

NOURISHMENT FOR OUR JOURNEY: THE PENTECOSTAL
VIA SALUTIS AND SACRAMENTAL ORDINANCES*

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ABSTRACT

Sacramental ordinances are community acts of commitment ordained by Christ as means of grace with particular symbolic significance for our Pentecostal identity (story) and faith journey (*via salutis*). By locating the sacramental ordinances in the Pentecostal story, the sacramental ordinances take on a spiritual-metaphorical-narrative nature. The metaphorical and narrative nature of the sacraments gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to work redemptively in our lives by strengthening the community in her journey (*via salutis*) thus (re) shaping Pentecostal identity as the eschatological people of God.

Jesus our Spirit Baptizer: A Personal Testimony

My Spirit baptism experience took place at an Assembly of God church in the late summer of 1983.¹ I was ‘saved’ in June 1983 and was water

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1. New Life AOG is located in Wellington, Ohio, and at that time averaged about 110 in attendance for Sunday morning service.

baptized by immersion in July at a church fellowship. During this time period God was 'getting me cleaned up'. I spent much time at the altars confessing, repenting, and consecrating myself to the living God. I was calling on the living God to change me, cleanse me, to sanctify me. Late in August, during a Sunday evening service, the pastor was passionately preaching about the importance of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. He drew his message from passages in Acts chs. 1 and 2. He made clear that tongues would accompany Spirit baptism. He cautioned the congregation not to seek tongues but instead worship Jesus Christ. Jesus, he assured, would fill us with the Holy Spirit. The initial biblical evidence of Spirit baptism would be manifested in tongues—a personal spiritual heavenly language that would enhance one's personal relationship with God. The pastor said, 'God will not move your tongue, you must cooperate with God by surrendering it and speaking as the Spirit gives you the utterances' (Acts 2.4). The experience of Spirit baptism would empower one to be a better witness for Jesus in word, deed and lifestyle (Acts 1.8). Toward the end of the message he gave the appeal, an altar call, for those who would like to be Spirit baptized.

The pressure was building inside me during the sermon, and I could sense the presence of the living God in our midst. The invitation was given, but I was hesitant about going forward. I had already been to the 'altar' many times. The pastor started to get irritated with us because no one was responding. He said, 'I know that God told me to preach this message'. I might add that he very seldom made such statements or became noticeably frustrated when people did not respond to an altar call. I was standing and weeping, wondering if this was my time to be baptized in the Spirit. I closed my eyes as I looked up toward heaven. Then I had a vision. I saw a place that was pitch dark, but suddenly what looked like a door swung open allowing a piercing bright light to shine forth. Out of the bright light walked a person dressed in a robe. I could not clearly see anything except that he lifted his hands upward and forward as though he was praying. Jesus was praying for us. Jesus was praying for me. I immediately pushed out of my way a young man who was standing next to me in the pew, and I ran to the front of the church. That evening, I prayed for a long time. I was unaware of what was going on around me. After a long time I realized that most of the teens were praying for me as well as some adults. They were 'laying hands' upon me, interceding for me to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Praise be to God the Father for a group of people who could 'pray you through'! That night I experienced my

personal Pentecost, even though I only uttered a few groans. The pastor encouraged me to continue praying in the Spirit and assured me that my spiritual language would grow. He reminded me that this was just the beginning and not the end. God would show up in special times and continue to work in my life. I left church that night knowing that Jesus was alive and that he had done something very special in my life.

I began this essay with a testimony in order to emphasize the importance of a ‘narrative-praxis’ approach to doing theology. Praxis, as a method, unites practice (doing) and theory (knowing) into the same reflective activity. A praxis approach encourages a critical engagement of theological reflection while affirming that our religious experiences shape our beliefs, and our beliefs shape our activities—hence theory and practice are inseparable and mutually informing.² 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. Jesus Christ is the center and leader of Christianity; therefore a narrative theology will emphasize the priority of the story of Jesus Christ and its significance for the Christian community and for the world. This is not to suggest that narrative theology is not concerned with other doctrines, but it is to suggest that all doctrinal discussions in the end will come back to the theological center—Jesus Christ.³ Therefore, narrative theology will pay close attention to the contours of the Christian story.

By sharing this testimony, I also wanted to draw attention to the importance of the worshipping community as the contextual arena for the discussion of theology including the sacraments (pneumatic ecclesiology).⁴ Along with this is the importance of placing the sacraments within the theological framework of the way of salvation.⁵ The Pentecostal

2. ‘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’. Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (JPTSUP, 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 37.

3. 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, especially pp. 52-54.

4. The church is a relational *koinonia* that provides the proper context for the celebration of the sacraments among God’s people. See Dwight W. Vogel, *Food for Pilgrims: A Journey with Saint Luke* (Akron, OH: OSL Publications, 1996), p. 32.

5. John Christopher Thomas has already called for this in his presidential address

via salutis is a dynamic pneumatic soteriology. The sacraments are significant symbolic signs that bring transformative grace by bringing people into closer contact with the saving action of Jesus. Therefore, the sacramental ordinances are community acts of worship for the individual-in-community and the community as a whole that provides necessary opportunities for spiritual nourishment on our communal journey in the Spirit.⁶

Ted Peters, a systematic theologian 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.⁷

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'.⁸ As a systematic theologian, Peters, like narrative theologians, recognizes the necessity of relating and integrating theological doctrines into the story of Jesus Christ. Therefore, any discussion of the sacraments must demonstrate a tight connection to the gospel and the significance of the sacramental ordinance for the worshipping community.

Now you may be wondering what this has to do with the sacraments and a Pentecostal *via salutis*? The previous discussion of the centrality of the gospel for narrative and systematic theology has *everything* to do with demonstrating the coherent and cohesive integration of sacraments into Pentecostal theology and the Pentecostal *via salutis*. Pentecostalism, from its very inception, has purposefully placed Jesus and the full gospel right at the center of its beliefs and practices.⁹ Furthermore, I hope to

to the Society for Pentecostal Studies. See his 'Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century' in *Pneuma* 20.1 (Spring 1998), pp. 3-19. I am following and further developing his insightful suggestion to connect a Sacrament with each of the theological themes of the five-fold gospel.

6. Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1994), pp. 6-11

7. Ted Peters, *God—the World's Future* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 43-44.

8. Peters, *God—the World's Future*, p. 44.

9. See Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987). I am not suggesting that theological reflection is simply restating

demonstrate the need to re-vision the traditional Pentecostal understanding of ordinances into ‘sacramental’ ordinances while simultaneously demonstrating that Pentecostal theology can be structured around the central narrative convictions of our story.¹⁰

For Pentecostals, the significance of the story of Jesus is articulated through the proclamation of the ‘full gospel’ or ‘five-fold gospel’: Jesus proclaimed as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer and Coming King.¹¹ The full gospel functions as the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal community. Pentecostal identity is articulated by the full gospel, which places Jesus at the center of God’s dramatic redemptive story, and Pentecostals, as the end-time people, are participating in the ‘Latter Rain’.¹² The community’s proclamation of the gospel is the primary means of grace that channels the redemptive activity of God in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit to the community and into the world.

For Pentecostals, the full gospel needs to function overtly in our theological structure. The full gospel emphasizes the story of Jesus and its significance for the Pentecostal community. Ted Peters’ analogy of the ‘hub’ works well for a Pentecostal theology integrated into the five-fold gospel or full gospel. 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. These spokes are the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal story. They are theological themes, which are doxological in nature, bring coherence to the

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.

10. See Kenneth J. Archer, ‘The Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Manner and Method’ (Collected paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, [place?], [precise date?] March 2004).

11. See Donald Dayton’ ‘Introduction’, in Yung Chul Han (ed.), *Transforming Power: Dimensions of the Gospel* (Cleveland, TN: 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).

12. I have developed this in greater detail elsewhere. See Kenneth J. Archer, ‘Pentecostal Story as the Hermeneutical Filter’ (Collected paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Tulsa OK, 13-15 March 2001) and especially ‘Pentecostal Story’ in Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, forthcoming), Chapter 4. [Any update?]

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 its center where it finds its ultimate significance. Jesus, then, is the primordial and ultimate sacrament.¹³

Even the so-called ordinances of the Pentecostal community must find their legitimization in Jesus.¹⁴ In order for the Pentecostal community to embrace an act as an ordinance, there would need to be a firm belief that Jesus Christ had ordained it.¹⁵ From this perspective the ordinances are understood to be ‘acts of commitment’ practiced out of loyalty to Christ.¹⁶

Unfortunately, for various reasons, some Pentecostals deny any ‘real grace’ being mediated through the participatory ordinance to the community, thus reducing these mysteries to mere memorial rites, occasions solely for cognitive reflection devoid of the Spirit’s presence and power.¹⁷ Yet the expectation of the worshipping community is that

13. See Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 30-32.

14. In the US, Pentecostal denominations that are more influenced by the Wesleyan holiness tradition (like the COG) officially adhere to three ordinances (Water baptism, Footwashing and Communion) whereas those Pentecostal denominations more influenced by finished-work holiness traditions, such as AOG, officially adhere to two ordinances (Water baptism and Communion). Although for other Pentecostal denominations and groups this may not necessarily be the case.

15. Pentecostals follow ‘Protestant orthodoxy’ in that only ‘what can be traced back to an express ordinance of Christ and is bound up with his especial promise counts as a sacrament’. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 200.

16. See Sanely J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2000), pp. 514-18, who maintains the importance of retaining the word ordinance, but also argues that the ordinances are channels for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of Christians, thus becoming more than memorial rites.

17. Frank Macchia, ‘Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Tongues’, in *Pneuma* 15.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 61-76, writes, ‘most Pentecostals are uncomfortable with the term “sacrament” because of association of the term with an “institutionalization” of the Spirit with “formalistic” liturgical traditions’ (p. 61). Unfortunately, his statement can be substantiated in the recent publication by William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1993). They write, ‘Biblical Christianity is not

they will encounter the presence of Christ through the Spirit in these celebrative activities.¹⁸

The concept of ‘ordinances’ must be re-visioned because in Pentecostal worshipping communities these rites provide sacramental experiences for the faith-filled participants. In other words, baptism, footwashing and communion have ‘provided many with a context for experiencing the redemptive and sanctifying presence of God in great power’.¹⁹ These are redemptive experiences, for they provide worshippers with opportunities for the ongoing spiritual formation of being conformed to the image of Christ through encountering the Spirit of Christ through the participatory reenactment of the story of Jesus.

Pentecostal spirituality is conceived as a ‘way of life’ that recognizes significant crisis experiences.²⁰ These experiences make possible the infusion of the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit into our lives. Pentecostal soteriology that is more Wesleyan and thus more Eastern in orientation ‘emphasizes salvation as participation in the divine life more than the removal of guilt’.²¹ Salvation as ‘the Christian spiritual journey is a life lived in, through, and for God’.²² The sacramental ordinances, therefore, aid us in our salvific journey because they give the Holy Spirit

ritualistic or sacramental’. The two ordinances... ‘are to be understood as occasions of memorial’ (p. 111). However, it must be pointed out that earlier Pentecostals may have been less troubled by the word ‘sacrament’. For example, Aimee Simple McPherson calls communion and water baptism sacraments as well as ordinances. **[Any ref. needed?]**

18. See Frank D. Macchia, ‘Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament? A Theological Response to John Christopher Thomas’, in *Pneuma* 19.2 (Fall 1997), pp. 239-49, especially p. 241. On a personal note, I can recall various times of taking communion under the pastoral leadership of Richard Dobbins during the Annual Conference of the Ohio District Council of the Assemblies of God. We were encouraged to pray for God to bring physical and emotional healing as we participated in the communion meal. It was not merely a memorial meal; rather, we encountered the dynamic presence of Christ Jesus our healer because his body had been broken and bruised for our salvific healing.

19. Macchia, ‘Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament?’, p. 240.

20. The *ordo salutis* is important to Pentecostals, but Pentecostalism must first and foremost be understood as a way of life.

21. Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (JPTSUP, 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 23.

22. M. Robert Mulholland, Jr, *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville, Tennessee; Upper Rooms Books, rev. edn, 2000), p. 26.

necessary opportunities to keep the community on the right path—the way of salvation.

The sacramental ordinances become means of grace for the receptive individuals-in-community. The sacraments are not ‘magical actions’ or simply ‘symbols of human response’ but are effective means of grace when inspired by the Holy Spirit and received by genuine human response in faith.²³ The sacraments are prophetic narrative signs involving words and deeds through which the community can experience the redemptive living presence of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit.²⁴ The Spirit inspiring the act of commitment as the worshippers are responding in faith transforms it into effective sacramental experience.²⁵

The sacramental ordinances are metaphorical-narrative signs that re-enact the redemptive story of Jesus for the community. The community anticipates and participates in this redemptive activity through proleptic worship encounters with the living God.²⁶ During worship ‘time and space

23. Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 127, see also pp. 123-129. I believe most Pentecostals would agree with Pinnock’s statement, ‘the effectiveness of the sacraments is bound up with the Spirit and faith’ (p. 123). See also John Wesley’s sermon ‘The Means of Grace’, in Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), pp. 158-71.

24. For the importance of the sacraments as prophetic, I am indebted to Daniel Tomberlin, a recent MDiv graduate at the Church of God Theological Seminary, who has served many years in the pastorate. He testified to how the Holy Spirit led him to have a footwashing service in which he washed the feet of an African-American pastor who was visiting his church. The church was located in the only city in Georgia that experienced race riots during the ‘Rodney King’ riots. The event brought a deep conviction to some, thus taking on a prophetic nature.

25. Clark H. Pinnock in ‘Divine Relationality: A Pentecostal Contribution to the Doctrine of God’, *JPT* 16 (April 2000), pp. 3-26, articulates the importance of the relational dynamic in Pentecostal soteriology which is always initiated through God’s grace but also requires human response. He writes, ‘Grace makes Spirit Baptism possible but people must seek the experience or it will not happen’ (p. 12). A Wesleyan Pentecostalism is much more ‘Eastern’ in its understanding of the cooperation between the human and Divine, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), pp. 67-72 for a review of the ‘Eastern understanding’ of the human and divine.

26. I am indebted to my colleague, R. Hollis Gause, for this important descriptive insight into the mystical character of Pentecostal worship. For more detailed discussion

(are) fused and transcended in the Spirit' through proleptic foretastes of the coming promise and through the recapitulation of past biblical experiences. 'Pentecostals (travel) in the Spirit forward or backward in time—back to Sinai, back to Calvary, back to Pentecost—forward to Armageddon, the Great White Throne judgment, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.'²⁷ In this manner, the sacraments 'function socially if not ontologically to identify us as Christian'²⁸ by allowing the community to participate in the divine life. Furthermore, the sacraments provide sustaining nourishment for us during our journey and needful opportunities to reshape our identity as the eschatological messianic community.²⁹

Based upon the previous discussion of Pentecostal worship, I have linked sacrament to ordinance. In doing so, I want to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in these mystical community acts of worship. Furthermore, in order for a rite to be constituted as a 'sacramental ordinance' it must be directly linked to the gospel and Jesus Christ. There are other sacraments and sacramental experiences, but I am concerned here to identify the 'sacramental ordinances' because they are directly connected to the gospel. From this perspective we could say that they are 'full gospel' sacraments.

Pentecostal Spirit baptismal testimonies make sense when they are understood within the *gestalt* of the Pentecostal full gospel message. As I

of Pentecostal worship as eschatological and sacramental see the theologically rich essay by Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'What Makes a Good Sermon? A Pentecostal Perspective', *Journal for Preachers* 26.4 (Pentecost 2003), pp. 45-54, especially pp. 46-49.

27. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 55. This 'proleptic' dimension is not unique to Pentecostal worship, but I would suggest it is more than cognitive reflection. See Ted Peters, *God—the World's Future*, who makes 'proleptic consciousness' an integral feature of his systematic theology, p. 19. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, p. 518.

28. Peters, *God—the World's Future*, p. 277.

29. See James F. White, *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999). White's informative discussion of the Sacraments in the history of Protestantism focuses on four traditions (Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Lutheranism), yet his comments concerning Pentecostal worship reinforce my argument. White states that the real presence of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit was a basic given of all Pentecostal worship, not just during communion (p. 83). He further writes, 'Modern-day Pentecostals often sound deeply eschatological with their worship heavily imbued with the present activity of the Holy Spirit. These gifts of the Spirit indicate the imminent return of Christ' (p. 99).

have reflected on my own experience and the Spirit baptism testimonies of others, I am convinced not only that water baptism, footwashing, and the Lord's Supper are sacramental ordinances but also that Spirit baptism is a sacramental redemptive experience in which tongues serves as the prophetic sign.³⁰ If Spirit baptism is sacramental, as I believe Frank Macchia has demonstrated, then it too must be integrated into the Pentecostal *via salutis*³¹ and be recognized as a sacramental ordinance of Pentecostal churches.

The Full Gospel and its Sacramental Ordinances

Jürgen Moltmann, in *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, poses an important question during his discussion of the sacraments.³² Moltmann

30. See Frank D. Macchia, 'Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience', *Pneuma* 15.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 61-76.

31. There is debate about this in both the finished work Pentecostal camp and the Wesleyan Pentecostal camp. For example, there are prominent scholars like William and Robert Menzies, Assemblies of God theologians, who see Spirit baptism as a vocational calling, thus falling strictly under ecclesiology and mission and not contributing to one's spiritual relationship with God ontologically, psychologically, or ethically. The fruit of the Spirit, the ethical-spiritual dimension of the Spirit, is received fully at conversion (based upon their reading of the Pauline corpus) yet the empowerment or Baptism of the Spirit comes subsequent to regeneration and is strictly for the purpose of mission (according to their interpretation of Luke-Acts). See William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 189-208. However, there are also publications by AOG theologian Frank Macchia who argues persuasively that Spirit baptism should be understood as a sacramental sign, thus Spirit baptism contributes to one's salvific relationship with God; see his 'Groans Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Tongues as Initial Evidence' in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1.2 (July 1998), pp. 149-73. Coming out of the Church of God (a Wesleyan Pentecostal denomination), see an earlier theological work by COG theologian Donald N. Bowdle, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1972). Bowdle writes, 'the baptism with the Holy Spirit...important as it is, does not really find place within *ordo salutis*, since it pertains not to salvation but to service'. Because it pertains to the power of the church and not with soteriology, 'the baptism with the Holy Spirit is properly concerned with ecclesiology', (p. 61). However, for a Wesleyan Pentecostal view from a COG theologian, which affirms Spirit baptism as an essential part of the *ordo salutis* subsequent to regeneration and sanctification, see R. Hollis Gause, *Living in the Spirit: The Way of Salvation* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1980), pp. 63-72.

32. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to*

asks,

churches with a plurality of sacraments must be asked about the unified ground to which these sacraments are related, and why these acts in particular are called sacraments, and others are not.³³

In response to this important question, I would argue with John Christopher Thomas that the unifying ground for the integration of the Pentecostal sacraments is the five-fold gospel.³⁴ The sacraments are directly connected to proclamation of the gospel and specifically connected to commands and promises of Jesus Christ. In this light, Pentecostals who embrace the five-fold gospel might consider expanding the number of sacraments from three to five.³⁵ By connecting a sacramental ordinance with a significant sign to each of the theological doxological declarations concerning Jesus (Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King), a coherent Pentecostal narrative theology would emerge from within the tradition and from the ground

Messianic Ecclesiology (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993) For his discussion on the sacraments see chapter 5, 'The Church in the Presence of the Holy Spirit', pp. 197-288.

33. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, pp. 199-200.

34. Thomas, 'Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century', p. 19.

35. For Pentecostals who have dropped Jesus as Sanctifier from their gospel message (mostly those in the finished work tradition), they should at least expand theirs to four by including Spirit Baptism and Healing. However, some in the AOG tradition, like Simon Chan, are calling for a return to the more historic five-fold message in order to reaffirm the importance of sanctification and to ensure a healthy integration between empowerment and holiness. See his *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (JPTSup, 21; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 69-70. By reasserting the importance of sanctification as a crisis experience(s), one is signaling a return to a more Wesleyan and Eastern soteriological paradigm. One could affirm sanctification from a Wesleyan perspective by re-visioning the traditional Wesleyan holiness view in terms of a more dynamic crisis-process dialectical understanding without giving up the importance of the consecrating moment(s). See, for example, James P. Bowers, 'A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Approach to Christian Formation', in *JPT* 6 (April 1995), pp. 55-86. The retrieval of sanctification would only reinforce the importance of holiness in the Pentecostal life. All Pentecostals realize that holiness is not an option and that sanctification is a necessary aspect of being Christian. Those denominations that reject the traditional Wesleyan holiness notion of a second work of grace could still retain Jesus as Sanctifier and articulate a more dynamic soteriology that allows for sanctification to include both psychological and ontological dimensions.

up.³⁶ Pentecostal theology would be a coherent and cohesive reflection of our relational experiential encounters with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit—a distinctly Pentecostal theology from beginning to end.

A formal presentation of Pentecostal theology can discuss the various Christian doctrines but should do so in a manner in keeping with our own tradition.³⁷ This form of Pentecostal theology would be more *narrative* in character, *systemic* in nature and would begin with the importance of Jesus Christ and his story.³⁸ As Thomas suggests, the five-fold gospel should be the integrating paradigm of our theology.³⁹ The five-fold gospel articulates the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal community that serves to explain *who* we are, *why* we exist and *what* we are to do.⁴⁰ In this manner, Pentecostal theology builds from the ground up because soteriology and ecclesiology are the primary dynamic contexts of the manifestation of the social economic Trinitarian life. For the heart of our Pentecostal knowledge of God is the revelatory encounter with the living Christ that initiates us into an exciting redemptive covenantal journey with the Social Trinity.⁴¹ All doctrinal discussions would find their ultimate significance and understanding in relationship to the ‘hub’ (Jesus Christ) and its ‘spokes’ (the five-fold gospel) contextualized within the worshipping Pentecostal community.

In the remaining portion of this essay I will briefly sketch out the connections between sacraments and five-fold gospel.⁴²

36. Coherence refers to the integration of sacramental signs into the five-fold gospel, thus reinforcing the validity of the Pentecostal ‘truth claim’ concerning our theological tradition. For an argument concerning Spirit baptism with tongues as a ‘coherent’ truth claim see Amos Yong, ‘“Tongues of Fire” in the Pentecostal Imagination: the Truth of Glossolalia in Light of R.C. Neville’s Theory of Religious Symbolism’, *JPT* 12 (April 1998), pp. 73-81.

37. Terry Cross, ‘The Rich Feast of Theology: Can Pentecostals Bring the Main Course or Only the Relish?’, *JPT* 16 (April 2000), pp. 27-47, especially pp. 33-34.

38. See Clark H. Pinnock, ‘Divine Relationality: A Pentecostal Contribution to the Doctrine of God’, *JPT* 16 (April 2000), pp. 3-26. Pinnock writes, ‘they [Pentecostals] do theology in the form of story and song. They should not develop theologies which are in tension with this feature’ (p. 11).

39. Thomas, ‘Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century’, p. 17.

40. See Kenneth J. Archer, ‘Pentecostal Story: Our Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning’, *Pneuma* (Forthcoming 2004) **[any update?]**.

41. Cheryl Bridges Johns, ‘Healing and Deliverance: A Pentecostal Perspective’, in Jürgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds.) *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* (Concilium, 3; **[place and publisher]** 1996), p. 47.

42. See Thomas, ‘Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century’, pp. 18-19.

Jesus is our Savior. He has ransomed us from the captivity of the kingdom of spiritual darkness and has reconciled us to God our father. Jesus is our atoning sacrifice. Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12.2). When a person calls upon the name of Jesus, repenting from sin and turning to God, they are saved. They experience justification and regeneration. They are born again and have the Holy Spirit. All future redemptive experiences spring forth from the seed sown in the initial experience of salvation.⁴³

Water baptism is the sacramental ordinance that publicly proclaims one's new identity with Jesus and his community of followers. New converts are baptized with water because Jesus commanded us to do so (Mt. 28.18-20). A believer's water baptism 'by immersion' best reenacts the salvific experience of identifying with the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6.4) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2.38). Water baptism recapitulates the protection of Noah and his family from divine judgment sent upon the wicked (Gen. 6-9; 1 Pet. 3.20-21) and also the Israelites' exodus deliverance through the waters of the Red Sea. Out of this, they emerged as a people belonging to God on 'the way' to the promised land. Water baptism is the sacramental sign initiating one into the cooperate *via salutis*.⁴⁴

The focus of water baptism is on the candidate, yet the community not only witnesses the candidate's baptism but is also called by the Spirit to relive their initiating salvific experience, hence re-identifying themselves as part of the redemptive community—the body of Christ. It also serves to point us to the ultimate goal of salvation—glorification and the redemption of creation. It is a promise that creates hope and reshapes our identity as we proleptically participate in the redemptive experience. We are the eschatological community of God and, as this community, we function as

The following is a narrative-oriented elaboration and expansion of Thomas' insightful proposal to correlate a sacramental sign with each 'fold' in the five-fold confession of Jesus, as follows: (1) Saviour—Water Baptism; (2) Sanctifier—Foot Washing; **[2 separate words here in Thomas? Elsewhere you use one]** (3) Spirit-Baptizer—Glossolalia; (4) Healer—Anointing with Oil; (5) Coming King—Lord's Supper.

43. This would include future redemptive experiences such as sanctification, healing, Spirit baptism and glorification. Thus there is a unitary interconnection of these identifiable and distinguishable experiences all anchored in the regeneration experience.

44. On Baptism see Peters, *God—the World's Future*, pp. 277-84; Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, pp. 520-32; White, *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith*, pp. 31-72.

a redemptive sacrament for the world—the body of Christ broken for the healing of the nations.

Jesus is our Sanctifier. He is our High Priest who intercedes for us praying that we would be sanctified (Jn 17). We realize that holiness flows from the very nature of the Holy Spirit through whom we participate in the divine life. Holiness is to permeate our entire being, affecting all aspects of our life as we continue in the *via salutis*.⁴⁵

Footwashing serves as the sacramental activity by which we continue to experience God's redemptive cleansing and healing. The washing of one another's feet is a ceremony of cleansing. The sacrament reminds the community that as we travel this path we do get dirty through the contamination of the world, and if we commit acts of sin they can be forgiven. God has provided a means for forgiveness, purging and cleansing of sin along the *via salutis*.⁴⁶

The sacrament recapitulates the biblical story of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness. It also involves recalling and reenacting Jesus' washing of the feet of the disciples (including Judas) prior to his crucifixion. As we wash each other's feet, we are reminded of our own shortcomings; yet we proleptically experience God's declaration—your sins are forgiven. The community realizes it is a holy people and a royal priesthood. Communal holiness, wholeness, discipline and discipleship are an integral aspect of traveling on the *via salutis*. Footwashing serves as a sacramental ordinance for continual need of spiritual cleansing during the journey to the promise land.

Jesus is our Spirit Baptizer. Jesus commanded his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Father (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4). Peter proclaimed that this gift of the Father was for everyone who believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 2.38-39). John the Baptist testified that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mk 1.8).

The sacramental experience of Spirit baptism manifests in the personal, audible sign of glossolalic tongues that signifies the presence of the living God upon us and among us.⁴⁷ This sacramental experience is important for

45. See R. Hollis Gause, 'The Doctrine of Holiness', in Yung Chul Han (ed.), *Transforming Power: Dimensions of the Gospel* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2001), pp. 87-147.

46. See John Christopher Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community* (JSNTSup, 61; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) and Frank Macchia, 'Is Footwashing the Neglected Sacrament?'

47. Frank Macchia, 'Tongues as a Sign', p. 63, and also see his 'Groans Too Deep

our empowerment as the charismatic missionary community. Signs and wonders follow those who preach the gospel empowered by the Holy Spirit. Individuals-in-community are participatory witnesses to the redemptive acts of God for the world.

This sacramental experience, which breaks out into ecstatic moments of worship marked by ecstatic praise and compassionate weeping for the lost and hurting, draws one into a deep intimate relationship with the Holy Trinity. The sacrament of Spirit baptism empowers each believer to become an active and significant part of the charismatic missionary community. In this community, everyone is to be a priest and prophet, ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit one to another and unto the world. The responsibility to reach the world with the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ falls upon all in these last days, because the end is near.

Spirit baptism provides empowerment to be a witness of the gospel, which flows out of relational intimacy with the Social Trinity. An intimacy forged in pilgrimage with the Spirit will be marked by periods of suffering and struggle, for the Spirit will lead one into the wilderness, as was Jesus, and into times of the 'dark night of the soul'. However, the presence and power of the living God does not leave us. The Spirit groans with us, even through us and causes us to weep and to shout as the Spirit of God comes down upon our community and as we proleptically glimpse the magnitude of our God and the glory of his Being.⁴⁸ The Word of God can become like 'fire shut up in our bones' (Jer. 20.9)—some may run, some may leap, and others may even weep. Spirit baptism is a mystical experience that is symbolized in glossolalic language because it transcends the limits of human speech. Tongues is the expression of the mystical experience of union with and participation in God's triune being. Spirit baptism is a sacramental experience empowering the community to be a charismatic witness along the way to the city whose builder is God.

Jesus is our Healer. Jesus healed people of diseases and performed exorcisms, manifesting the presence of the Kingdom of God in a tangible restorative manner (Acts 10.38). Pentecostals confess that Jesus is 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb. 13.10), and healing is an integral aspect of Jesus' ministry and atonement.⁴⁹

for Words'.

48. Acts 2 recapitulates the Mount Sinai encounter as found in Exod. 19.

49. Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*, pp. 189-207. See John Christopher Thomas, 'The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: James 5.14-16', *JPT* 2 (April 1993), pp.

The sacrament of healing involves the laying on of hands and anointing with oil (Mk 6.13 and Jas 5). Oil, along with the laying on of hands, serves as the sacramental sign. 'In the ministry of healing there is the expression of the belief that salvation and healing are for the whole person. The laying on of hands and anointing with oil are means whereby Pentecostals give expression to this belief.'⁵⁰ Healing is not limited to just the physical but extends to the whole person; hence emotional or inner healing is also included.

The sacramental experience involves the community. When one is healed and testifies, it becomes a present proleptic sign of the future glorification that awaits all God's children. From this perspective, praying for the sick is an important aspect of Pentecostal communal worship because it allows God to break into the present. In turn, this allows the community to participate proleptically in the future promise of permanent healing (Rev. 19–20).

As we pray for those suffering, we are reminded that we live in the tension of the kingdom of God—a kingdom present but not yet present. Those who are prayed for (even many times) and yet do not experience their healing are still recipients of God sustaining grace. Not everyone will be completely healed, yet all who participate in this sacramental act can experience sustaining grace through the abiding presence of the Spirit. The community is brought back to the reality that ultimate healing will take place in that great community experience of the second coming of Christ, when those who are both dead and alive, sick and healthy will be gathered up together in God. All healings are momentary testimonies of participating in the ongoing ministry of Christ through the power of the Spirit, and these same testimonial affirmations anticipate the coming of Christ.

Healing is an important sacramental ordinance that helps sustain us on this journey and shapes our identity as a compassionate, healing community. As a healing community we welcome the poor, the lame, the weak and the sick, recognizing that their presence is a necessary sacrament for us. If they are not welcome, then the Spirit is not welcome. 'The outcasts become vessels of honor through which God makes known the mysteries of His kingdom.'⁵¹

25–50 and his *Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in the New Testament* (JPTSUP, 13; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

50. Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance', p. 49.

51. Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance', p. 49.

Jesus is our Soon-Coming King. Jesus is coming soon to receive his eschatological community, his Bride. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper dramatically reenacts our Savior's death (1 Cor. 11.23-26) but also prophetically recalls our Savior's promise that he will come again, and we, his people, will one day partake in that grand eschatological meal—the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Mt. 26.29).⁵² At this meal we will dine in the fully-realized identity and dignity of being God's people, saved and sustained through the mission of the Son and Spirit!

The sacramental ordinance of the Lord's Supper, with its sign of the one cup and one loaf, gives us necessary opportunity for the Spirit to shape our identity as a collective people belonging to the one body of Christ. The superiority of one's race or gender is brought to prophetic condemnation, because in Christ we are one, servants one to another. If preference is given, it is to the weak, to the poor, to those suffering, for these are those whom Christ came to redeem (Lk. 4.18-19). As we celebrate our liberation from satanic dominion and salvific union with God through Jesus' atoning life, ministry, death, and resurrection, we participate in the redemptive presence of the Almighty God who through his Son and Spirit has made a way for us. We are caught up in the divine dance in which we participate in the very being of God, longing for the fullness of his kingdom to be manifested. We partake in Jesus' body and blood to make us one and sustain us with his prophetic promise—'I am coming very soon'. Maranatha!

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper allows us to partake in the body and blood of Christ. By it, we experience sustenance for our journey. It recapitulates the eating of *manna* in the wilderness as a means of sustaining the Israelites on their pilgrimage. The Lord's Supper is a sacramental event that shapes our identity as the messianic eschatological people of God. We look forward to Christ's coming, and we long and look forward to the coming of the Kingdom of God when God will be all and in all.

Conclusion

We are pilgrims on a journey—the *via salutis*. We were publicly initiated into this communal journey through water baptism. Along this journey the Lord has provided sanctifying cleansing through footwashing, spiritual

52. See White, *The Sacraments in Protestant Practice and Faith*, pp. 73-118.

empowerment through Spirit baptism, healing through anointing with oil, and spiritual sustenance through the bread and the wine—the body and blood of Jesus. These sacraments are means of grace providing opportunities for the Spirit to work redemptively in the faithful participants within the Pentecostal proleptic worship service. The sacramental ordinances evoke remembrance of the past and provoke playful anticipation of a future (promise) that collapses into the present mysterious salvific experiences. This interplay between promise and fulfillment plays a significant dialectical role creating opportunities of mystical redemptive participation in the divine life of the community. I hope our understanding of ordinances takes on the mystical significance, which at the very least transforms these particular ‘acts of commitment’ into *sacramental* ordinances.⁵³

*Jesus Only is our Message*⁵⁴

1. Jesus only is our Message,
Jesus all our theme shall be,
We will lift up Jesus ever,
Jesus only we will see.

(Chorus)
Jesus only, Jesus ever,
Jesus all in all we sing;
Savior, Sanctifier, Healer,
Baptizer and coming King.
2. Jesus only is our Savior,
All our guilt He bore away,
All our righteousness He gives us,
All our strength from day to day.
3. Jesus is our Sanctifier,

53. I agree with Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, *The Sacraments in Religious Education and Liturgy: An Ecumenical Model* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1985), in their understanding of sacraments as means of grace whereby we communicate and participate in the good news of our faith. In this sense, sacrament is a translation of *mysterion*, thus a sacrament is not simply an ordinance of Christ (p. 44).

54. *Gospel Hymns and Songs for Church Use* (Nigeria, West Africa: Zoe Publishing, n.d.), pp. 44-45. This song attests to the centrality of the five-fold gospel. I am indebted to my colleague, Ayodeji Adewuya for sharing with me this hymn which testifies to the importance of our central narrative convictions.

Cleansing us from self and sin,
And with all His Spirit's fullness,
Filling all our hearts within.

4. Jesus only is our Healer,
All our sicknesses He bare,
And His risen life and fullness
All His members still may share.
5. Jesus only is our Power
His the gift of Pentecost,
Jesus, breathe Thy power upon us,
Fill us with the Holy Ghost.
6. And for Jesus we are waiting
Listening for the trumpet's sound,
Then it will be us and Jesus
Living ever with our God.