

A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Method and Manner

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Abstract: Pentecostalism as a Christian religious movement has been given much attention by historians, sociologists and even biblical scholars yet little attention has been given to the development of a Pentecostal theology. This article emphasizes the necessity of doing Pentecostal theology by means of an integrative methodology and in a narrative manner that flows out of Pentecostal identity. Pentecostal theology must move beyond the impasse created by subsuming its identity under the rubric of 'Evangelical' in order for it to articulate a vibrant fully orb'd mature Pentecostal theology. This can be accomplished only when 'Pentecostal' is taken seriously as an authentic Christian tradition with its own view of reality. I argue that one very important way of articulating a Pentecostal theology in keeping with its identity is to ground it pneumatologically and organize it around the Five-fold Gospel.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Lk. 4:18–19)

I am not ashamed of the gospel;
it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith. (Rom. 1:16)

Pentecostal theology?¹ Often, Pentecostalism is presented as a primitivistic and popularistic revivalistic movement with an apocalyptic forecast for the future.² As a

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- 1 This article is a revision of a paper that I presented at the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 11–13 March 2004, at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I want to thank the respondents Henry H. Knight III, D. Lyle Dabney and Frank Macchia for their constructive comments. I appreciate the editorial reading of the draft by my colleagues Rickie Moore and Melissa Archer.
- 2 I realize that there is some validity to these taxonomic tautologies.

religious movement, Pentecostalism has a robust spirituality but it lacks the intellectual ability and academic sophistication required to produce an acceptable enduring theology.³ From this perspective Pentecostalism is presented as a subgroup of popularistic Fundamentalism or at best a conservative group of North American Evangelicalism. Pentecostalism at most may help other Christian communities appreciate the importance of emotive experiential worship services but it really does not offer a distinct theology.

This simplistic reductionism of Pentecostalism is being challenged in various ways. Douglas Jacobsen (a non-Pentecostal) correctly points out that such a 'representation of the movement misinterprets both the genius and genesis of Pentecostalism'.⁴ Pentecostalism should be appreciated for what it is – an authentically new living Christian spirituality with a distinct theological view of reality.⁵ In other words, 'Pentecostalism is a theological tradition.'⁶

Even though there is a growing awareness that Pentecostalism is its own theological tradition, there are some Pentecostal scholars who continue to recast

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- 3 For one example see Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). For two significant 'Pentecostal' responses to Noll's monograph, see James K.A. Smith, 'Scandalizing Theology: A Pentecostal Response to Noll's *Scandal*', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 19 (1997), pp. 225–38 and Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'Partners in Scandal: Wesleyan and Pentecostal Scholarship', *Pneuma* 21 (1999), pp. 183–97. See also Amos Yong, 'Whither Systematic Theology? A Systematician Chimes in on a Scandalous Conversation', *Pneuma* 21 (1999), pp. 85–93.
 - 4 Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 355; see further his penetrating analysis of early Pentecostalism's similarities to and differences from Fundamentalism, the Social Gospel and empiricism (pp. 351–64). Jacobsen's work demonstrates that early Pentecostals were contextually situated amongst a range of different theological persuasions. Pentecostalism as a movement was not simply a Hegelian synthesis but was *sui generis*, its own theological tradition (p. 361).
 - 5 Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. xiii. For other helpful discussions concerning a distinct 'Pentecostal theological tradition' by Pentecostal scholars see Cross, 'The Rich Feast of Theology: Can Pentecostals Bring the Main Course or Only the Relish?' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (April 2000), pp. 27–47; James K.A. Smith, 'Advice to Pentecostal Philosophers', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (April 2003); Kenneth J. Archer, 'Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning', *Pneuma* 26 (2004), pp. 36–59. See also the seminal work by Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), which argues that Pentecostal spirituality is a distinct lived experience in the Spirit of God and should be the starting and ongoing contributing aspect of a Pentecostal theology.
 - 6 D. Lyle Dabney, 'Saul's Armor: The Problem and Promise of Pentecostal Theology Today', *Pneuma* 23 (2001), p. 143. Dabney is challenging Pentecostal theologians first to view early Pentecostalism as a spiritually rich tradition with an 'implicit theological impulse'. Second, he is challenging Pentecostal scholars to develop explicitly a mature Pentecostal theology from the perspective of the third article or pneumatology (pp. 141, 144–6). Dabney believes that Pentecostalism is a pneumatologically driven renewal movement that should do theology from the third article of the creed. When Pentecostal

Pentecostal theology into an Evangelical mold. For these, Pentecostalism is an Evangelical tradition first and foremost with the additional distinct doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. Thus Pentecostalism is not a separate theological tradition in and of itself but simply an Evangelical movement that has a distinct doctrine – a view that becomes more pronounced after certain Pentecostal denominations became members of the National Association of Evangelicals in the 1940s and 1950s.⁷

One cannot argue for a distinct ‘Pentecostal’ theological tradition if it is really believed that Pentecostalism’s roots, soil and fruit is Evangelicalism, especially the North American version! One would not be able to construct an accurate and explicit Pentecostal theology from the theological and cultural categories that are inherently a part of Protestant Evangelicalism. The theological categories are often at odds with the implicit theology of Pentecostalism.⁸

One of the issues that contributes to the debate is the manner in which the origin and emergence of Pentecostalism are understood. The primary focus falls upon the historical antecedents that gave rise to ‘Pentecostalism’. The examination of historical antecedents becomes the means properly to explain the theological matrix of Pentecostalism and then becomes the standard to validate the current production of Pentecostal theology. From this perspective, the definition of Evangelicalism and the contributions of Evangelicalism to Pentecostalism are more of a concern than an understanding of Pentecostalism.⁹ One could argue that the world behind Pentecostalism is more important, hermeneutically speaking, than

theology is done through the lens of pneumatology, it will become mature theology and will be beneficial to all Christian traditions (p. 145).

- 7 For example, see John B. Carpenter, ‘Genuine Pentecostal Traditioning: Rooting Pentecostalism in Its Evangelical Soil: A Reply to Simon Chan’, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6 (2003), pp. 303–26.
- 8 Dabney, in his ‘Saul’s Armor’, argues that Pentecostals who have theologically assimilated with Protestant Evangelicalism do not have the categories to do Pentecostal theology or worse ‘have absorbed the false pernicious notion that Pentecostalism is not a theological tradition at all’ (p. 121). He says that Pentecostal assimilation into Evangelical identity began in the early 1950s and represents the third stage in North America Pentecostals’ struggle with their own identity within the larger Christian communities. For Dabney, Saul’s armor represents cultural and theological categories of thinking that do not emerge from the implicit theological impulses of Pentecostalism, thus it needs to be thrown off so that Pentecostals can discover their own voice (pp. 115–17).
- 9 Ian M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918–1939* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999). Randall’s monograph is an important contribution, yet my concern has to be with his broad definition of Evangelicalism. He follows David Bebbington’s definition of Evangelicalism as a movement that comprises all those who share these four common themes: the Bible, the cross, conversion and activism (pp. 1, 271). He views Pentecostalism as a conservative evangelical movement because of its view of the authority of the Bible and revivalism, see especially chapter 8, ‘Old-Time Power: Pentecostal Spirituality’, pp. 206–37. In this chapter Randall argues that Wesleyan roots are absent in British Pentecostalism. British

the world of Pentecostalism which generally eclipses the world behind Pentecostalism.¹⁰ No doubt an accurate and fair assessment of the social, cultural and theological womb that birthed Pentecostalism is important properly to understand and assess Pentecostalism.¹¹ But to subsume Pentecostalism into the category Evangelicalism is to exclude aspects of Pentecostalism that are essential to its identity and undermine its capability to present an authentic Pentecostal theology. Pentecostalism is more than the sum total of all the contributing theological antecedents that it embraced, absorbed or rejected, and then transformed into a distinct tradition which has commonalities with most Christian traditions including evangelicals.¹²

I sense that we more 'postmodern' Pentecostal scholars take the 'world of Pentecostalism' as our starting-point and thus are more willing post-critically to appropriate theological insights of other traditions, including those outside of so-called Evangelicalism into our Pentecostal theological works.¹³ Doing Pentecostal

Pentecostals 'were determined to stake out ground which was identifiably within the central conservative evangelical spirituality' (pp. 207–11). It seems that these historiographies want to stress the 'immediate' historical antecedent, while minimizing other Christian traditions.

- 10 The concern for historical antecedent further reinforces my argument that when Pentecostalism entirely embraces Evangelicalism it becomes more modernistic in its theological concerns, albeit modernistic in a theologically conservative way.
- 11 For an informative read that takes serious the global diversity of Pentecostalism see Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 12 See William J. Abraham, *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984) for the problematic nature of the term 'evangelical' along with some suggestive resolutions. Abraham argues that there are enough shared characteristics among certain traditions that they can be classified as a family. More important, however, is Abraham's affirmation that those traditions that make up the 'evangelical family' must do theology from within their own tradition. This is exactly what I am trying to do and therefore I agree with D. Lyle Dabney that Pentecostals must throw off the evangelical nomenclature and do theology as Pentecostals. See also Donald W. Dayton, 'Some Doubts about the Usefulness of the Category "Evangelical"', in Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), pp. 245–51, who argues that the category evangelical has lost its usefulness and calls for a 'moratorium on the use of the term, in hope that we would be forced to more appropriate and useful categories of analysis' (p. 251). I agree with Dayton. However for a contemporary Wesleyan theologian who is current in this debate and still finds the 'evangelical family resemblance' metaphor beneficial in linking distinct movements together, see Henry H. Knight III, *A Future for Truth: Evangelical Theology in a Postmodern World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), especially chapter 1.
- 13 Some Pentecostals would also want to engage non-Christian religions in dialogue because we believe that the Spirit is working everywhere. For example, see the important work of Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) and his *Beyond the Impasse: Towards a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

theology involves more than simply retrieving and restating or employing a revisionist historiography; it involves faithfully re-visioning our tradition in light of the Spirit and the Word.¹⁴ Thus what emerges is a mature Pentecostal theological articulation of our tradition's or traditions' implicit Pentecostal spirituality.

One of the more pressing problems of doing modernistic academic forms of theology is that they become disembodied from community life and spirituality, thus doctrinal statements take precedence over both communal praxis and communal pathos. Orthodoxy, defined as right belief, is the means to explain what is and is not essentially Evangelical. Orthodoxy separated from both orthopraxy and orthopathy becomes a form of cognitive creedalism that in turn becomes the means to identify who is and is not 'Evangelical'. Reference to our specific communities of worship (local churches and denominations) is not as important as affirming the Evangelical creed! Furthermore, who said that all the theological molds have been created? Those Pentecostals who are concerned to be seen as Evangelical first and Pentecostal second seem implicitly to agree that current North American Evangelicalism (as though it is some monolithic group) presents the best creedal description of essential orthodox Christianity. At best, Pentecostal 'Evangelicals' can argue that Pentecostalism has recovered an additional doctrine but not an essential doctrine. For this group 'Pentecostal' is simply an adjective.

Could we not suggest that Pentecostalism is the creation of a distinctly new and yet still authentically Christian mold? Rather than arguing that Pentecostalism is Evangelical, should not the greater and more ecumenical concern be to argue that Pentecostalism is an authentic Christian tradition in action and thought? From a grammatical perspective, 'Pentecostal' functions both as an adjective and as a noun. It is a distinctly identifiable community embodying its own Christian spirituality. As Terry Cross so aptly stated:

While Pentecostals share many theological tenets in common with other Christians, we have experienced God in ways others do not confess. Rather than viewing theology as a description of our distinctives, we need to understand the all-encompassing difference which our experience of God makes in every area of our lives – especially those that are theological . . . Pentecostal theology will reflect the reality of God's encounter with humans, developing the recipe with a

14 I am purposefully inverting the Protestant approach of Word and Spirit to signal that Pentecostal theology must break from the traditional Protestant paradigm of subordinating pneumatology to Christology. For example, I do not want to follow the traditional argument that Jesus Christ achieves redemption and the Spirit simply applies redemption, but instead articulate the constitutive and reciprocating missional roles of the Spirit and the Son from a decidedly pneumatological view. I want to avoid the subordination of both the Son to the Spirit and the Spirit to the Son through articulating the missional activity of the Spirit and Jesus in the eschatological transformative redemption of God's creation. For a helpful discussion and proposal to move beyond the traditional Protestant paradigm as it relates specifically to soteriology see Steven M. Studebaker, 'Pentecostal Soteriology and Pneumatology', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (2003), pp. 248–87.

special ingredient that flavors the whole dish, not just the relish that complements the main course prepared by someone else.¹⁵

In re-addressing the legitimacy and viability of doing Pentecostal theology, I will argue that our tradition should express its theology in a way that is faithful to the tradition. The method and manner are organically connected to the body thus affirming a narrative approach that starts from below, among the people who have encountered the Spirit of the living God in community.

I agree with Simon Chan's statement that 'the strength of Pentecostal traditioning lies in its powerful narratives'. Chan further argues, 'Pentecostals have been better at telling their story than explaining it to their children.'¹⁶ Chan's statement is revealing. On the one hand he recognizes the strength of testimony and story as a primary means of Pentecostal traditioning, yet on the other hand it appears that this approach is not as helpful because the stories need to be explained. In explaining, Pentecostals may opt for modernistic epistemological modes that are inherently hostile to Pentecostal practices of story-telling and testimony. I believe that part of the problem of 'explaining' our theology has been the uncritical adoption of theological methods and forms which contain epistemological and theological perspectives that undermine the Pentecostal spirituality which shaped its story. By employing more modernistic epistemological methods we undermine the credibility of our spirituality, we rob our narrativity of its formative power, and we become more conservative modernists (academic Neo-Fundamentalists) than Christians of the Spirit and the Word.

The early Pentecostal way of doing theology was expressed by means of testimonies, songs, trances, inspired preaching and dance. Swiss missiologist Walter Hollenweger notes that early Pentecostals primarily relied upon oral means of communication to express their theology.¹⁷ According to Hollenweger, the early Pentecostal oral means of communication involved the following:

orality of liturgy; narrative theology and witness; maximum participation at levels of reflection, prayer, and decision making, and therefore a reconciliatory form of community; inclusion of dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship that function as a kind of 'oral icon' for the individual and the community; an understanding of the body-mind relationship that is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind as, for example, in liturgical dance and prayer for the sick.¹⁸

15 Cross, 'The Rich Feast of Theology', pp. 33–4.

16 Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 20.

17 Hollenweger argues that the narrativity and orality of early Pentecostalism come from the African-American contribution to Pentecostalism. See his 'After Twenty Years Research on Pentecostalism', *International Review of Mission* 75:297 (1986), pp. 3–12.

18 W. Hollenweger, 'The Pentecostal Elites and the Pentecostal Poor: A Missed Dialogue?' in Karla Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina 1994), p. 201.

Hollenweger writes, 'the Pentecostal poor are oral, nonconceptual peoples who are often masters of story. Their religion resembles more of the early disciples than religion taught in our schools and universities.'¹⁹ Obviously, early Pentecostals were not doing theology in a modern academically acceptable manner. These marginalized people were doing theology through narrative forms. Ironically, their way of doing theology was more consistent with the primary biblical way of presenting theology – through narrative.

Deborah McCauley's important work only reinforces Hollenweger's emphasis on the primacy of oral communication and narrative.²⁰ McCauley's work addresses an important and often overlooked group in North American Christianity. She investigates 'Mountain Religion' – a group often overlooked because it is an oral culture.²¹ McCauley's work touches on various Christian traditions in Appalachian America including Pentecostalism. McCauley explains that most Christian mountainous people know the Bible primarily as oral literature. She adds that they know the Bible very well, even if they cannot read. As a result of being primarily illiterate, Appalachian Christians have 'highly developed listening skills . . . compensating extremely well for whatever lapses in literacy'.²² McCauley finds that Appalachian Christian folk who desire to learn to read do so in order to read the Bible. Important is the reality that Pentecostalism's roots in the USA are entrenched in the slave Christianity of the South (the Mississippi Delta) and in the mountainous regions of the United States.²³

Like early Pentecostals, current Pentecostals who come from the margins of society are predominantly oral/aural learners. They do theology primarily in narrative forms. Thus, to do theology in a manner that is consistent with our early tradition, a post-critical narrative method should be employed. Perhaps by allowing our theological explanations to be framed by narrative, we will better spiritually form our congregations into dynamic Pentecostal communities of the Spirit and the Word.²⁴

19 Hollenweger, 'The Pentecostal Elites and the Pentecostal Poor: A Missed Dialogue?', p. 213. The first generation would be included in his understanding of the 'poor' which he contrasts with the contemporary elite Pentecostals. The elites are those who are 'literary conceptual peoples who pride themselves on speaking the language of science and technology' (p. 213).

20 Deborah McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

21 McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion*, p. 195.

22 McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion*, pp. 61–2, 76, 167, 382.

23 All early Pentecostal denominations have their headquarters in areas less affected by modernization such as mountainous regions like the Appalachian region (Church of God, Cleveland TN), the Ozarks (Assembly of God, Springfield MO) and the Mississippi Delta region (Church of God in Christ, Memphis TN).

24 See Jackie David Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), pp. 109–34, for a critical approach to group 'Bible Study' that takes the narrative form 'testimony' as an essential element in this transformative communal learning activity.

Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia rightly notes ‘Pentecostals have always favored testimonies, choruses and prayers over intellectual or critical reflection as the means by which to interpret the gospel.’²⁵ Macchia suggests that Pentecostalism at its grass roots did theology in a narrative manner with a devotional tone, yet he finds Hollenweger’s concept of orality too restrictive. Macchia correctly points out that early Pentecostals also wrote out testimonies and silently danced before the Lord. Because of these other forms, Macchia suggests that early Pentecostal theology should be classified as ‘nonacademic’ instead of ‘oral’. For Macchia ‘nonacademic’ is not a bad or misguided or even an improper form of theology. ‘Nonacademic’ serves as a descriptive category for early forms of Pentecostal theology that is more devotional and popularistic. Macchia uses ‘nonacademic’ as a way of contrasting early grass roots Pentecostal theology with that which is conceptual, rationalistic, systematic and scholastic in form – the ‘modernistic’ academically acceptable scientific manner.²⁶

By ‘nonacademic’, Macchia refers to theology that takes the forms of prayers, commentaries, devotional writings and disputations. From this perspective, nonacademic theology is not necessarily concerned with critical reflection, contextualization or even methodological procedure. Macchia believes that these nonacademic forms are important and acceptable ways of doing theology that deserve to have a place alongside the scientific academic form. He writes, ‘The most creative Pentecostal theological discourse can be included as a more-or-less popular form of nonacademic theological genre.’²⁷

I agree with Macchia’s assessment that early Pentecostal theology was more devotional and popularistic in tone. However I find Macchia’s descriptive concept of ‘nonacademic’ problematic. I am concerned with the assessing of early Pentecostalism’s ways of doing theology, both the forms and the content. We need critically to assess our grass roots and current works. Yet by utilizing the concept of ‘nonacademic’ as a means to classify early Pentecostal theology, Macchia undermines his argument that these forms have a place on the same shelf next to the academic forms. Nonacademic forms will be seen as lacking intellectual credence. The nonacademic will always be subordinate to the academic and be shelved beneath it (if found at all in the library). Further, those practitioners of the privileged academic (scholastic and or systematic) form will not take serious theology labeled ‘nonacademic’.

I believe ‘pietistic’ may serve as a more helpful descriptive category than ‘nonacademic’.²⁸ Pietistic literature can be unsophisticated and popularistic or academically sophisticated in form, but it remains a personal confessional extension

25 Frank Macchia, ‘Theology, Pentecostal’ in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 1120–41, p. 1120.

26 Macchia’s notion of ‘nonacademic’ comes from Karl Barth’s description of German Pietism.

27 Macchia, ‘Theology, Pentecostal’, p. 1121.

28 ‘Pietistic’ also has problems and maybe it would be better to classify early Pentecostal literature as ‘paramodern’. Early Pentecostalism was a paramodern movement because it

of one's intimate yet communal relationship with the living God. For Pentecostals, this would reinforce the importance of a holistic embodied theology that integrates the head and hands into the heart.²⁹ Pentecostalism is an affective-experiential theological tradition, and to keep it as such we need an integrative methodology contextualized in an actual worshipping community.³⁰

Our theological explanations can become a critical reflection upon our doxology with our acts of worship always informing and transforming our official dogma, and in turn our dogma informing our doxology. Orthodoxy has more to do with our primary way of doing theology, which is worship, than the secondary critical reflective activity – the production of official dogma or right believing (*orthopistis*). Worship is our primary way of doing theology.³¹

Method: integrative

A Pentecostal theological method should attempt to integrate ortho-praxis and ortho-pistis into ortho-pathos. Praxis is an epistemological view which unites theory and practice. Actions give rise to and shape beliefs, and beliefs shape and inform activities. Praxis embraces the notion that theory and practice are really inseparable and mutually informing. This is contrary to much of the Western philosophical tradition which insists that theory must proceed first in order to provide the foundational rationale for practice. 'Instead of theory leading to practice, theory becomes, or is seen in, the reflective moment in praxis.' From this perspective 'theory arises from praxis to wield further praxis'.³² Praxis then dialectically unites practice (doing) and theory (knowing) into the same activity. Even though praxis is

existed on the fringes of modern society, see Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (London and New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), pp. 29–33.

29 The heart symbolizes the seat of our affections and affirms the important contribution of aesthetics to theological understanding. Steve Land argues for the integration of orthodoxy (right praise / belief) and orthopraxy (right action) into orthopathy (right affection). This is not a balancing act between feelings and thoughts but an integrative work wrought by the Holy Spirit; see *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, pp. 131–3. However, Land's proposal needs to become more explicitly communal and less individual.

30 The method and message should be understood as a manifestation of our tradition emanating from our contextualized Christian community. The Pentecostal theologian's first priority is an actual localized Christian community in which he or she actively engages in worship and ministry.

31 See Donald E. Saliers, *Worship As Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), especially chapter 2, 'Dogma and Doxa', pp. 39–48.

32 Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 37. See also Johns and Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study', pp. 119–24.

an important epistemological corrective, by itself, it is not enough to nurture a mature Pentecostal theology.

Hispanic Pentecostal theologian Samuel Solivan argues for a conjunctive-integrative theology that places 'orthopathos' as the interlocutor between orthopraxy and orthodoxy.³³ He understands orthopathos to be a necessary aspect of doing theology for two important reasons. First, North American theologians who embrace a praxis methodology are often detached from the very community for which they are doing theology – the poor and marginalized. They critically reflect upon someone else's suffering from an indirect detached position. Orthopathos moves the theologian into the community on the margins where suffering is a reality. This involvement among and with those who suffer gives the theologian a firsthand, direct existential engagement as one among and with the marginalized: '*Orthopathos* as an interlocutor seeks to or links us in community with those who suffer.'³⁴ In this way orthopathos affirms the importance of a personal and yet communal experiential theology and helps us to become in tune with the very pathos of God.³⁵

Second, orthopathos provides a necessary corrective to the more narrow conservative modernistic view of orthodoxy as correct propositional truth claims. This disembodied cognitive orthodoxy (theory) does not necessarily lead to the biblically affirmed responsibility of Christian social ministry to the poor (practice). As Solivan points out, history testifies that orthodox doctrine does not necessarily concern itself with the widow and the poor and often serves to legitimize the power structures favoring the status quo.³⁶ Orthopathos is the necessary corrective for either orthodoxy or orthopraxy because it brings an emphatic concern for those who are suffering into the very activity of doing theology.³⁷ When we lose the experiential-existential sense of what it means to be the marginalized that comes with actually living among the poor, we will give precedence to cognitive doctrine detached from the very pathos of God. We assume the epistemological argument that right theory (doctrine) produces right activity (ethics).

I agree with Solivan's argument that orthopathos puts us in touch with the compassionate redemptive liberation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This redemptive liberation is anchored in the very passion of God manifested paradigmatically in the ministry of Jesus and the ongoing work of the Christian

33 Samuel Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 11, 68. Solivan raises important corrective concerns that help enhance both Johns' and Land's contributions by anchoring orthopraxis in community and affirming the epistemological value of an experiential praxis of living in the margins.

34 Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation*, p. 37.

35 Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation*, p. 38, writes, 'God's self-disclosure in Jesus the Christ serves as a tangible paradigm of correspondence between God's *orthopathos* and the possibility of our own. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit serve as principal examples of God's orthopathic character.'

36 Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation*, pp. 11, 35–6, 64–5.

37 Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos and Liberation*, p. 60.

community empowered and impassioned by the Spirit. We must do theology from a conjunctive methodology that takes seriously orthopathos as the integrative center for our Pentecostal theology without setting aside either praxis or dogma. Without orthopathy, contemporary North American Pentecostalism will become the very community that early Pentecostals protested against – a cold, creedal and cerebral Christianity that has no room for the poor and hurting. Not to take pathos seriously would be to become disconnected from the very nature and mission of the Social Trinity.

Manner: narrative

Not only must Pentecostal theology employ an integrative method, it must also articulate its theology in narrative forms. By using narrative we can produce critical theology for our present-day communities that is in continuity with the manner of the earliest Christians and early Pentecostals.

I understand ‘narrative’ in two complementary ways. First, by narrative I mean to highlight the importance of understanding scripture as a grand meta-narrative with the Gospels and Acts as the heart of the Christian story. Even though narrative is the predominant genre of scripture, I am using narrative as a theological category. From this perspective, narrative is a way of grasping and making sense of the whole of God’s inspired authoritative witness – scripture.³⁸ The Social Trinity is the central figure of Christianity, with Jesus Christ being the very heart of the story; therefore a narrative theology will emphasize the priority of the gospel of Jesus Christ and its significance for the Christian community and the world. This is not to suggest that a Pentecostal theology is unconcerned with other doctrinal themes, but it is to suggest that all doctrinal discussions in the end will come back to the theological center – the person Jesus Christ.³⁹

Ted Peters, in his systematic theology entitled *God – the World’s Future*, writes:

If we were to think of Christian systematic theology as a wheel, the gospel of Jesus Christ would be located at the center. It is the hub around which everything else revolves . . . the gospel is that which establishes one’s identity as Christian.⁴⁰

38 For an informative explanation of the significance of narrative as a theological category for the understanding of scripture see Joel B. Green, ‘The (Re-) Turn To Narrative’, in Joel B. Green and Michael Pasquarello, eds., *Narrative Reading, Narrative Preaching: Reuniting New Testament Interpretation and Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), pp. 1–36.

39 Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God’s Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), preface. See also his essay, ‘The Basis and Authority of Doctrine’, in Colin E. Gunton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 41–64, esp. pp. 52–4.

40 Ted Peters, *God – the World’s Future* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 43–4.

Peters defines 'gospel' as 'the act of telling the story of Jesus with its significance'. He further states that, 'the gospel is the content of the story of Jesus and its significance; and this constitutes the material norm for systematic theology'.⁴¹ As a systematic theologian, Peters, like narrative theologians, recognizes the necessity of relating and integrating theological doctrines into the story of Jesus Christ.

Second, narrative provides a coherent and cohesive structure for articulating Pentecostal theology, which is simultaneously concerned about nurturing spirituality and Pentecostal identity. For Pentecostals, the significance of the story of Jesus is articulated through the proclamation of the 'Full Gospel' or better, the 'Five-fold Gospel'.⁴² Jesus is proclaimed as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer and Coming King.⁴³ The Five-fold Gospel functions as the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal community.⁴⁴ Pentecostals embrace the Full Gospel, which places Jesus and the Spirit at the center of God's dramatic redemptive story. Pentecostals, as the end-time people, are participating in the 'Latter Rain' of this redemptive story. The proclamation of the Full Gospel is the declaration of the redemptive activity of God in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the community.

These confessional-doxological statements flow out of our redemptive encounter with the living Word, Jesus Christ, who is present in our community through the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. We praise the Lord who saves, sanctifies, heals, Spirit baptizes and is coming for us. The central narrative convictions of our story are doxological testimonies that shape our community.⁴⁵ Thus the Five-fold Gospel is not a set of quaint platitudes but deep-seated, affectionate affirmations flowing from our worship of the living God who has transformed our lives. The Pentecostal story shapes our identity, guides our activity and reflects our understanding of salvation for all of God's creation. For Pentecostals, then, our story with its central narrative convictions expressed through the Five-fold Gospel needs to take on a more overt role in our theological

41 Peters, *God – The World's Future*, p. 44.

42 See Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987). I am not suggesting that theological reflection is simply restating the gospel. I believe all theological discourse is a secondary reflection on the primary source – the scriptures – informed by experience, with the gospel being the very heart of the Christian story.

43 See Donald Dayton, 'Introduction', in Yung Chul Han, ed., *Transforming Power: Dimensions of the Gospel* (Cleveland, OH: Pathway Press, 2001), pp. 11–18. Dayton writes: 'for a decade or so all of Pentecostalism was sharply Wesleyan/Holiness until this theme was suppressed by some under the influence of W.H. Durham' (p. 13).

44 I suggest that even for non-Wesleyan Pentecostals who are still holiness in orientation, sanctification would be a useful theological plank that could provide for a more dynamic synergistic soteriology that is inherent in Pentecostalism. For Pentecostals of all persuasions the pursuit of holiness in lifestyle is not an option but a command. The pneumatological dimension of sanctifying grace as an ontological participation in the Spirit helps further to develop a more robust Pentecostal theology.

45 See Kenneth J. Archer, 'Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning', *Pneuma* 26 (2004), pp. 36–59.

explanations. One important way of articulating a Pentecostal theology then would be to shape it around our story and structure it around the Five-fold Gospel.

Ted Peters' analogy of the 'hub' works well for a Pentecostal theology structured around the Five-fold Gospel and centered upon Jesus Christ. The theological center is the person Jesus Christ, and protruding out of the center are the five spokes which serve to explain the significance of the story of Jesus Christ for the community and the world. These spokes are the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal story. They are theological themes that bring coherence to the Pentecostal story and provide stability for the rest of Pentecostal theology. Our Pentecostal doctrinal practices and beliefs are the wheel, connected to and stabilized by the spokes, yet turning and spinning around its center – Jesus Christ. Pentecostal beliefs and practices, therefore, will always flow back to their center where they find their ultimate significance and justification – Jesus Christ.

Pentecostal theology should be written in a way that reflects the importance of Jesus Christ as articulated through the Five-fold Gospel.⁴⁶ John Christopher Thomas has creatively connected each doxological confession of Jesus with a particular biblical-sacramental sign. Thus, 'Jesus is our Savior' is connected with the ecclesiastical rite of 'water baptism', 'Jesus is our Sanctifier' with 'footwashing', Spirit Baptizer with glossolalia speech, Healer with praying for and anointing the sick with oil and Jesus as Coming King with the Lord's Supper. Thomas has set forth a proposal that is more integrative theologically by interconnecting ecclesiology and soteriology with Christology.⁴⁷

One would need to articulate the Five-fold Gospel paradigm from an explicitly Spirit and Word understanding, however, so as not to eclipse or subordinate the necessary role and missional activity of the Spirit to Christ. The Pentecostal story could provide a coherent overall structure of the written work with each central narrative conviction becoming a point of intersection of and critical reflection on the various theological *loci*. In this way, ecclesiology, soteriology and eschatology are held together around the missional story of the Social Trinity. For example, when discussing 'Jesus Our Savior' one could discuss a pneumatic soteriology, eschatology and then ecclesiology. To discuss 'Jesus as Savior' and not embark upon

46 I believe that the Pentecostal New Testament scholar John Christopher Thomas was the first to call for an integrative Pentecostal theology specifically structured around the Five-fold Gospel. See his '1998 Presidential Address: Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century', *PNEUMA* 20 (1998), pp. 3–19, especially pp. 17–19. See also Veli-Matti Karkkainen, 'David's Sling: The Promise and Problem of Pentecostal Theology Today: A Response to D. Lyle Dabney', *Pneuma* 23 (2001), pp. 147–52. His comment, 'I am drawn to the Pentecostal – Spirit-led, I am sure – focus on Jesus Christ as the center of the (five or fourfold) Gospel . . . it is a precious methodological gateway to a balanced theology' (p. 152), resonates well with what I am proposing.

47 For a narrative expansion on Thomas' proposal and further development concerning the sacramental nature of the signs see Kenneth J. Archer, 'Nourishment for our Journey: The Pentecostal *Via Salutis* and Sacramental Ordinances', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13 (2004), pp. 79–96.

a discussion that the Kingdom of God is breaking in among us and that through regeneration we become a part of a redeemed counter-cultural community is to misunderstand both the purpose of redemption and the very mission of Jesus Christ and the Spirit from a decisively Pentecostal perspective. Just because the structure follows a more narrative format constructed around the Five-fold Gospel does not make it less academic or less intelligent or less capable of addressing concerns raised by the traditional theological *loci*.⁴⁸ Furthermore, a Pentecostal theology can avoid a Christomonistic tendency of Reformation theology of the Word by affirming and addressing the missional role of the Spirit in conjunction with the missional role of Jesus.⁴⁹ Spirit-Christology would more correctly reflect the Pentecostal story and scriptural testimony. It may not be classified as a 'systematic theology', but it can be a fully orb'd Pentecostal theology that adequately addresses the various theological themes arising out of the scriptural witness and fleshes out the dynamic interactions of the Spirit and Word.

In conclusion, Pentecostal theology must be done in a holistic integrative manner. We can be more creative in our articulation of the gospel. This may lead to important insights missed by other traditions as well as necessitate a revision of our story.⁵⁰ Furthermore, a Pentecostal narrative theology would have immediate benefits for the Pentecostal community by shaping and reshaping its identity through a critical engagement of its story. A Pentecostal theology structured around the Five-fold Gospel would make an important contribution to the Pentecostal communities, but not necessarily the definitive contribution. For surely the Spirit has more to say and ways to say it!

48 *Contra* Frank Macchia, who believes that the Full Gospel as a framework is unable to address the full spectrum of theological *loci*. Macchia writes 'Such a framework is potentially Christomonistic (in which devotion to Christ defines every area of theological concern) and dominated by a concern with the way of salvation'. Thus, for Macchia, 'pentecostal theology cannot be confined to this paradigm if it is to speak to a broader configuration of *loci*' ('Theology, Pentecostal', p. 1124). Interestingly, Macchia does lift up Karl Barth as an example for Pentecostals who want to move beyond 'nonacademic' and scientific interpretive methodology. Macchia does not specifically say but I believe he is suggesting the way Barth did theological interpretation (his method). Interestingly, Barth's work has been criticized for being 'Christomonistic', which is the very thing Macchia wants to avoid, hence his rejection of the Five-fold Gospel as an organizational narrative for a Pentecostal theology (p. 1123).

49 See n. 14 above. The growing interest in Spirit-Christology signals the necessity to rethink both pneumatology and Christology. See Ralph Del Colle's important Roman Catholic contribution to a renewed Spirit-Christology: *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

50 See Richard Shaull, 'From Academic Research to Spiritual Transformation: Reflections on a study of Pentecostalism in Brazil', *PNEUMA* 20 (1998), pp. 71–84.