you walked to meetings ... There was always something happening — there was always an air of expectancy. I remember my mother walking so fast to a prayer meeting ... 'I just want to get there,' she said, 'I really believe tonight's the night the Lord is going to baptise me.' And that was the night. It didn't matter if it rained. You never stayed home because it rained. You sat in church wet.¹⁹⁶

Of course, there were those who found such a commitment too great a price to pay in spite of the blessings they received. But the eyes of those who persevered were so entranced by the beauties of the kingdom of God, the kingdoms of this world were but a passing blur. The spirit of Pentecost stole their hearts and dropped sweetness and honeycomb on their lips and many waters could not quench their love.

¹⁹⁶ E.Michalk, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

PART FIVE
DENOUEMENT

CONCLUSION

Pentecostalism in Australia is now almost one hundred years old.¹ It is an appropriate time to reflect on its origins and character. From the outset, the movement's distinctive doctrine and practice was the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. In recent years, sociologists and psychologists have attempted to explain this phenomenon. While their insights have been valuable, and there have been helpful analyses of both the reasons why people speak in tongues and the benefits to be gained from doing so, the practice of tongues itself has defied human analysis. 'Deprivation theories', in particular, have proven inadequate, especially in regard to the Australian movement.

There are clearly many similarities between Australian Pentecostalism and its international siblings, but there are also certain areas of difference. Firstly, although in countries like the United States and Brazil, Pentecostals are numbered in the millions and the movement burgeoned initially among the poor and underprivileged, this was never the case in Australia. In this country, Pentecostals basically represented a middle-class constituency. There were twice as many Pentecostal believers engaged in small business or in professional or middle-management positions as in the community generally; there were only

¹ This statement assumes a starting date of 1908, with the first formally organised congregation, the Apostolic Mission at Good News Hall. The first Pentecostal meetings were conducted in 1870. See Chapters Three and Six.

half as many in labouring jobs. During the Great Depression, most Pentecostals were gainfully employed — and many gave themselves to charity and welfare work. In the cities, there was no obvious concentration of Pentecostals in poorer suburbs: a significant number inhabited prosperous areas. Many lived in country towns or on farms. Overall, the evidence suggests that Pentecostals in the 1920s and 1930s were middle class people who were socially secure.

Although Pentecostalism in many countries has been primarily an urban movement, in Australia, there were more congregations in country towns than in the cities. The earliest known Pentecostal meetings in 1870 were conducted in a farming community near Portland, Victoria and farmers continued to be well represented in subsequent years.

The role of women was another distinctive feature. The first Pentecostal church was pioneered and pastored by a woman (Sarah Jane Lancaster) and over half of the assemblies established prior to 1930 were brought into being by women, and often led by women as well. Although most Pentecostal movements overseas gave freedom to women to minister, there were few who encouraged them to exercise such oversight or pastoral leadership.² In most cases, women were allowed to preach, pray, prophesy and evangelise, but there were clear lines of demarcation limiting their authority. The roles of overseer, elder, bishop, general superintendent and the like were not open to them. The scene in Australia was different. In spite of reservations being expressed on occasion, women undertook all the roles open to men. After 1925, male leadership increasingly became the norm but theoretically any office was still open to women.

It is commonly thought that Pentecostalism came to this country as an American missionary outreach. In this respect, Australian Pentecostalism differs from movements like Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism, which plainly reflect their American origins. The cosmopolitan nature of Australian Pentecostalism has been evident from the beginning. Its origins lay in the

² The Apostolic Church in England, for example, forbade women to participate in church oversight — a policy that was reflected in the Apostolic Church in Australia after 1930.

Wesleyan doctrine of 'entire sanctification' through the power of the Holy Spirit; in the ministry of divine healing and other gifts of the Spirit taught by John Dowie; and in the focus on holiness and 'victorious living' by Evangelicalism, especially the Keswick movement. Wesleyanism and the Keswick movement both stemmed from England. Dowie, although born and educated at tertiary level in Scotland, was brought up in South Australia.

From the outset, leadership was in the hands of Australians. Sarah Jane Lancaster, the founder and pastor of the initial congregation was Australian-born, as were most of her associates.³ The founders of the second and third congregations were also native Australians. Melbourne-based missionary Robert Horne began the Southern Evangelical Mission in 1911 and Melbourne-born Charles Greenwood established the Sunshine Gospel Mission in 1916. Successive congregations were also Australian-led — the church at Parkes was formerly established in 1919, a development from cottage meetings started there in 1914 by Will Jeffrey.⁴ In Sydney, it was Frederick and Philip Duncan who pioneered the work; in Adelaide, Annie Chamberlain, J.H.Rieschick, Gus Jansen and Joy Heath; in Brisbane, Florrie Mortomore and Harold Martin; in Perth, Edie Anstis and Ruby Wiles; in Cairns, Florrie Mortomore and C.Kajewski. And so on. Not until the coming of the Apostolic Church in 1930 was there a Pentecostal group in which ongoing leadership was in the hands of missionaries from overseas. Australian Pentecostalism has always been distinctly Australian.

At times, Pentecostalism has been erroneously seen as a pseudo-Christian sect. Theologically, however, it is in most respects an Evangelical movement. That Sarah Jane Lancaster's views on the Trinity and the nature of punishment of the wicked made her an exception to this has already been noted. Even so, Lancaster stood more in the Evangelical tradition than out of it. Certainly, the movement as a whole was Evangelical. What set it apart was the emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking with tongues. Even

³ One exception was John A.D.Adams, a New Zealander.

⁴ Chant, 1985, p.126.

acceptance of the gifts of the Spirit was not exclusively Pentecostal. There were many in the mainline churches who believed in divine healing. It was glossolalia that was the sticking point. For Pentecostals, on the other hand, this was a major strength. By insisting on the sign of tongues, they made it mandatory for people to have an experiential encounter with God. There was no place for a nominal faith. Whereas it might in other circumstances be possible to say all the right things and believe all the correct doctrines and still not have a personal faith, this was not so easy in a Pentecostal church. Only when you spoke in tongues was your profession beyond question. It was clear that you could not manufacture tongues by your own ability. It had to be an act of God.

The Pentecostal approach ensured that there was little nominalism among them. People either embraced the faith with enthusiasm, or withdrew altogether. It was hard to find a comfortable middle ground. An identifiable experience of their God gave people a sense of certainty that a rational understanding on its own did not always provide. 'You can take many things from a man,' said a member of Good News Hall in 1923, 'but there is one thing you can never take, and that is his experience.'⁵

By enshrining such a numinous encounter in the centre of the faith, Pentecostals tapped into a major but often neglected aspect of religious life. While Protestant Christianity in particular was becoming increasingly formal in its approach, there were many who found in Pentecostalism an enriching experience of God which satisfied the oft-neglected emotional needs.

Unhappily, the same strong convictions that set Pentecostals apart from the rest also tended to set them apart from each other. Because of Lancaster's unorthodox views, for example, she was ostracised by most other Pentecostals. Then, when the Apostolic Church started, they were vilified by their peers for their practices and their views.

Having experienced tongues, Pentecostals were inevitably open to other kinds of 'manifestations'. Obviously, spiritual gifts such as prophesying and healing

⁵ GN 14:10 November 1923, p.13.

were encouraged. So, too, were phenomena such as tears, visions and physical trembling. With preachers like Van Eyk and Len Jones, worship and celebration were extravagant. So from the beginning attempts were made to discern what was acceptable and to bring in controls. Achieving a balance was always difficult. For those outside the movement, almost all Pentecostal behaviour was excessive; for those inside, it was important not to quench the Spirit, yet at the same time not to go to extremes. However, one experience was never questioned and that was being baptised in the Spirit. This was a cornerstone of the movement and potentially its great strength. As long as there was an insistence on constituents receiving the Spirit with the sign of tongues, the vibrancy of the movement would be sustained. If this was compromised, Pentecostalism would finish up becoming just another Protestant denomination.

Revival movements have rarely sustained their energies for more than a handful of years. Pentecostalism in Australia is now in the last decade of its first one hundred years. Whether it proves to be the exception to the norm has yet to be seen. As it stands on the threshold of its second century, it needs to review its origins and reassess its potential.

From a Pentecostal perspective, current statistics indicate an area of concern. After World War II, there was explosive growth in the movement. Census figures have only been available since 1976, but they show that from 1976-81 while the population grew by only 7.5%, Pentecostal growth rate was 87.9%. During the following five years, the rate was still a very healthy 48%. By 1991-1996, however, it had dropped to 16% (see Table 1.4) While growth rates of new movements inevitably reduce as numbers increase, the rapidity of the decline here is significant. If it continues to the same degree, the next five-year period could actually witness a reduction in numbers. While there are no doubt many reasons for this, which are outside the scope of this thesis, it may not be without significance that this same period has seen a softening of emphasis on the need for tongues as a sign of being baptised in the Spirit. Is there a correlation?

In the pre-War years, baptism in the Spirit was seen as a vital spiritual experience, but, as I have attempted to show in this thesis, it was always seen as

being firmly based on biblical foundations. With the emergence of the Charismatic and 'Third Wave' movements, and the popularity in America, England and Australia of phenomena such as the 'Toronto Blessing', there has been a growing focus on the value of an emotional experience for its own sake, rather than as a sign of spiritual empowering.⁶ Much has been made of behaviour such as being 'slain in the Spirit', often at the expense of tongues. 'Blessing' alone has been seen as sufficient justification, whether it can be defended biblically or not.⁷ This has always been a potential weakness in Pentecostalism — that a numinous experience might be over-valued in itself. Historically, there are indications that a preoccupation with experience generally rather than a clear focus on glossolalia as a sign of the impartation of the Holy Spirit tends to be corrosive. On the other hand, there is still a significant element of the movement which maintains its traditional stance.⁸ From both a historical and a theological perspective, it is my conviction that, in spite of the flattening of the expansion rate in the 1990s, the movement will continue to expand.

Ronald Knox has argued that, on the basis of history, no revival movement is likely to last longer than a hundred years.⁹ Like Wesley, in the film *The Princess Bride*, when warned by Buttercup that no one could penetrate and survive the terrible fire swamp, Pentecostals might well respond, 'You're only saying that because no one ever has.'

⁶ This could represent an interesting field of investigation for another thesis.

⁷ These movements, while being apparently Pentecostal, all stand back from a necessary connection between baptism in the Spirit and glossolalia. See Burgess et al (eds), 1988, p.810; Dixon, 1994. There has been extensive criticism of the 'Toronto Blessing' by some Pentecostals. See eg P.Powell, 'Spiritual Drunks,' *Contending Earnestly for the Faith* Blenheim, New Zealand, 1:4 May/July 1995, p.1; 'Measuring False Prophets' 1:4 May/July 1995, pp.2ff; ; B.Randles, *Weighed and Found Wanting: Putting the Toronto Blessing in Context* Cedar Rapids, IA, n.d. but c.1996.

⁸ The Assemblies of God Statement of Faith has not changed in this matter.

⁹ Knox, 1987, p.590.

BENEDICTION

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

The Gospel of Mark 16:14-20 (NIV)