

**A PENTECOSTAL— CHARISMATIC HERMENEUTIC MODEL
IN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT**

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ABSTRACT

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Present hermeneutic problems within Christian scholarship involve the subjective and objective divide which is culturally seen as separate world views, one of science and one of metaphysics. Whereas the Holy Spirit has been traditionally relegated to the subjective realm, Pentecostals have celebrated the event as the Spirit breaking into the objective world with power and purpose, consequently redefining reality and our access to it.

Modernity's traditional conservative world view has taken the reading of the scriptures in such a way that the authority of the Bible as God's Word has been seen as compilations of inspired writings from within which doctrinal and normative truths are contained as God's self-revelation. Others contend that as they are written by fallible authors containing the complexities and contextualities implicit in the writing process. Traditional hermeneutic methods do not resolve many of the inherent problems accessing and extracting what those truths might be, if that is even always their prime goal.

Charismatics and Pentecostals hold to a more experiential and holistic view of the unity of the supernatural within the observable realms, which includes a hostile and evil environment in conflict. This thesis proposes that the "Spirit-filled" believer has already been significantly changed in his nature to engage in effectual communication with the Holy Spirit enabling many hermeneutic questions to be accurately resolved. A more relational theology of the Holy Spirit is presented, with emphasis on our participation with the Holy Spirit to implement the scripture sacrificially with both intelligence and supernatural power. All Spirit filled Christians should have emerging self-organizing abilities, which when coupled with the spiritual authority of the scriptural text are able to operate within the paradigm of the corporate postmodern tool of an Organizational Matrix. This is a community activity which involves distributed spiritual giftings as well as responsible scholarship.

Included is an incarnational perspective where the interpretative process is inter-related with the movement from the objective text, through subjective communion with the Lord, and implemented into the objective realm. This is a holistic view of scriptural interpretation and application merging through the Object-to-Subject-to-Object process, but also filtered through an active revelational understanding from the Holy Spirit to the reader.

A modified Apostolic peshar hermeneutic is also considered as occasionally relevant, which involves applying the empowerment of Pentecost with a partially realized Kingdom eschatology. This is seen as significant, as it was the popular hermeneutic during Jesus' earthly ministry among the Jews and one employed by the disciples as they interpreted the Older Testament. In a manner different from the initial inscripturation,

although equally active, the Holy Spirit imparts revelation necessary for understanding, at his discretion to the reader.

This thesis is presented in a manner more consistent with postmodern sensitivities also using an inductive approach as well as deconstructing some traditional expectations of Academia, especially regarding personal and subjective observations.

METHODOLOGY

My Approach will be as follows: First I will review some of the historic causes of the hermeneutic problems confronting the Church. Then I will briefly review several of the philosophical issues raised among Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians affecting hermeneutics. I will next sketch the issues needed in the development of the hermeneutic matrix which will incorporate three theological issues: the transformed nature of the Christian, the interaction of the Holy Spirit with Christians, and the context of the eschatological cosmic conflict.

Emphasis will be upon the Holy Spirit as an interactive personality dwelling within believers who, as the true originator of Scripture, is desirous and able to lead that believer into the meaning and purpose for which it was written. It will also be established that the believer has a newly created, but still human nature which is increasingly becoming coherent with the Divine nature, enabling effectual communion with God. The existence of evil allied against that communion and its implications will be considered.

These issues will be developed within postmodern perspectives, and occasionally in a post modern style. A continuum of issues will merge throughout the thesis in contrast to a strict systematic topical consideration. The end purpose is not to authenticate a particular hermeneutic philosophy as much as develop a normative reproducible direction and model toward a solution meaningful to Pentecostals interfacing the Western Postmodern culture.

CHAPTER 1

THE HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE FOR POST-PENTECOSTALS

The Loss and Restoration of Communion with God

Within the Western Christian church an air of crisis seems to hover over every facet of its being. Reflecting the malaise and disintegration of a culture that had been built on a Judeo-Christian world view, all institutions are under major foundational changes. As with most change, some see it as an opportunity to rethink major fractures within the church, while others view it as a devastating loss. We, as Christians, have a security under God's sovereign rule, and among Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians there is a strong eschatological sense about the meaning of world events. Still, there is an unsettling frustration among American believers as historical roots are challenged. Some see this as local symptoms of a parochial mixture of nationalistic and political emotions, and signs of growing culture conflicts. Walter Brueggemann observes, "The contemporary American is so largely enculturated to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act. This enculturation is in some way true across the spectrum of church life, both liberal and conservative."¹ Failing to see the global perspective of the increasing numbers of conversion to Christianity,² some Americans view these events as the shaking before the return of the Lord

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 1

² David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Richmond, VA, Office of Overseas Operations, International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2000), 8.

(Heb. 12:26). Most all would agree that these are internationally tumultuous times and evil seems particularly virulent, but for some Christians these are signs to be welcomed.

Evangelical Christianity has always been interlinked with Scripture, for we have been *a people of the Book*. But the *Book* has always been about the “people of God,” which we are. We are in His *Book of Life*. Is it not true that his book is a part of us? We speak of Christ in us, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27), and yet we are *in Christ* (Rom. 6:11, 23). The union we are destined to have with God, that which Adam only sampled, is far beyond what has entered even into man’s heart (1 Cor. 2:9). A child’s question was, “do caterpillars dream of flying?” What awaits us is beyond our dreams, and we in the meanwhile sadly occupy ourselves contemplating issues such as, “Do Christians have to tithe?” We have already become partakers of his divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), though in part. We are already seated with him in heavenly places (Col. 3:1), in part. The kingdom has already come (Luke 11:20), in part. Pentecostals need to see that God has called them to show his people that he has opened a way that they might now live in *that part*, until such a time when he reconciles all things to himself. But we do not now see all things under his feet, but we do see Jesus. (Heb. 2:9) That should have always been the Pentecostal creed. The time has come for the church to cease looking at events and time as though they were little pieces streaming across their lives. Jesus is Lord of all things, and we can presently begin to live in that understanding. We can become united with him as a part of “putting those pieces” back together and restoring what was lost. Living *in that part* is not conditional, it is relational and that is what the baptism in the Spirit should bring about.

The radically changing events in the world need to be seen globally and holistically, and Biblical hermeneutics has been consequently affected. Kevin Vanhoozer explained one of his main theses for his book on hermeneutics stating, “—the crisis in contemporary interpretation theory is actually a theological crisis.”³ He adds that the morality of literary knowledge involves the virtues of the interpreter. From a Pentecostal perspective the necessity is to redefine theology as well as face the issue that intellectual integrity alone is not sufficient for accessing the places where answers are to be found. There is a present wave of new Christians being added to the church, and they are mostly from radically non-Western cultures. As long as Western churches insist on reproducing their cultural models, they will be of little use, and the West will find they have been disqualified.

Formally educated leadership has increasingly become insufficient for the continued addition of new churches overseas due to failure to see the different approaches needed for the leadership that is emerging. The lack of personnel and facilities, even within some of the largest denominations, is unable to keep up with the increase.⁴ But still growth is occurring and leaders emerging, equipped only with the Scriptures and expectations for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is therefore a primary training needed for a simple hermeneutic understanding, but flexible within various cultural settings that are easily understood and non-controlling. It should be established with basic integrity and able to facilitate the interpretation of the Scriptures, allowing the Holy Spirit to engage the believer while minimizing error and

³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?: The Bible, the Reader and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1998), 25-29.

⁴ David Garrison, 12.

deception, but dynamic and inclusive as a living body. Sadly, most Pentecostals continue to avoid interaction with serious training, not realizing that what is needed is not what has been the pattern of the past. Impartation is considered necessary to give understanding concerning the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit. Möller states the traditional Pentecostal position that, “Any other key concept, like covenant or Kingdom of God or hope or whatever, will be seen as threatening this personal and living relationship between God and the human being.”⁵ Möller cites a reference to W. G. MacDonald having said that Pentecostals did not need to go for a conceptual center beyond Christ, or place a theological framework over him. That simplicity is perhaps multicultural, but it is also naive.

In the West, denominational Charismatics have declined along with denominationalism as a whole. Many have retreated to independent fellowships, while milder Charismatic elements have become a part of traditional denominational structures. The effects of music and television have had enormous impact on church ministry and organizations which has greatly diluted some traditional theological and ecclesiastical underpinnings. Most attendance among Protestants in the United States at this time is determined by non-doctrinal issues that follow ministry style or professionally orchestrated services. As churches have moved into an American marketing strategy for enlargement, smaller congregations suffer when larger, more consumer oriented ones exist nearby. There is a religious parallel to the cultural situation where small businesses lose support to the mega-superstores, which also has the effect of uprooting established communities and small towns.

⁵ Francois Möller, *Initiation Into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics*, “Pentecostal Theology.” Eds. Simon Maimela and Adrio König (Pretoria: J L van Schail, 1998), 186.

This has caused some pastors to leave the ministry as a sustaining livelihood. Many have also become disillusioned with the entire church system, although still fervent in their Christian commitment.⁶ Others have become bitter, many returning to a more paranoid and fundamentalist posture. Added to this is an assault upon the Christian culture which is becoming more obvious in the political landscape; but for many Christian leaders this means defending the ‘faith once delivered to their fathers,’ and they resultantly become even more irrelevant. Tragically, for many, the model of the past is the only way forward.

Historically the Church has attempted to be the guardian and custodian of truth by mainly providing foundational doctrines and dogmatics. Pastoral ministry in larger congregations was limited to the pulpit ministry or crisis counseling. Postmodernism has pointedly shown that many ministries occurred within monocultural contexts and agendas which affected interpretations and practices and left the people within those congregations even more alienated from the harvest field. Many rejected the limited content within fundamentalism and looked toward more accommodating solutions. Until recently, a single Christian culture was seen as the unifying factor, even in world mission contexts. The postmodern rejection of metanarratives has caused many evangelicals to despair and fail to appreciate that the field is being cleared and there is an open opportunity to present the Gospel in a fresh manner.

Pentecostals and Charismatics have always seen Scripture, however, as the legitimate metanarrative, but in a dynamic participatory way, and have

⁶ Estimates are 1600 pastors leave per month. See *Charisma Magazine*. Vol. 2 No. 249, Feb. 2001. Also see: George Barna, *Revolution*, Wheaton: Tyndale Hse., 2005.

expected supernatural intervention by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The *postmodern context* in which we engage our efforts in this thesis is one that appreciates and accommodates the legitimate questions and criticisms made against Western modernism, including the restraints of foundational rationalism, which still has much of the church in its grip.

The Fall of Communication

From a Judeo-Christian viewpoint, the problem of Hermeneutics is interrelated with the root crisis of Humankind as presented in the Genesis narrative. History records cyclical dramas as nations rise and fall, each seemingly repeating the same underlying pattern of struggle within an overall losing battle for earth's survival. Ecologists make alarming pronouncements of a bleak future caused by a severely damaged world, but they only see symptoms. Those that do press on into the future do so not in hope, but as an escape from what had been Modernity, having given up trying to make sense of their inheritance. *Ecclesiastes* seems a book for the times as the phrase, *vanity of vanities*, expresses reality in an appropriately aging culture. However, a reawakened remnant is emerging as the Holy Spirit is encouraging the church to look again at its roots and hear from the Bible. Garrett Green summarizes Paul Ricoeur's statement, "In short, it is by *interpreting* that we can *hear* again."⁷ Books bequeathed to us by our predecessors have been opened and found that the stories and clues to the way ahead have faded into indecipherable scribbling. Some have become agnostics, having despaired that it ever made sense, while others, the badly injured ones, have moved on

⁷ Garrett Green, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination*, "Theology and the Religious Imagination" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 125.

to the illusionary safety of atheism. Contrary to the critics of Postmodernism, they have not rejected truth or a metanarrative containing man's purpose; they have turned their futile affections aside from a hope that never materialized. That such a time should have come upon the American church should be no surprise, or should it surprise the world that already should have heard what Christians claim to know. The message that failed to be incarnated before the world is clear in the Scripture entrusted to Christians:

For the whole creation is waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be revealed. It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it- with the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God. We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains. And not only that: we too, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we are groaning inside ourselves, waiting with eagerness for our bodies to be set free. (Romans 8:19-23 NJB)

In the Garden, before the serpent's question was philosophical or procedural, it was moral and relational, and I propose that any solution should address those aspects as central. His Word is a lamp to travel the path home, while leaving a trail so others might follow. The purpose of the Scripture is God's self-disclosure leading to the Communion we have lost. The re-entry into the Holy Place is a Paradigm Shift. Stanley Grenz put it, "The ultimate purpose of God's self-disclosure is to bring us not into a relationship with either a body of timeless laws or universal moral axioms, but into relation-

ship of the self-revealing God, and as a consequence with one another and all creation.”⁸

For our present purposes, the specific issue of Hermeneutics began with that question that was put to Eve, “Has God said...?” From that question, which was deceptive and not epistemic, came the plethora of the pain and corruption in the world, and possibly the entire cosmos. As most of us are familiar with the story and its continuing episodes into the present, we are able to see most of the subsequent impotent solutions and their consequences that have been worked and reworked. Although one might not be familiar with each formal philosophical perspective, the results are a matter of record. Eden was a prototype; and that story is at the root of subsequent problems, which I propose is where any attempted resolution must start.

Humans have been irresistibly drawn to interpret the significance of experiences encountered in life, and that compulsion emerged from the deposit into humanity of an awareness of God and his desire to commune with man. J. Barton Payne said, “Men of every period have recognized sets of values for human living. This phenomenon is observable in all cultures, whatever may be one’s individual evaluation of the religions concerned.”⁹ It has been formulated by theologians as “natural revelation,” and was “evidence of the creator” embedded within creation itself. The initial “religious” activity recorded in Genesis was *dialogue* with God, and Adam spoke with God as he walked in the garden in what appeared a casual and personal rela-

⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1997), 245.

⁹ J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 16

tionship. The initial indictment against Adam after his disobedience was that he “listened to the voice” of his wife, who had also listened to yet another one. The immediate result after disobeying God’s command was they became *self-aware*, and “they *knew* that they were naked,” Their focus and knowledge had changed from God to themselves, and has since been the core symptom of the corruptible effects of our broken spiritual “DNA.” Garrett Green says, “Sin is total, one could say, not in degree but extent: there is no protected island, no last, ‘natural’ refuge of virtue to which the sinner can retreat.”¹⁰ He continues to point out that our corrupted image of God from the fall has functional and relational implications.

Even as the source of eternal life was denied Adam and he was forced into a world that was set to a future of decay, still one other man, Enoch, walked and fellowshiped with God for three hundred years, and found a way out. This relationship is the only way, the only solution back to communion with God, and the cross of Christ made it possible and accessible. Within broken humanity remains a nostalgic awareness of the person of God, and it is deep within human consciousness. When the pain and rebukes of life come upon men, they pause and ask in jest, “What is God trying to tell me?” Within is the sense that man is in some way responsible for his trouble, and that there is a God interacting in man’s affairs. If there ever was a true metanarrative, the story of God’s desire to personally commune with man is it, and why the Scriptures are considered sacred.

The theme of communion with God echoes throughout man’s existence, from walking with him in the beginning, until the present when com-

¹⁰ Garrett Green, *Imagining*, 88.

munities share the cup of his presence with his Body. Paul, in 1 Cor. 11:29, brings a terrifying indictment against the church that even resulted in sickness and death among them.¹¹ The text is clear that the cause was their inability to discern who they were as members of the body of Christ, and that their behavior was an affront to the sanctity and cost of that communion. This appears a major recurring theme from the opening of the letter to its grand conclusion in chapter 13. Grenz and Franke in their remarks concerning the works of theologians Rahner and Pannenberg conclude, “Perhaps the single most significant development in the contemporary renaissance of Trinitarian theology has been the emphasis on relationality.”¹² This is one of the underlying cores upon which I approach this particular thesis. I suggest that all attempts to interpret Scripture and other revelation from God that avoid this principle will fall short. If, like Adam, men listen to other voices, even those that are intimately dear, they will miss the mark, and be accountable for the voices to which they did listen. A Language of listening and speech occurred at all levels of creation, from that which proceeded from God when he called the solar system into existence, to Adam’s role in naming the animals. But all voices were not benevolent, and so it continues to this day. Failure to comprehend the forces that still corrupt and pervert, even the framework within which hermeneutics so often naively transacts its commerce, can bring darkness erroneously perceived as light.

¹¹ An interesting event in the animal world has been observed within certain species where the dominant male will kill a newborn that is disruptive and abusive of its siblings.

¹² Stanly J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville: Westminster, 2001), 193.

The Fall of Knowledge

A philosophy that was formulated in the rediscovery of *self-awareness* with its attending symptomatic curse of independence was received into the Church uncritically. Jens Zimmermann commenting on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's exposition in his *Ethics*,¹³ states that “-‘hermeneutics’ basic goal of self-understanding rests on a fundamental misunderstanding of ontology. While conscience may call us to self-knowledge, this inexorable drive toward self-knowledge is an indication of the rift at our core caused by our alienation from God.”¹⁴ Having known God *within* God's world, man's very being was now thrust into God's *outside* world at the cost of estrangement from God. Adam became aware of that which was not God, which was *himself*. Contained in this is the concept of evil as that which *is not God*,¹⁵ which we shall cautiously describe in terms of spiritual entropy.¹⁶ In Adam man knew himself as something apart from and outside of God, but in the second Adam, a way has been provided back with an even greater intimacy.¹⁷ Bonhoeffer observed, “He (man) can know God only if he knows

¹³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Translated by Neville Horton Smith, New York: Touchstone, 1995), 22.

¹⁴ Jens Zimmermann, *Recovering Theological Hermeneutics: An Incarnational-Trinitarian Theory of Interpretation*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 294.

¹⁵ See: Christopher C. Emerick, *Gott Und Das Bichtige: Karl Barth and the Problem of Evil* (Regent University: Presented at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, *Journal of Renewal Studies*)

¹⁶ *Entropy* has for some time been equated with evil in the popular mind and casual science. It is unquestionably a strong metaphor, and a valuable model for envisioning relationships, but it is only an observed thermodynamic law with specific parameters not transferable into other categories. That a universal principle exists, however, is a possibility.

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 15:45.

only God.”¹⁸ The self-knowledge of Descartes that inspired the birth of Enlightenment was already a corrupted child that was destined to bring light only to man’s own rule. Again in Bonhoeffer’s words, “Bearing within himself the knowledge of good and evil, man has become judge over God and men, just as he is judge over himself.”¹⁹

What was broken, however, could be repaired, what was lost could be restored, and even *beyond*, because the relationship God has planned for mankind transcended any present apprehension of it.²⁰ This expression of communion was born from an essence of God that Scripture says was beyond definition, and only metaphorically described. It was the love of God, and its incarnation was Jesus Christ. This was the foundation²¹ that was not foundationalism. It was not static, but open and built of living stones. Control was unknown, for that love could not be forced.²² That love, that God is, sought a worthy residence in which to rest, and finding none, made those who were not, to be that holy place. The peace attending those that commune there found humanistic rationalism an unwanted guest, and attempts to intrude into the wedding proceedings are quickly found out by those who recognize their clothing only to be those of servants. Servants are valuable, but they are not family.

¹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰ 1 Cor. 2:9.

²¹ 1 Cor. 3:10.

²² R. MacDonald, The theme of *Song of Solomon*, “Outline,” World Wide Web: <http://www.Scripturewise.com/outlinesty.htm> . (cited 10 July, 2005).

Hermeneutics has always been established as a tool to find understanding and wisdom in our communion with God, which I propose is the prime sacrament. As the articles involved in the ministry at the altar were reverently handled by the priests, so should those who facilitate our communion through the Scripture. But the Christian Academy was not to serve men outside of the faith as an apologetic institution, but to serve the Lord and his people. This too was a corruption brought into the darkness of Enlightenment. As the “ladder” in Jacob’s dream had a footing established on the earth, its source was from the Throne, and it was called, “The House of God,” not “of man.” It was a place of communication, and one that was sanctified with anointing oil. From a Pentecostal perspective, prone to acknowledging types, it was a precursor to Moses’ tabernacle, where God and man communed in a place called the Holy of Holies.

Sadly the Church has permitted the profane to move from the courtyard into the holy places, and the servant ‘reason’ has offered strange fire.²³ Idols of science, even the Scriptures themselves have become objects of worship²⁴, and it is time to cleanse the sanctuary. We have committed the sins as they did in Jeremiah’s day. “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” (Jeremiah 2:13 NIV)

²³ Num. 3:4.

²⁴ John 5:39-42.

Rediscovering Knowledge

Along the journey, praying and seeking the realization of God's Kingdom, the Church allowed the Academy to often become an end in itself. Who could prophesy against such an institution whose own prophets only recognized Plato and Socrates; who among men could tell the king of his nakedness? It has been the lost children of postmodernism, who have cried out. The Christian Academy has permitted its agenda to be determined by the secular school of Philosophy. Evangelical philosopher Alvin Plantinga gave this exhortation:

... Christian philosophers and Christian intellectuals generally must display more autonomy-more independence of the rest of philosophical world. Second, Christian philosophers must display more integrity-integrity in the sense of integral wholeness, or oneness, or unity, being all of one piece. Perhaps 'integrality' would be the better word here. And necessary to these two is a third: Christian courage, or boldness, or strength, or perhaps Christian self-confidence. We Christian philosophers must display more faith, more trust in the Lord; we must put on the whole armor of God.²⁵

In another comment concerning the destructive influences of philosophy, Herman C. Hanko writes,

Modern philosophy, beginning with Descartes, was rationalistic; i.e., it appealed to the human mind as the standard and arbiter of the truth. In reaction to the synthesis philosophy of the Scholastics, it made a distinction between philosophy and theology. Philosophy was the domain of reason; theology was the domain of faith. Philosophy answered the basic questions of the

²⁵ Alvin Plantinga, "Faith and Philosophy": *Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* vol. 1, October 1984.

universe, of man and of his ability to know; theology dug its material out of the Bible.²⁶

This observation has been widely documented, with many books²⁷ and papers written²⁸ on the subject, especially in the context of postmodern deconstruction. Scripture does not speak kindly of philosophy, and “science falsely so called”²⁹. “Don’t let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ.” (NLT Colossians 2:8)

Evidently in God’s providence, he has allowed the Academy as a counselor to the Church during these many years. As Paul spoke about himself in his statement to the Corinthians, it now also applies to the Academy: “So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Moreover, it is required that those put in charge be found trustworthy.”³⁰ Hanko critically commented, “The insidious influence of rationalism devastated the church, partly because these rationalists professed orthodoxy in matters of faith, and partly because the church itself had in the latter part of the 17th and in the 18th centuries entered a period of dead orthodoxy which made them vulnerable to rationalism.”³¹ With

²⁶ Herman C. Hanko, “Issues in Hermeneutics,” *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, April-Nov. (1990).

²⁷ An example is; Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt & Certainty in Christian Discipleship*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

²⁸ John R. Franke, “Reforming Theology: Toward a Postmodern Reformed Dogmatics”: *The Westminster Theological Journal* 65:1 (Spring, 2003):1-26.

²⁹ 1 Tim. 6:20 NAB notes.

³⁰ 1 Cor. 4:1-2 freely translated.

³¹ Hanko.

the demise of foundationalism brought about largely by the increasing influence of postmodern thinking, some evangelicals have experienced authentic paradigm shifts, while many others are watching from the wings. Most leaders in the Church are only to the place that they realize the failure of Modernism and the signs of the decline of what had been Western Civilization. W. Jay Wood confirms,

One frequently hears in these postmodern days that foundationalism is dead. Unfortunately, these obituaries seldom identify the exact identity of the deceased. Some authors seem to think that all versions of foundationalism are of the form purposed by Descartes, Locke or logical positivists. Not only were there different versions of foundationalism available during the enlightenment (Thomas Reid's being a notable example), but there are now different versions as well.³²

The entire world is in crisis and the only option open seems to be “postmodernism.”

Beyond Modernity

There are many varied definitions and attempts to identify Postmodernism. Paul Lakeland³³ suggested that there are even a thousand different opinions on the equally varied differences. Considering the theological cultural expressions between North America and Europe, postmoderns seem to be anyone who is in any way re-evaluating the future, be it ever so slowly. Among American fundamentalists, postmoderns are still looked upon in a

³² W. J. Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1998), 203-4.

³³ Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

very negative sense, and mainly seen as moral relativists and deniers of all truth.³⁴ From reading the titles and book covers it appears that many, except the fundamentalists and some ultra-conservatives, are in some manner accommodating a postmodern agenda. This highlights the vast differences held regarding Postmodernism's nebulous identity. There is one common opinion; however, for most forms of postmodernism, and it is the radical rejection of the function of reason as represented in the dualism of the Enlightenment period. It is interesting that the relatively few that claim to have accepted postmodern tenets have not changed their doctrines or are "doing church" differently. Most of their theological activity seems to explain how they have really been postmodern all along.³⁵ The view of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture appears to continue as it was, and the fundamentalist legacy still remains entrenched, if only behind the scenes. Garrett Green thinks that, "One of the strongest indicators that modernity survives in our world is the persistent popular assumption that science and religion are somehow fundamentally opposed."³⁶ There might be a valid reason for this view, however, for those who hold to the miraculous nature of Christianity would see as Polanyi did,³⁷ that science cannot within itself validate the miraculous, for in so doing, it would negate that it was actually a supernatural event. Lesslie Newbigin is less kind to rationalism but does agree that,

³⁴ An example of an entire book dedicated to that opinion is: Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodernism*, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000).

³⁵ John R. Franke, 1-26.

³⁶ Garrett Green, *Theology, Hermeneutics, and Imagination: The Crisis of Interpretation at the End of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18.

³⁷ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 284.

“protestant fundamentalism is, like liberalism, a child of the Enlightenment.”³⁸ The use of the historical-method and the continued concept of biblical authority, Newbigin says, “leads to absurdity and arises from a false concept of biblical authority imposed on the Bible by minds shaped by the Enlightenment.” Many evangelicals who would deny a fundamentalist label, never the less retain the same doctrines and practice. Newbigin continues with an expression of appreciation of the fundamentalist’s rejection of scholarship that denies any real authority to Scripture, but said, “I cannot accept the kind of defense of the Bible that rests on a surrender to the very forces threatening to destroy biblical authority.”

The complexity involved with knowledge and reason seem to be another circle added to the growing collection already in hermeneutics’ kit. Discerning some of the Gnostic tendencies even of Postmodernism itself, Kevin Vanhoozer writes, “Postmoderns develop the Gnostic dichotomy body and spirit into a dualism of language and the world.”³⁹ It seems that this enemy is relentless in his games with us. Unfortunately, articulated subjectivity was one of the categories denied expression and evaluation within the Academy by its obsession for objectivity. Brueggemann recommended a way out; “over against the real threat of objectivism and the lesser danger of relativism, to attend to the practice of perspectivism,...that is, the world is perceived, processed, and articulated with one or another perspective, and a perspective has the power to make sense out of the rawness of experienced

³⁸ Newbigin, 85.

³⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 121.

life, even though it cannot be ‘proven’ or absolutely established.”⁴⁰ The demand for certitude and its evasiveness has been a major frustration for the academy. This has been Pentecostalism’s contention with them, that the scholars entrusted to faithfully tend the secrets of God’s truth allowed such an enemy as naturalistic rationalism access to the leadership of churches.

The Return Home for the Pentecostals and Charismatics

I would like to make a conclusion about the way ahead in consideration of mankind’s historic loss of eternal life with God. John wrote in chapter seventeen of his Gospel that Jesus identified eternal life as knowing both God and Christ. Repeated in word and spirit is Jesus’ yearning for unity and restoration of the whole family.⁴¹ Language, truth, meaning, and knowledge are holistically interrelated and interdependent. It is through them, we are told, we access that door that leads home, and hermeneutics can help give light to the passageway, which Christians must consider as sacred. If the Scripture is the lamp that illumines the path back home, without oil to provide a steady light to see not only our feet, but the lay of the land, limited as it may be, at best it is only striking matches and moving ahead in “spits and spurts.”

If we accept that the purpose of hermeneutics is to derive focused meaning from the Scriptures we read, we would do well to remember that as Christians we are foremost ministers of reconciliation, and then exegetes.

⁴⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 10.

⁴¹ John 17, Philippians 2, or Jesus’ superlative initiating the Passover meal, “with desire I have desired to eat this meal with you.”

The purpose of hermeneutics is to facilitate sound exegesis in order to equip all Christians to serve. If such service is about reversing the entropic corruption in the world, it must then be sacrificial; it will cost. There has to be an ongoing discipline in hermeneutics regardless of it being heavily loaded with contextuality and other burdens allied with the nature of writing. The journey we alluded to is real in a very tangible sense, and although not born of man's initiative, it cannot be presumptuous or passively undertaken. If Enlightenment is to truly lose its power and deceptive doctrines of dualism, that priesthood must be vanquished and those who serve in that Academy must return to the Church, which must be holistically holy. As the mind must serve the spirit with soundness and integrity, so also must the accoutrements of hermeneutics and exegesis, as well as those who serve at the altar.

Since the early eighteenth century an increased number of grassroots Christian movements developed in America, Europe and some of her colonies. Often called "Awakenings" and "Revivals," they were characterized by several distinct features. They were fundamental in strict adherence to Scripture. They were emotionally charged, and accompanied by a distinct awareness of the reality, operation, and presence of God. Having started as a desire to expand upon the Reformation in Europe, "revivalism" quickly spread to North America. Ernest Stoeffler stated, "A spiritual hunger grew in reaction to the coldness and formalism of the Protestant state churches. Drawing from diverse roots, Pietism emerged as a quest to apply Reformation doctrine to personal life."⁴²

⁴² Ernest Stoeffler, "Can These Bones Live?," *Christian History*, 10, (1986).

The particular doctrines of the leaders varied corresponding with the theological and political nature of their homelands. Regardless of the particular creeds, it was the preaching of the Bible that was preeminent and that which set the authoritative atmosphere in the gatherings. Many of those affected by what was considered a “visitation of the Lord” had been under both political and religious persecution, and the gospel that promised release from these forms of oppression was joyously received. The Age of Enlightenment had promised a war weary Europe a new future, and the people had a readiness to throw off the restraints of their past. Transitions were happening at all levels of society and the new season upon the Western world was one of release from superstitious fears, to the romantic ideals championed by the intellectuals, science, and the growing technology. The earlier dualism formulated by Descartes and foundationalists seemed to be the answer to the terrible conflicts that resulted from the past wars of politics and religion and the new land of North America seemed an even greater opportunity for some to cast off the old world. Even today the separation of church and state is viewed differently by Europeans than it is by Americans, and for Europe it means freedom *from* religion, while in America it is freedom *of* religion. For some God was not merely a deity, which was the best offered under Enlightenment, but a very present King, and one who did not share his throne with scientific humanism, or was his realm divided.

Both Europe and America readily embraced the apparent freedom provided by the dualism of the physical and the metaphysical world. However that split was perceived; abstract or material, Scripture or experience, faith or reason—the relevance was the same as the scriptural expressions used by Paul when he wrote of the “seen and the unseen” worlds. As voiced

in the “Lord’s Prayer,” or anticipated in Christian eschatology, such divisions have since been increasingly deconstructed toward a more comprehensive reality. God was not consigned to his quarters by philosophic decrees, and his manifested presence was to be expected in all realms, and hopefully facilitated by the Church. Those who believed and expected supernatural manifestations had different names, usually imposed upon them throughout this period of the Church’s history. They were suspected to be witches, Satanists, mystics, heretics, or even Pentecostals and Charismatics in the years following.

The focus within Pentecostalism historically was upon results with usually little thought regarding theological implications. Except for the attempt to respond to critics of “speaking in tongues,” no serious effort went into establishing credible apologetics. When theological issues were forced upon them for consideration, the Pentecostals embraced the closest doctrines that were held by “Bible Believing” churches, often from their own foundations prior to their Pentecostal “experience.” This was done without realizing that within those fundamental systems were roots of foundationalism that would continually plague Pentecostals and later, the Charismatics. Mixed in with many of these early churches was a Dispensational Eschatology most often acquired from the notes in the popular Schofield version of the Bible. Ironically, Pentecostals increasingly accommodated a theological system that denied the validity of the experience that was its distinguishing feature.

Almost a century later the Charismatic Movement brought evangelicals, liberals, and Catholics into what had been mostly a Pentecostal world view. This served the purpose of socially and doctrinally authenticating Pentecostal praxis. Many Charismatics were from older denominational

churches that were much less concerned with doctrinal purity than experiencing God in ways they had never done through their sacramental systems. The liberal persuasion of many of these churches was much less demanding than the fundamentalists, and demonstrated a more inclusive attitude. Since very little scholarship has developed within the community of North American Charismatics, from this point on in this thesis I will deal mainly with theology as understood within the Pentecostal fraternity, and generally use the term “spirit filled,” Pentecostals or “Post-Pentecostals” to include the larger expressions.

Foundationalism was already suffering major defeats within the Academy and Nietzsche’s “God is Dead” was heard in the halls of seminaries. Pentecostals had mainly focused on the gift of tongues as initiatory to what had become known as being “spirit filled,” a result of being “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” Charismatics had brought with them a more intellectually inquisitive approach to the Scriptures, and quickly other insights developed as they read Scriptures from the Pentecostal promises of a present manifestation of power. Within Pentecostalism there were, in contrast to the “wild behavior” fascination its critics emphasized, leaders with a strong Biblical emphasis upon the centrality of Christ alone.⁴³ Early fundamentalism’s attachment to Dispensationalism with its much publicized teaching on the imminent return of Christ motivated investigation into the scriptural prophecies of “the end time Church,” which awakened Christians to rethink their purpose and identity. Implicit within these questions and the rediscovered supernatural realms was an awareness of the darker realms. Deliver-

⁴³ Möller, 186.

ance, intercession and spiritual warfare became popular teachings, and many books were published on these, and other “spiritual” subjects.⁴⁴

Supernaturalism had been considered a long dark period of blight upon Christianity when Descartes moved to bring the confusing mixture of subjective and metaphysical issues into the light of objectivity and rationalism. There was a desire for a restoration to the early Hellenistic philosophically oriented church, and as new discoveries in science enlightened the world with reason and understanding, the false ideas and superstitions that had been prevalent began to disappear. Spirit filled Christians knew that not all of the mystical dimensions were false superstitions only within the mind. It is well known that what one usually discovers is determined by the purpose of the investigation, and the search for rational answers did find solutions for many conceptual errors. But even in this growing knowledge, the occult remained hidden in its darkness, secured under the rocks of rationalism. The authorities and powers in the heavenly realms were not rendered ineffective but oddly hidden by the light of rationalism, and so remain to this day. Christian rationalistic philosophy fails to recognize that it is not playing a game on a level field, and not all gestalt triggers or paradigm leaps are initiated from human or benevolent inspiration. Healthy interpretation cannot grow in such an environment, and an effective defense must be a part of any hermeneutic consideration.

The Pentecostal world view has always been decidedly mystical, and viewed by some scholars as a revival of the early heresy of Montanism⁴⁵ at

⁴⁴ Paul L. King, *A Believer with Authority: The Life and Message of John A. MacMillan* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2001).

the end of the 2nd century. Because of Modernity's strong alliance with rationalistic philosophies, both Pentecostals and Charismatics had usually been considered by other evangelicals as extremely irrational at best, and as deceived emotional fanatics, by their strong critics. Interestingly, Modern liberals had often looked at the entirety of evangelism in a similar manner, with the Pentecostals merely at one extreme of Fundamentalism. With the increasing demise of the American evangelical's still rather fundamentalist influence, the scene changed considerably, and the emerging atmosphere within the "liberal" Academy moved toward ecumenicalism, one which was slowly opening up to Pentecostalism. A leading Pentecostal from South Africa, David duPlessis⁴⁶ was one who boldly went through those open doors—all of the way to the Vatican. The windows of the supernatural that had been closed by the Enlightenment were opening, even if only interpreted by most as an ecstatic religious fervor. As many evangelicals in the middle of the 20th Century were preparing a rebuttal to the "death of god," Pentecostalism witnessed the birth of "The Jesus People," along with a less radical group called by the traditionalists, Charismatics.

At this point I would like to add that although the Charismatic movement seemed to start within mainline denominational churches, several minor Pentecostal branches during the middle 1800's prophesied that such a movement would take place. Larry Christian, a charismatic Lutheran researched this group in his book on the "Catholic Apostolic Church."⁴⁷ A Pentecostal derivative that was known as "Latter Rain," considered to be in

⁴⁵ Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series: Volume I* (Oak Harbor: Logos, 1997) Book V. Chapter XVI.

⁴⁶ Affectionately known world wide as, "Mr. Pentecost."

⁴⁷ My personal copy has been lost and I am unable to locate any information on it.

error by some Pentecostal churches, had significant influence in emerging Charismatic and post-Pentecostal doctrine. With the exception of some scholastic research into these movements, very little academic material was produced and most theological content must be distilled mainly from published sermons, periodicals, and web sites.

Catholic Charismatics

The Roman Catholic Church was also accommodating to this movement. Within several years of its first involvement there was a limited acceptance granted from Pope John. Catholic theologian Donald L. Gelpi wrote from ancient perspectives in the context of contemporary Charismatic practice, “After successfully resisting the attempt of Jewish converts to reduce it to post-exilic Judaic piety, the Christian community took root in a culture whose religious climate was a blend of polytheism, neo-Platonism, and Gnosticism. Of the three the most persistent and troublesome to the Christians was Gnosticism.”⁴⁸ The Catholics associated Montanus with other heresies, many resulting from Gnostic syncretism with pagan mystical religions. Almost 2000 years later The Latter Rain group spawned another much more radical one called “Manifest Sons of God,” existent in various forms today and rooted to ancient Gnosticism with special revelational teachings such as: Ultimate Reconciliation, the Doctrine of Inclusion, and the Illusionary Nature of the World, Death, and Satan.⁴⁹ I bring these aberrations out to

⁴⁸ Donald L. Gelpi, *Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint* (New York: Paulist Press, Imp, 1971) 104.

⁴⁹ This is from a World Wide Web personal web address owned by Gary Sigler, <http://www.sigler.org/kingdom/page1.html>, accessed 11/23/05.

be considered because of their rise and maintenance from purely subjective non-hermeneutically evaluated experiences. Dealing with exegetical problems involving evil, hell, and punishment has been very difficult, both intellectually and spiritually. Safeguards against deception and error are not accomplished by denial or dogmatic dismissal. This was done by many Fundamentalists in reaction to tongues. A few “proof texts,” a few “horror stories of abuse,” a dogmatic pronouncement, along with a few authoritative references, and one did not have to deal with the problem any more. Abdicated responsibility and reaction instead of a serious moral hermeneutic is more an incubator approach to spiritual health than is the admonition in Hebrews 5:14, where maturity is formed by learning to discern good from evil *within* the risk of involvement.

One Catholic position regarding the Charismatic is, “No finite human attempt to theologize the charismatic experience is closed to critical reflection.”⁵⁰ In the Catholic tradition, Ignatius of Loyola detailed some principles of spiritual discernment for those undergoing the experience of “Spiritual Exercises.”⁵¹ Gelpi made two other observations. “Although God does move the hearts of men, even authentic religious experience is capable of leading to interpretations, reflections, and resolutions which have no clear claim to divine inspiration. These interpretations and resolutions can adulterate and pervert the spiritual grace embodied in the authentic religious experience from which they originally emerged.” Sadly, they also considered what Protestants would claim as our fathers to be errant, be they Moravians, Waldensians, Anabaptists, or the whole of the Reformation and Pietism. It

⁵⁰ Gelpi, 123.

⁵¹ Ibid., 39-41.

seems that the “inner light” experience, although benign in and of itself, was the cause of many of the doctrinal aberrations and divisions of Protestantism. Many were viewed by Catholics as Gnostics. Accordingly, “The fatal blunder of the Waldensians lay in their confusion of inner enlightenment and theological competence.”⁵² Such problems were not solved by rationalism, or lack of zealous experience.

In a final conclusion they stated: “Divisive enthusiasm renders the Pentecostal experience individualistic, subjectivistic, factionalistic, dualistic, anti-institutional, anti-clerical, anti-sacramentalistic, anti-corporeal, anti-humanistic, destructively mystical, fundamentalistic, and rigoristic.”⁵³ Catholics attributed anything they considered as erroneous doctrine – such as Edwards’ *Treatise on Religious Affections*, as misinterpreting the “movements” of the Holy Spirit. They limited such activity as non-rational and mildly acknowledged the ecstatic manifestations, but did not deal with other activities such as prophecy and words of knowledge. Interestingly, they also attributed much of the doctrinal objections of the Protestants as being born from subjective religious experiences, as opposed to traditional sound theology. Admittedly, the Catholics have maintained an investigative openness to ongoing theological insights – at least as the intellectual pursuit goes. As far as any adjustments, it would be next to impossible.⁵⁴ For Catholic Charismatics the Pentecostal experience was officially limited to a “religious enthusiasm,” and accepted as long as it was considered only a personal emo-

⁵² Ibid., 11.

⁵³ Ibid., 205.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 125, 191-3.

tional response to religion. Other charismatic gifts were reported; however they were usually only acknowledged as functioning among ordained ministries. Historically the Roman Catholics considered spiritual manifestations of evil an integral part of their curriculum with a long tradition from the Dark Ages. Charismatic manifestation of supernatural activities within parishes were easily rationalized and even seen as confirmations of the ongoing subversion within Mother Church. Although early Pentecostals and Evangelicals,⁵⁵ especially those on mission fields, were familiar with witchcraft and demonic activity, it was the Charismatics, however, that exposed contemporary demonology with books and conferences, both teaching and demonstrating the reality and battle with the demonic and other satanic forces. Pentecostals have internally struggled with theological issues of the demonic, largely due to their reluctance to acknowledge their own vulnerability to the demonic world. It would prove that those on the mission field and those living in less comfortable quarters would find that darkness was always looking for shadows to occupy. I have included this in a little detail because it is of value in considering how the historic church approached problems that remain within Pentecostal subjectivity. Many Pentecostals today are just as the Catholics were, locked into doctrinal and traditional constraints. Textual interpretations accommodated the evils of the time, and that is something we must remember as we consider the way to do hermeneutics.

⁵⁵ K. Neill Foster, Paul L. King, *Binding and Loosing: Exercising Authority over the Dark Powers*, (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, Inc. 2000).

Personal Observations of the Charismatic Movement in America

There are several important differences among early American Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians.⁵⁶ A great many of the Charismatic meetings were held within the original denominational structures, but with a decidedly ecumenical attendance in “special” meetings. The traditional church meetings continued as usual, while other new gatherings brought together many from different expressions of Christianity. In a lounge of a Catholic Church in an evening meeting one could find Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and independents all sharing a distinct experience with the Holy Spirit. This was not usually centered on speaking in tongues. The experience was most often described as an awareness of the Presence and Reality of God. All else flowed out from that focus. Theological differences, worship styles, social and racial diversity did not hinder the sense of God’s presence, but only enhanced it. A Scripture commonly used to explain this occasion was John 12:32, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” NAU. (This was a good example of popular Charismatic hermeneutics at the time).

Many believed that God was especially pleased with their gathering. Another familiar Scripture teaching in church assemblies was that the Lord was present when several were gathered together in His name. In these Charismatic assemblies there was a subjective unity that far surpassed what was usually experienced in churches. It was in this atmosphere where mixed congregations, even with an occasional professional clergyman among the people, expressed it as if “they were sitting at the feet of Jesus.” From this

⁵⁶ Personal experience -1960s In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

posture ministry would often flow among the worship, prayer and testimony. There was a distinct feeling that God was there with them and it was occasionally confirmed by miracles and healings. The experience of God's presence usually resulted in an almost passive basking in the atmosphere, but some were animated to worship and praise, while yet a few moved about to pray and be an instrument for the Lord to bless others.

Personal differences, levels of social position and religious affiliation did not seem important. Ministry, guidance and exhortations freely came even from the elderly or young children. The maturity of the content and execution of these gifts seemed the same, whether from adult or child. In one manner or another, everyone actively participated in the occasion. Seldom were many Pentecostals there at those meetings, for they had their own "services" and traditions that had been functioning for years. Many Charismatics felt that Pentecostals thought that Charismatics were just "catching up" to where they had always been. But from the view of what was called, "Body Ministry," Charismatics who visited Pentecostal Churches were disappointed at what appeared to be very religious closed systems. Strong vertical authoritarian leadership seemed much more common than congregational participation. Although this was not necessarily the testimony of earlier Pentecostal movements, this difference resulted in a definite reluctance for the two groups to unite. What would now be recognized as expressions of post-modern issues were at work in those meetings: interactive participation, disregard for structural authority, open leadership, expectation of new experiences, disregard for time or other cultural signals, and a strong sense of community with an awareness of it being significant in the Grand Purpose of what was happening. Most important, there were no rule books, and most

had set their mind, not to “off,” as the critics would predict, but to a high state of sensitivity that they would be able to know “what the Spirit was saying.”

As those meetings continued, many developed into churches with their distinct Charismatic liturgies. As these churches became similar to traditional “established” churches, the previous distinction from Pentecostal churches diminished merging often into what became the Faith movement. Some remained Charismatic and were either assimilated into their denominational roots or became Independent churches. In this context the Church Growth movement started, with many of its leaders coming with early Charismatic influences. The initial experiential atmosphere was no longer a regular occurrence. The more recent “visitation” popularized with the Vineyard Churches known as “The Toronto Blessing” in 1994 did see a return of these manifestations, and when I attended, sensed a familiarity. Reports of similar activities independently happening on a global scale seemed to come from even remote communities. This period was short lived but touched many people around the world, and primed the Pentecostals for another paradigm shift.

Moving Beyond Pentecostalism

The first experience of a person “Baptized in the Holy Spirit” in a Pentecostal context is usually a paradigm shift from a secular to a religious world view. The previously inherited Cartesian separation of a defined reality remote from the spiritual world collapses into one. A heightened awareness of the “reality” of God that had been dimmed by naturalism suddenly breaks through. What is often described in one’s initial “born again” conversion can be magnified to such a degree that conventional social protocol be-

comes insignificant in comparison to the encounter with Christ. That such an overpowering effect should bring accusations of excess should come with no surprise, for those involved with the initial Pentecostal event were accused of drunkenness. Contrary to observation, it is not the overwhelming emotion that envelopes the individual, but it is the impact of encountering Christ in such a previously unknown degree. Christianity is no longer a theological matter, and will probably never again be one. Francois Möeller wrote, “It is clear that in the Pentecostal paradigm, truth is related to Christ Himself and not to any theological or even biblical concept...It is a result, the consequence of the encounter with Jesus Christ as the Baptizer in the Spirit; it is an experience in the God-human relationship.”⁵⁷ This is a direct return to that relationship lost in the Garden, at least as humans are able to experience it this side of the eschatos. Pentecost is the celebration of the resurrection, on the “glory” side of the cross. Contemporary Christianity rightly acknowledges their participation in the cross, but Pentecostals celebrate their participation in the Resurrection. The former requires one kind of faith, the latter, another. Rationalism unavoidably acknowledges death, but is silent before the Resurrection. Doctrinal Christianity encourages one to participate in the cross, but cannot lead into the power of its Great Harvest.

A second observation that Christians sometimes experiences after coming through Pentecostal’s portal into the world of the Spirit is they seem to have a new Bible. The new experiences that are encountered usually produce a hunger to take them into the Scriptures. For those who may have read the Bible in their early Christian beginnings, it seems the appeal now is to find Christ as he related to the early believers. As an awareness of uniquely

⁵⁷ Möller, 186-7.

common experiences build a sense of timeless community and bridges the gaps of a distant culture, there comes a communion of the spirit that eludes scholars trying to fuse the horizons through philosophy and linguistic speculations. The Pentecostal experience is not just a different Christian experience, but it is deeper, and it can be lost⁵⁸, because it is relational which is of itself, personal communion with a personal God. What all Christians have, in their own way, experienced at times in their walk with Christ is brought to a different level of communion. It is not a part of a dichotomy of experiences, but an ever growing involvement with the person of Christ. Some question if they had misread their Bible⁵⁹ from the beginning, but the root somehow goes back to the Fall in the Garden, and it is the job of those who are commissioned by the Lord to help the church interpret the way back from scientific rationalism into spiritual reality.

Within the Pentecostalism-Charismatic brotherhood there is disagreement on the particular manifestations and a necessary time frame, but the commonality is an experiential transformation into a new reality. As if entering into a parallel universe, the familiar has not become less so, but it has been invaded by new shapes and shadows, forms and ghosts, some holy, others—not. Whatever interpretive scheme a Pentecostal has, it must accommodate a new host of characters in an unfolding drama in which he is now a major player, and it is not a play, but real! Eyes now wide open, patterns, before unseen, now reveal cosmic relationships. Vern Poythress⁶⁰ ex-

⁵⁸ Rev. 2:4.

⁵⁹ See, Moisés Silva, ed., *Has the Church Misread the Bible: Today's Hermeneutical Challenge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 31.

plains that even in regeneration, the work of the Spirit affects people in the deepest and fullest way. He continues to say that the Spirit's work is more than merely giving understanding to a person in an intellectual way or with a new analogy. He does not question that insight and analogies are able to be gained biblically, but also insight is able to be given into one's own life and experience. I would add a perspective from the gospel account of Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus. In verse 3 of John 3, Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Two verses later again, Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (NKJ) Either Jesus is equating the two events, or is indicating that "seeing" occurs with regeneration, but "entrance" requires an experience like the one Jesus had with John the Baptist. This was an entrance into sacrificial ministry, testing, power, but from an event where the Father acknowledged him by speaking with an audible voice. The only other two additional times this happened was when Jesus appeared on the mountain with Elijah and from there set his face "as a flint" toward the cross; the other as Jesus taught his disciples about the sacrificial death a seed embraces to reproduce its kind. This too was all too clear in his mind as he anticipated the cross and also the joy of his coming harvest called Pentecost. Paul was commissioned with the Father's blessing objectively audible. This is incarnational hermeneutics.

⁶⁰ Vern S. Poythress, Moisés Silva, Ed., *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, Science and Hermeneutics: Implications of Scientific Method for Biblical Interpretation*, "Models in Science and in Biblical Interpretation" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 491.

Preparing for New Paradigms

We live in a world of our own construal. —the constructed world attains for us the character of objectivity, for it seems to be external to our personal consciousness, and we appear to experience the world with others. Nevertheless, as the demise of naïve realism has led scholars from a variety of disciplines to conclude, we do not live in a universe that is simply a given, external reality. We do not inhabit the world-in-itself.—Hence, scientists now generally view their proposed theories and models as ‘candidates for reality’

—to cite Arthur Peacocke’s descriptor more than simply reflections of reality itself.⁶¹

Commenting on Thomas Kuhn and the necessity of what might appear to be a random choice of a metaphysical position (or choice of a ‘religion’), van Huyssteen says how scientists must choose between theories, “In contrast to Popper, in whose view the problem of choosing a theory must ultimately be solved by logical criteria, Kuhn maintains that both the choice of theories and development of scientific knowledge are ultimately explained by sociological and psychological factors. This means that a certain value system always plays a role in the scientist’s choice of theories.”⁶² Things we seemingly did “naturally” seemed to be getting much more complicated. Kuhn’s philosophical insights of science and the world changed the direction that even scientific realization could take. Orderly advance of Modernism

⁶¹ Grenz, *Beyond*, 271.

⁶² Wentzel van Huyssteen, *Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 57.

was now discontinuous and results seemed to continually evade expectations.

Some of the questions brought into the Church for this generation to answer are enumerated by Stanley Grenz⁶³. How should theology respond to the collapse of the modern worldview? How can Christian Scripture that emerged in particular ancient contexts exercise a normative function for culturally diverse incarnations of Christian theology? What is the value of past theological formulations? What is the role of culture in theological reflection?

The context of this pursuit is acceptable within the postmodern culture, and needs to be developed by Pentecostals who have answers within their roots. Grenz's appraisal in understanding this culture's motives comes more as a rejection of Modernity than of any specific unique agenda. Post-conservative evangelicals would hold that- "Broadly speaking, the term postmodern implies the rejection of certain central features of the modern project, such as its quest for certain, objective, and universal knowledge, along with its dualism and its assumption of the inherent goodness of knowledge. It is this critical agenda, rather than any proposed constructive paradigm to replace the modern vision, that unites postmodern thinkers."⁶⁴ Paradigm leaps are more often gifts, than earned accomplishments.

Grenz gives one positive observation that postmodern evangelicals should hold; theological endeavors should be as a servant to the Christian narrative. In the growing academic curriculum, Deconstructionism has de-

⁶³ Grenz, *Beyond*, 11.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

veloped an understanding that individual concepts are inter-related to the whole, and this also applies within academic disciplines. What were only perceived as shared interests in the past are now seen as merged in a manner that boundaries are no longer identifiable as always distinct, especially theological categories. We cannot use the old tools with their customized shapes to forge the way ahead. Postmoderns have brought understanding to what had been in the past considered as peripheral and of little importance. In the context of chaos, which Western culture now seems to be moving through, little “things” take on new explosive significance. When Scripture tells us that God causes all things to work together for our benefit, it is not merely an addendum like a bandage to facilitate the healing of the wounds of life. “All things,” do indeed, work together and it is crucial to understand that God is interacting existentially with the “living out” of our lives. We must be careful to engage a holism that includes the past as well as our present direction into the future. This does not happen in a determinative causal manner where the pattern of the past is the promise of the future, but as a dynamic holistic multidimensional sphere. All things, even the past, are still with us, and without God’s intervention, where we are in the present would not be good, and for some, it is not. This is one of the reasons I have included the historical perspective in this section of my thesis, even though the information is readily available in numerous books. The redemption of mankind also brings the restoration of creation and the things it contains.⁶⁵

In developing this thesis I will mainly deal with several relevant issues considered in the theology of the Holy Spirit, the nature of the re-

⁶⁵ Rom. 8:20-22.

deemed believer, and the cosmic world view. Some supplementary considerations will be implications within the Pentecostal theological framework. A *Hermeneutic Organizational Matrix* will be considered in the exploration as an aid for the reading of Scripture. Our approach must have metaphoric substance, like the “ears to hear” that Jesus referred to in his teachings.⁶⁶ This involves a quickened part of our spiritual mind, and can be cultivated and exercised within the world we live.

Even formulating a hermeneutic “method⁶⁷ is itself a ‘message,’ and as such, itself an unavoidable engagement in constructive theology.”⁶⁸ I would suggest that such hostility by postmodernism to formulations is more an agnostic rejection of Modernity’s failed attempt to supply answers than it is a disinterest in the actual questions. The existence of Evil and the resulting suffering are probably the early questions in the minds of primitive mankind long after the Fall faded from their memory. Job is considered by some sources the oldest recorded book and it confronts the problem head on. These questions are ancient and became relevant to mankind immediately after embracing Evil and were evident in Adam’s personal self awareness. That the idea of self awareness should appear as Descartes’ basic presupposition is not surprising,⁶⁹ but is one that appeared too late and well after the Garden gate had closed. But self awareness is a symptom of the lack of the

⁶⁶ Scientists have actually located the area of the brain that processes metaphors. World Wide Web: <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000BE01D-E7E3-1294-A7E383414B7F0000&sc=I100322>, Scientific American.Com, “Brain Region Linked to Metaphor Comprehension,” News, May 26, 2005.

⁶⁷ Grenz, *Beyond*, 239, 261.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁹ Descartes’ “I think therefore I am.”

Source and can become a part of decaying humanity; regardless of humanistic attempts, we do not look very healthy in the mirror.

These answers became relevant after evil was embraced by Adam in the Fall, and the (entropic) realm was closed. Irenaeus questioned that we lost God's image we had in the Garden at creation.⁷⁰ Epistemological roots found fertile soil in self-realization, which, to this day, fails to realize its propensity to create idols. The gods created by rationalism might be more mature than the Greek and Roman deities, but even the philosopher's more altruistic creations are always far from Yahweh and His story.

Why Post-Pentecostals Need Their Own Hermeneutics

This subtitle could sound patronizing or unsuitably sectarian. Agreed that the designation as a Pentecostal or charismatic is only one of many labels applied to a particular genre of Christianity, and a much less provocative term might be "Spirit-filled." Of course that designation has its own complications, but it does focus on a particular distinction. In *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* it states, "The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is the secret of the Church's power. It is the greatest need in every sphere of Christian activity, that the message of salvation might be proclaimed with the Divine unction, which alone can insure its success."⁷¹ In the entire 600 pages there is no precise definition of Pentecostalism, except to describe it in terms

⁷⁰ "Irenaeus understood the image to refer to man's freedom and reason and likeness to the gift of supernatural communion with God which was lost in the Fall." Sect 7, ch 31.ii Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL Victor Books, 1986).

⁷¹ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" (Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1987) 304.

of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as initially experienced at Pentecost. Almost apologetically, it acknowledges that, “The Pentecostal Movement has been accused of being an experience-centered movement, and indeed it is! But it is also a Bible-centered movement.”⁷² I make this observation to call attention to the continuing struggle to emerge from foundationalism that still demands our allegiance.

As Pentecostals and other Spirit-filled groups come into their distinguishing identity they bring along with them their traditions, which in our present interest is their hermeneutics. This they have almost all inherited from Christian Modernism, which is presently unsuited for the task and expectations as we move away from the modern world. Words used in the above paragraph, namely, “secret,” “power,” and “unction,” are all part of defining the Spirit-filled experience according to the traditional Pentecostal paradigm. Jesus’ admonition had been to remain in Jerusalem until they would receive power to “be” witnesses. Whatever was involved in the days ahead would not only require authority, but power. John in his epistle ties the word “unction” (*chrisma*) epistemologically to the truth of the Gospel, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” (1 Jo 2:20 NIV) Christians read in Scriptures that they are to be like Jesus and do what he did,⁷³ but their mentors discourage such thinking as even blasphemous. Still searching for an exemplar, they look to Paul, or Peter. The cessationalists again, used their hermeneutics to prove their theology. Frederick Brunner makes the succinct observation that, “It is important

⁷² Ibid., 27.

⁷³ John 14:12—in the context of receiving the Holy Spirit.

to the Pentecostal that what he reads in his New Testament be able to happen *today*.”⁷⁴ Those who are Spirit-filled and experience life on a different plane look to the Scriptures to find understanding of things that were once secret, but now the natural and the spiritual world are in the process of appearing together. Zimmermann, in his desire to open up a dialogue between philosophy and theology quotes Bonhoeffer:

There are, therefore, not two realms [i.e., a realm of grace and a realm of nature], but only the one realm of Christ-reality [Raum der Christuswirklichkeit], in which the reality of God and world are united...Not two competing spheres that coexist and contend with each other about their limits so that questions about these limits would be decisive ones for history; rather all of reality is already drawn into Christ and brought together in him [in ihm zusammengefasst] and only from this center and towards this center does history move. (Bonhoeffer, *Ethic*, DBW 6. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1998)⁷⁵

For Pentecostals this has other implications, perhaps more spiritually mundane, but for those that also see just one reality. Contemporary Christians, as did the saints at Pentecost, need Christ’s power for what is ahead; to understand their story and the provisions within Scripture with a hermeneutic that functions in both worlds. There are several forms of hermeneutics practiced by Pentecostals, and present academics have undergone some changes toward postmodern understanding. Interpretative study has been drawn more from a need to responsibly engage postmodern questions than from paradigm shifts within the Pentecostal Community. The most commonly used hermeneutics are still based on the historical exegetical method

⁷⁴ Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 23.

⁷⁵ Zimmermann, 322.

inherited from the Antiochene School. Although there is usually a definite emphasis upon authorial intent⁷⁶, the reader continues to be left out of the process.⁷⁷ The problem of not being able to engage Scripture with relevance has resulted in some Christians having a limited appreciation of its divine potential. John Franke encouragingly states that this should not be. “On the basis of biblical texts that speak of the continuing guidance of the Spirit to the earliest believers, subsequent generations of Christians have anticipated that the Spirit would guide them as well.”⁷⁸ “Many within Pentecostal-Charismatic leadership have come to the glaring conclusion that biblical illiteracy in their churches is commensurate with that of middle-America Christians, who are migrating to television and media for knowledge of their religion.”⁷⁹ Of course the Scripture was never paper and ink, but with the escalation of technology and megachurches with immense budgets, this only reinforces this trend. Within the church community this has been exacerbated by failure to spiritually involve the reader and connect them with their theological roots regarding the experiential guidance of the Holy Spirit. This, among other reasons explains why charismatic leanings toward the Bi-

⁷⁶ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody: Hendrickson Pub. Co., 2000), 37, 43.

⁷⁷ Some fail to see the limitations of *authorial intent* as the sole basis for hermeneutics. Most of us have witnessed a situation where, during a lively discussion, another person picked up and further amplified something the speaker said. Possibly the speaker himself had not worked through his own implications. This is similar to situations in mathematics where everything after the axioms are given is implicitly there, “waiting” to be discovered. It is now commonly accepted by many that we all communicate (sender *and* receiver) out of a very complex context. The Scripture perhaps refers to this when it says we “prophesy in part,” in 1 Cor. 13:9 (in an epistemological and eschatological context). Except for a few, the question is not that context matters, but to what degree and is it navigable.

⁷⁸ Franke, 21.

⁷⁹ Barna Updates, “More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church,” March 14, 2005, *This website gives specific statistics.*
<http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=184>.

ble are considerably different from other evangelicals. Encouragingly, they ask richer questions from the Scriptures. Because of the awareness and fear of, not just intellectualism, but of demonically orchestrated deception, the apparent and uncritical certitude of traditionalism has been assumed as a safe harbor for many. Evangelicals continue to sail in the harbor with a great sense of impunity. Still the inner leading of the Holy Spirit continues to draw Spirit-filled believers with expectations beyond most that only seek intellectual knowledge. Some reasons Pentecostals turn to the Scriptures are listed:

1. As a common way to hear a word or communication from God. This would primarily be a supernatural sense of revelation from the Holy Spirit, confirmed internally by a witness of the Spirit, and/or confirming circumstances, with the expectation of an accompaniment of faith. God's action in this could also involve the selection of certain other Scriptures, from a single text, to an entire chapter. This would be a part of what is traditionally thought of as, "being led by the Spirit."
2. To receive a sense of spiritual reality.
3. In a sense of it being God's will at the specific time, as an urging by the Spirit."
4. To receive encouragement and edification.
5. As a cultural expectation.
6. For correction and "getting right" with God.
7. For direction and guidance.
8. In order to have prophetic perspective on personal or global circumstances and events.
9. In order to minister to others.
10. To have fellowship with God, and the Spirit.
11. To express devotion and affection. Worship.
12. Bible Study as an academic endeavor, either formal or personal.
13. To find help in a time of great need.
14. To find an apologetic against criticism.

There are even greater reasons why God *takes* Christians to the Scriptures, and often they “just find themselves there.” Reading the Bible is still the major source of Revelation, but not the only one. Often “out-of” context and “correct” meanings are irrelevant, but not merely due to lazy thinking or lack of academics, but because they “fit” the problems asked. There is, however, a dangerous “religious” regard for the Scriptures such that they often become used as a talisman.⁸⁰ That God appears to occasionally meet such expectations in disregard that such practices might be idolatrous, is testimony of the graciousness extended to His people. Confirmation and guidance are also discerned through circumstances, “coincidence,” and counsel by others, and most often by recognizing the internal subjective direction of the Spirit. They see this as the Biblical pattern, especially in the New Testament. Seldom do Pentecostals and Charismatics read the Scripture for doctrinal or dogmatic reasons unless in a formal setting. Of course, if one goes to Scripture looking for a doctrinal normative, he will find (make) one. A practice from early Pentecostalism (derived from the Old Testament) was, the pastor/prophet/leader—the “man of God ‘went up the mountain’ to hear the Word of the Lord for the people.” In contrast, most Charismatic churches encourage the people themselves to make that journey. Usually the typical leadership model in more congregational fellowships discourages the abusive practice of a single leader as the only one able to “hear from God”.

⁸⁰ This might be likened to the use of the Urim and the Thummim, or the practice of casting lots. Lev 16:8; Acts 1:2; Ex 28:30. Often the practice is opening the Bible at random, and reading “what the Lord would say.”

The Academy

Built upon religion and philosophy, possibly as far back as 385 BC in Athens, and developed throughout the ages, the generic “Academy” has become a term for adjudicating bodies for establishing academic credibility and theological protocol. It should be no surprise that its dogmatic adherence to Cartesian conformity in the past dictated the qualifications for acceptance, which today has been subdivided within denominations, or schools of thought which are often geographically described.

Because American primitive Pentecostalism had not been born within the oversight of the academy and seemingly had no desire for such recognition, it was generally considered suspect, but mildly tolerated because it did, when pressed, ascribe to basic orthodox doctrines and Biblical convictions. What was later to be known as the Charismatic Movement shared many of the Pentecostal experiences as well as the consequential contextual perspectives, and attempted to bring them into their particular traditional church structures. Initially the academy was European centered while America was considered academically immature. This caused considerable suspicion about outbreaks of religious enthusiasm during those centuries, even though Europe experienced equally powerful parallels. Early revivals within America were often the products of Wesleyan ministers, but few scholars are aware that many of the initial spiritual awakenings resulted from Presbyterian preachers.⁸¹ These were discouraged by Presbyterian authorities who withdrew their support. It was in this vacuum that Methodists took the man-

⁸¹Timothy K. Beougher, *Little Known Facts about Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders*, "Camp Meetings & Circuit Riders—Untamed Faith on America's Early Frontier," *Christian History*, Issue 45 (1995).

tle and the now famous “Arbor Meetings” continued evangelizing the growing rural communities. The historical context of the influence of dualism’s struggle with early Montanism illustrates that, just as Descartes did not discover self-awareness, he also only brought to light the conflict initially born in the Garden. Until emerging leaders see the present inertia against moving out of Foundationalism as a necessary developmental stage in civilization, they will not understand that any solution must ultimately deal with the root cause, whose solution is not able to be found through modern philosophical constructs. Postmodernism, and that which follows that, will not remain free from the curse outside of the work of Christ and his Kingdom.

The rigid stance of Constructionism served both the Fundamentalist and Liberal equally well. It became the normative filter for any thoughtful scholarship, especially in the disciplines of religion and philosophy, and still reigns over much of the theological landscape—including the construction of thesis and journals. For postmodern theologians it is similar to a situation where one must deliver a lecture on the topic of “The Bankruptcy of the Lecture Method of Teaching.” The lecture’s success would only serve to disqualify his thesis. The lack of scientific or rational verifiability of subjective experience, especially what might be considered supernatural, has disqualified modern religious metaphysics from any serious consideration except in the speculative musings of philosophers and theologians. Although religion itself had battled experience with natural science in this arena, religion found itself increasingly marginalized in Western society. This is one reason why “subjectivity” has never been taken seriously enough to merit responsible investigation.⁸² Yet we are told, “Reformed epistemologists

⁸² The Roman Catholic Church might be the exception to this charge.

claim that more often than not we come to religious belief through the stimulation of our cognitive faculties by certain kinds of experience rather than by way of argument or inferential reasoning.”⁸³

This conflict continues into the Twenty-first Century as Christian fundamentalists attempt to challenge evolution in the scientific and legal courts of America. Not only do they fail to recognize that any victory would be minimally effective as an apologetic, but also winning a temporary acknowledgement of deism is far from justifying Christianity. Spirit-filled Christians understand Paul’s admonition that our conflict is with principalities and powers in spiritual realms,⁸⁴ and it has been the mission of the Church to incarnate that truth. To most evangelical theologians there has only been dualism with no convergence existing between soul and spirit. Except for basic exegetical or psychological studies, that area has been thought settled and of little interest academically. One notable Christian philosopher and theologian who has labored in this area of the academic vineyard is Dallas Willard. His paper on *Spiritual Disciplines* is a welcomed addition.⁸⁵ Religious postmodern-conscious leaders have challenged their critics for failing to see that they are cursing the society, and even the harvest field in which they are called to minister. The very nature of many of the arguments serve only to confirm that a foundationalist dogmatic mindset is driven to indiscriminately lump everyone together without knowledge of the beliefs of the vast body of Christians united in what ultimately should be a common goal.

⁸³ Wood, 164.

⁸⁴ Eph. 6:12.

⁸⁵ Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation, and the Restoration of the Soul,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Vol 26, No.1 (1998): 101-109.

A critic of Postmodernism, Zane Hodges laments, “Postmodernism has taken the final step and has dismissed language itself as a legitimate conveyor of truth. To the postmodernist, all communication is theory-laden and can never point to ultimate reality of any kind.”⁸⁶ Later he concludes, “It is plain that such an approach to the Scriptures robs them of any inherent authority and places the interpreter above the text rather than under it. What the interpreter will hear is not the voice of the Lord, but his own voice. And in postmodernism that is all the interpreter really wants to hear! From one point of view postmodernism is the ultimate attempt to place man in authority over the Scriptures rather than place the Scriptures in authority over man.” With only minimal theological understanding of legitimate postmodern challenges, much of the Church has rushed into battle, having failed to discern exactly what it is fighting. But this is changing as the global power centers shift from the historic Western Judeo-Christian world view.

Many reports are on record from within a large number of nations confirming the explosion of Christian converts. This has occurred at such a rate that within large established evangelical denominations, converts have grown faster than their ability to be formally embraced into fellowship. Many miracles have been reported, some well documented.⁸⁷ Mainly having been “self-taught” only by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures, leadership has emerged from within small home churches which seem to naturally reproduce themselves within a year or less.⁸⁸ This has facilitated a relational

⁸⁶ Zane Hodges, "Post-Evangelicalism Confronts the Postmodern Age" (*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Spring 1996, pp. 3-14).

⁸⁷ James H. Rutz, *MegaShift: Igniting Spiritual Power* (Colorado Springs: Empowerment Press, 2005).

network and an expanding religious world view that has been very much in accord with post-Pentecostalism's praxis. But resistance remains.

As records have shown during past visitations from God, there are those that would want to own and control these events. During these seasons, sensitive leadership stands aside, hesitant to even disturb what is seen as a sovereign activity of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal eschatology has envisioned these "movements of the Spirit" as ocean waves. Popular writer and academic, Leonard Sweet has written a scholarly text in postmodern style, which has been well received by "non-professional" Christians.⁸⁹ But all does not move forward, and Charismatics as a movement have dwindled around the world. Both the biblical record and church history have demonstrated that, *at least with spiritual* paradigm jumps, reversion does happen⁹⁰, and usually it is a return to prior levels of spiritual malaise. From the immediate days after the crucifixion to Revelation's exhortation to return to one's first love, "backsliding" is, sadly, not foreign to any church age. Perhaps this indicates that spiritual paradigm changes are different from those within the natural mind. This is the period where maturing discipleship is crucial, and should involve a hermeneutic element in directed discipleship. Even though some leaders have projected almost unimaginable growth ahead, ships are built for weathering the storms, and Pentecostal eschatology has warned of battles up ahead.

⁸⁸ Garrison, 39.

⁸⁹ Leonard Sweet, *Soulsunami* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

⁹⁰ Green, *Imagining*, 54-58, Kuhn holds that this does not happen. This would make a worthwhile research endeavor.

In the following chapters we will look more closely at two underdeveloped concepts; one will involve deepening traditional Pentecostal theology regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, and the other will explore the nature of a redeemed believer, and how it affects that functional relationship. This will be considered within the context of the Spirit-Filled Christian's world view and the hermeneutic implications. Following this we will conclude with a suggested hermeneutic framework using a management model involving multiple authorities and inter-relational functioning. One teacher commented that leadership is like a group of campers lost in a forest, and the leader happens to be the one that has the compass at the time. The "mechanism" of *revelation* remains a major study, and we will assume at this point that it involves our natural consciousness and its response to the engagement of the spiritual mind with God. Paul reveals some places where one needs "to land" with our paradigm leaps and he does this as he reveals his prayers for several of the churches. We single out his prayers⁹¹ with a view that they are typical aspects that need divine impartation beyond what pure didactic efforts alone can achieve. Common elements within these prayers are rooted in epistemology; wisdom, revelation, personal knowledge, discernment, and understanding. Necessarily following is a personal commitment to incarnate what the Spirit revealed as the proper response to any given revelation.

⁹¹ Eph. 1:17-21; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:10-14.

Incarnational Goals

The goal of any hermeneutic effort should be in the meaning of the results produced. This objective has both ontological and eschatological implications which must be realized within a cosmology involving malevolent forces allied against the Kingdom of God. Again, these three arenas come into view from the testimony of Paul's own mission to the Church, which are found within the context of his own writings. Most present Pentecostal hermeneutics fail to engage these dynamic aspirations. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions." (Colossians 1:24 NAU) I recognize that this Scripture conflicts with evangelicalism's "finished work" doctrine, but if we understand Pentecost as the Harvest, Christ planted two hands in order to reap millions. I do not want to engage this issue here and it might be better served with the familiar admonition that one should "daily take up his cross." A problem exists in that this phrase is familiar and too innocuous, and the cross is not harmless. If the Scripture really is the expressed will of God, and if it is able to cleans, save, heal, and all of the dozens of things the Scriptures tell us it can do; hermeneutics is not doing an autopsy on a dead frog, but more like doing dental work on a mildly sedated lion. At least surgeons scrupulously wash before their operations. I am not advocating any hermeneutic liturgy, but we are not operating in a sterile environment, and because we wear a Red Cross professional medic arm band does not make us immune from enemy fire. The cross is about evil, and death, and the cost it takes to reverse that growing entropy. When the curtain was torn in Christ's crucifixion, it was not just that man again had access God, but God had access to the world through man, and order began to be restored "at a cost." Jesus prayed in his "priestly

prayer,” “As you sent me, so have I sent them.” Again, the repeated ultimate purpose was voiced, that we might be one. That is a major reversal of spiritual entropy, and Paul in Colossians indicated he recognized his part in it.

World view is a determining context we bring to our hermeneutics, and how high one stands determines how much of the world one can see, and what horizons will be fused. I, as have others⁹², proposed that there is none higher than the cross. Paul determined to know it above all else. Walter Brueggemann commenting on Phi. 2:5-11, which is another cry to climb the cross, says, “That tradition of radical criticism is about the self-giving emptiness of Jesus, about dominion through the loss of dominion, and about fullness coming only by self-emptying...The empty one who willingly surrendered power for obedience is the ultimately powerful one who can permit humanness where no other has authority to do so.”⁹³ Unlike philosophers, Christ did not merely proclaim the way; he was the way in more than as metaphorical imagery.

Elementary foundationalist hermeneutics gave some good directions and principles to discern literary genre and observe what was before the reader as a beginning. Who has not been rewarded by understanding Hebrew parallelism? We certainly know such things affected the author, as they do the reader. Saying that the “real” author of the Scripture is the Holy Spirit affirms what most of us believe, but the next step is a little more evasive. When Christ opened the Scriptures in the Synagogue, how did he explain them? If he, as our exemplar, spoke with authority, can the Holy Spirit do

⁹² Examples: Alister E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1996), 40-42 and Zimmermann, 67-68.

⁹³ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 78.

the same through us? It seemed that Paul thought he did from his comment in Romans. “-what I spoke and proclaimed was not meant to convince by philosophical argument, but to demonstrate the convincing power of the Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:4 NJB) When Jesus unfolded the Scriptures on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, he did not have to wonder how much Moses saw of the cross when he laid down the healing procedure for leprosy⁹⁴; for he had his Father’s understanding. The two who heard his words later testified that their hearts were on fire; they experienced a power that was not merely convincing oratory.

In a short paper presented for a Pentecostal body in the United States, Harry Staiti noted one Pentecostal hermeneutic method beyond the more common evangelical historical/grammatical approach.⁹⁵ A well documented prominent observation is that Pentecostals view historical narratives as containing theological constructions with didactic value. He also refers to four common perspectives given by Roger Stronstad: *Pneumatic*, as Interpretation through experience with the Holy Spirit; *Holistic*, which involves Induction (exegesis), Deduction (Biblical Theology) and Verification in life–experience; *Pragmatic*, influenced by Charles Parham where present experience (including the ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’) coincided with Biblical experiences. *Genre*, or Literary style and authorial intent usually set the context.⁹⁶ Certainly in recent years Pentecostalism has generated an increasing presence in the academy, especially from the more predominate church

⁹⁴ Lev. 14:1- 7.

⁹⁵ *Pentecostal Hermeneutics*, Harry J. Staiti, World Wide Web: www.pcaog.org. Accessed Oct8, 2004.

⁹⁶ Roger Stronstad, “Trends in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” *Paraclete*, (Summer 1988): 1-12.

groups. The negative factor is that much of the passage has been along the same road of Modernism that others traveled. There is an awakening to the pressing needs before the Church⁹⁷ and the academicians are still faithfully mining Pentecostal doctrines, but it is still within the paradigms of Modernism. Even though feeble attempts to accommodate a more robust understanding of a previously impotent Reformed concept of inspiration is pursued, and experience has been embraced as a necessary outcome to the hermeneutic process, any light that has been produced is forced to be filtered through a Modern world view. Events are moving too quickly and questions will not wait for a transitional process.

Reworking differing views of concepts, and debating how some consider the chronology of the future are all that is left on the wrong side of the paradigm. Bultmann gave eschatology an existential meaning. Two extremes of neglect and overuse are mentioned, Grenz then comments: “Both all too readily separate eschatology from other topics of systematic theology, relegating it to merely one compartment within the corpus of Christian teaching. And both easily divorce eschatology from the life of the church, reducing it to simply the delineation of what will happen at some future time.”⁹⁸ All of this illustrates what Marius Herholdt wrote concerning the future of theology. “Postmodernism teaches that there is not a fixed body of theological truth available that needs to be communicated from generation to generation. The onus is rather on every generation to discover meaning for themselves

⁹⁷ i.e. Roger Stronstad, “The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology” (*Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement*, Series, 16)

⁹⁸ Grenz, *Foundations*, 242.

by means of metaphoric reference.”⁹⁹ It is the future’s unique task to integrate what is theirs, as theirs, along with the story of the road that brought them to where they are.

Incarnation involves joining systems and putting things that have been taken apart back together. This involves a cost since when something is taken apart, it is removed from a relationship and in so doing, it suffers loss. That which is lost “is” something, and must be acquired and then re-invested in its reconciliation. When we take God apart in our study of him, the pieces we are left with only are a fraction (fractals) of what was there before we presumptuously ripped them from him. Only in his great love for us did he allow this intrusion. The Scripture, “Taste and see that the Lord is good,”¹⁰⁰ has been at his expense. This is why eating his flesh and drinking his blood is his prerogative and is holy.

Apostolic Hermeneutics

Pentecostal hermeneutics is very much influenced by eschatological elements within their world view. As previously mentioned, Pentecostals expect to see what they read in the Bible happen in their life. Traditional evangelical theology that relegates observable intervention in the affairs of men only to the distant past or the unavailable future seems incredulous to Pentecostals. Although initially influenced by Dispensationalism, its popu-

⁹⁹ Marius D. Herholdt, Simon Maimela and Adrio König eds., *Initiation Into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics* (Pretoria: JL van Schaik, 1998), 223, 224.

¹⁰⁰ Ps. 34:8.

larity has been decreasing except within older mainline Pentecostal denominations. This has been caused by a renewed interest in Kingdom theology, such as that by G. E. Ladd,¹⁰¹ which allows, at least a partial presence of supernatural activity in the present.¹⁰² Modern Dispensationalism also was used as an argument for the cessation of the *charismata*, which also contributed to its lack of appeal, especially with the Charismatics. But Pentecostals hold an eschatological hermeneutic that is very similar to that of some of the first century Hebrew scholars.

Traditional Jewish forms of exegesis appear throughout rabbinic literature, which includes the Mishnah, the two Talmuds, and the Midrash literature. Jewish exegesis continued during ancient times, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and remains a subject of study today. Jews have centers for exegetical studies around the world which remain a part of each community. As exegesis matured in the church there was a growing awareness that contextualization¹⁰³ demanded greater understanding of the interpretative culture held by the authors of the Scriptures. The disciples themselves were uneducated, but should have had some familiarity with contemporary styles of commentary.¹⁰⁴ Even the foreigners were aware that the disciples were not academically trained; their encounter with the Holy Spirit changed something with them that prompted the observation that they were out of character. “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and un-

¹⁰¹ George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999).

¹⁰² Jesus’ statement regarding the significance in his casting out the demon.

¹⁰³ Silva, 75.

¹⁰⁴ Jewish exegetes have the title *meforshim*, meaning, commentators.

derstood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13 NAU) Perhaps there was a recognized similarity to that as recorded in Mat. 7:29 when Jesus taught in the Synagogue with authority, unlike the scribes. “When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. ‘Where did this man get these things?’ they asked. ‘What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!’” (Mark 6:2 NAU)

Pentecostals have been quick to relate the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with boldness, but seldom has the observation been made that one of the resulting miracles was their new found hermeneutic ability.¹⁰⁵ The supernatural presence of God communicating to man had, at Pentecost, been of His design and instigation. Marius Herholdt made the following observation:

The hermeneutic bearing of this is that the communication of hermeneutic effort is on God’s side, and not on human endeavor. Believers actively engage in the charismatic gifts, but it is God who speaks and makes his message known. The *kerygma* is not a static set of truths that waits to be discovered, for God speaks when believers speak as the Spirit gives them utterance. The input of the believer therefore contributes to a reader-response type of communicative understanding of the Word.¹⁰⁶

Most non-Pentecostal evangelical scholars are willing to include any such anointing as aspects of the Apostle’s unique commissioning as a New Testament canonical writer, of which they also do to the passages in John 14

¹⁰⁵ For an non-supernatural explanation see, Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 92 fn 40.

¹⁰⁶ Marius Herholdt, Simon Maimela and Adrio Konig, Eds. “Pentecostal and Charismatic Hermeneutics,” *Initiation into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics* (Pretoria: JL van Schaik, 1998), 429.

regarding the “Spirit of truth.” Peter Enns points to three reasons why this is questionable.

Should not one more readily assume that it is precisely their inspired, authoritative status that would demand they take God-breathed Scripture more seriously? Second, one could just as easily argue that it is precisely because they were the Apostles, to whom the inscripturation of the New Testament had been entrusted, that we should follow them. We follow them in their teaching, so why not in their hermeneutic? Third, and most importantly, we must remember that the ‘problematic’ ways in which the Apostles handled the OT cannot be addressed as a function of the apostolicity. In fact, if anything is not a sign of their apostolic authority, it is in how they handled the OT.¹⁰⁷

Richard Longenecker has commented on the apostle Peter’s hermeneutic style in his epistles, identifying the major emphasis as from the *pesher* school, which is very similar to the “this is that” interpretative method used by Pentecostals.¹⁰⁸ Before we turn our attention to that particular eschatological hermeneutic, I want to draw attention to parallel characteristics of early Apostolic exegesis that relate to Postmodern sensitivities.

Longenecker identifies four common presuppositions in all schools of Apostolic thought as: “Corporate Solidarity” which sees the family grouping of tribe or nation; “Correspondences in History” as a unique people of God and the Messiah with their own unique history or narrative; “Messianic Presence” which was an existential relationship with God and specifically with

¹⁰⁷ Peter Enns, “Apostolic Hermeneutics and an Evangelical Doctrine of Scripture: Moving beyond a Modernist Impasse,” “Can we do what the Apostles did?” (Article: *Westminster Theological Journal*, Fall, 2003), 16.

¹⁰⁸ Longenecker, 201.

with Christ through the Spirit; and “Eschatological Fulfillment” which was rooted in and conditioned by what already happened in the immediate past. He says, “The decisive event had occurred, and, in a sense, all else was epilogue.”¹⁰⁹ Where he looks at the decisive event as a peak, Enns sees a little brighter prospect in that which follows. “The eschatological moment is the apostolic message that Christ has come to fulfill one chapter of the history of God’s people and to begin another chapter to be completed at the consummation of all things.”¹¹⁰ In Heidegger’s way of thinking, Grenz makes it more immanent, “The future then, is an existential reality; that is, it gives meaning to our existence as it fosters our ability to transcend the present.”¹¹¹

“This—Is—That”

The term “this-is-that” is easily recognized as taken from Peter’s message at Pentecost relating what the people had been witnessing among the disciples as the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Particularly used by the Jewish exegetes since the Second Temple, the theme of both the restoration and present fulfillment was dominant. John and others used it, and although it was the dominant way Jesus dealt with the Scriptures, it alone does not cover the way Jesus applied the Old Testament to himself and what was about to come upon the people. It had a prophetic nature about it, but not such that it turned attention from the present, but that it actually ended the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 93-95.

¹¹⁰ Enns, 6. Even though this is a key element of *inaugurated eschatology* this thesis will not address those implications.

¹¹¹ Grenz, *Foundations*, 268.

present with the excitement and release of that which had been hoped for throughout their lifetime. One might, with proper religious imagination, consider how such a time as the second return of Christ would be taken emotionally by the church if it happened this very day. For Pentecostals and those that hold such understanding of the event for which they are called, emotion is a necessary spiritual derivative of faith realized. The authentic is not something manufactured by manipulation, but the result of an observed event. A prominent teacher once made a comment that a hungry man did not have to “talk himself” into being thankful for a juicy steak placed before him. Joyful excitement is an integral part of the event. Whether it was the “sacrifice of the expensive ointment” or his “silencing his critics as he rode into Jerusalem,” Jesus was not shy in accepting emotional response to his presence. Initially the rejection of the Montanists¹¹² was due, not to any wayward doctrine, but because of their “improper behavior.”

The relatively recent American reemphasis of the *peshet* type interpretation came about with a defined move of the Spirit known as “The Toronto Blessing.” This was a part of a number of “spiritual revivals” around 1994, which were mainly in South Africa, Great Britain, and North America. Reports from hundreds of small regions around the globe were reported, many of them isolated and seemingly had started with no outside influence. Although little attempt was made to track the origin, connections seem to indicate activity dating back to the end of World War One in Argentina,¹¹³

¹¹² “Even the fourth-century heresy hunter Epiphanius could find no serious fault with the movement. Still, the way Montanists practiced the faith made most Christians wary.” James D. Smith III, “Heresy in the Early Church: Christian History,” *Issue 51*, (Carol Stream, IL: *Christianity Today*, Inc.), 1997.

¹¹³ Reference to John Miller missionary. World Wide Web; <http://www.peniel-argentina.org/menue.htm>.

South America. The Toronto movement was associated with a Vineyard Church associated with John Wimber, and found criticism from fellow Charismatics due to some of the more unusual behavior during the meetings.

Mark Stibbe wrote a book in an attempt to counter some of the criticism. In it he brought to attention the Charismatic legacy of the “This-is-that” hermeneutic and later wrote “Four Waves of the Spirit” in *Skepsis* (Summer 1995) where he tied the movement to Ezekiel 47. Several books have been written on this movement, and one by a fellow Charismatic which identified the weakness of Stibbe’s exegesis.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately the arguments in both publications were still caught in the backwaters of foundationalist thinking and failed to navigate the main river. This is ironic because often teaching accompanying the movement involved the imagery in the Ezekiel passage¹¹⁵, with emphasis on “going deep enough into the river that one, no longer was able to stand, and had to abandon all to the flow of the current.” The emphases on the externals that accompanied God’s visitation seemed swallowed up in the existential consumerism of the Western world, even within this otherwise reputable church. [Desire for the loaves and the fishes still seem to be with us.] Peter Enns observes even as a Reformed scholar, that “‘apostolic hermeneutics’ has not had the influence it should. As I see it, a cause of this is, ironically, the influence of Enlightenment thinking on evangelical theology, specifically assumptions concerning standards of

¹¹⁴ Mark Smith, Vivian Culver, John Lyons, and Lloyd Pietersen, Ed., *The Mark of the Spirit: A Charismatic Critique of the Toronto Blessing* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998). See also a M.Th. dissertation http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/th_spirit.html; Robert J. May.

¹¹⁵ Ezekiel 47.

‘proper interpretation.’”¹¹⁶ The hermeneutic task before those who experience this “old” paradigm shift is not to redefine hermeneutics, or “rejoice that the demons obey us,” but grasp the significance of embracing the present—the “this,” part of “This-is-that”—without frustrating the purpose of its presence. In a song, written in the waning breeze that once came from Toronto, are the lyrics, “It’s not about me Lord. It’s all about you.”

¹¹⁶ Enns, 1.

CHAPTER 2

RETHINKING PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY

My initial approach in my proposal for this thesis brought me to reconsider the Garden, drawing attention that the initial cause of man's fall had hermeneutic overtones. In a sense, it was the prototype of the "hermeneutic of suspicion." The question of the serpent was context-loaded in a way we can only observe from minimal references. What we do know from the story is that there had been a cosmic battle that still continues. We are not living on a friendly planet. C. S. Lewis' science fiction trilogy aside, we seem to be living on a penal colony that is still in rebellion. There is no safe place, and even scholars need to recognize that the problem is more than just human finitude. Sin apparently did not begin with Adam as the cosmos was already in entropic decay. In the story of Christianity, this is the all encompassing singularly overruling theme. And yet this is a subject that has only engaged the contemporary academy's curiosity. The average Christians' appraisal of academics is often that they do not live in the real world. Surely there is "real life" existence outside of the study, and children have illness, and even scholars suffer from horrendous evil. Somehow in the midst of this life, the academy has managed to maintain its illusion of objectivity, and kept all of these "life issues" out of their work. Perhaps a connection should occur that something is deeply wrong with such a world view.

Kevin Vanhoozer refers to Ereich Auerbach's claim that the Bible is "tyrannical," and that it claims, not only that it alone represents the true his-

tory of the world, but that it seeks to subject us ultimately to theocratic rule.¹¹⁷ Nietzsche and his colleagues were more than suspicious. It seems that it is the Christians that are naïve. I am not advocating another “hermeneutic of suspicion,” but am challenging the academic community and seminaries to realize that the issues we are involved with are about power, authority, and control. Reformed scholar John R. Franke¹¹⁸ writes, “nonfoundationalist theology means the end of foundationalism but not ‘foundations.’ However, these ‘foundations’ are not ‘given’ to human beings.” He quotes Bruce McCormack,

they ‘always elude the grasp of the human attempt to know and to establish them from the human side’ and they cannot be demonstrated or secured ‘philosophically or in any other way.’ Hence, human beings are always in a position of dependence and in need of grace with respect to epistemic relations with God. Attempts on the part of humans to seize control of these relations are all too common throughout the history of the church and, no matter how well intentioned, inevitably lead to forms of oppression and conceptual idolatry. Nonfoundationalist theology seeks to oppose such seizure through the promotion of a form of theology and a theological ethos that humbly acknowledges the human condition of finitude and fallenness and that, by grace if at all, does not belie the subject of theology to which it seeks to bear faithful witness.¹¹⁹

We are in a war and vulnerable to hostile powers and principalities; what is involved is not just philosophically established territory. As Christians and Pentecostals, our traditional understanding is that in some way, at

¹¹⁷ Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 223.

¹¹⁸ Franke, 1-26.

¹¹⁹ Bruce L. McCormack, “What Has Basel to Do with Berlin? The Return of ‘Church Dogmatics’ in the Schleiermacherian Tradition,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23/2 (2002): 172. pg 16.

some time we are going to be held accountable for our work. Certainly Green and Brueggemann are not the only supporters of harnessed passion in the work of interpretation. It is not only emotions¹²⁰ I am invoking, but a sense of priority and urgency. Practically, this probably means that there is a need for renewed spiritual humility and willingness to remember one's ontology. Zimmermann challenges us that both theology and philosophy have forgotten that the main goal of interpretation before the Enlightenment was communion with God.¹²¹

Before taking up specific questions I would like to recall the issue of authority and control. Behind the hermeneutic quest for interpretation is the agenda, not a philosophic concept of truth, but more of "correctness." Most of the proposals presented throughout Western's civilized relationship with Scripture have yielded valuable and usable insights. There appears to be an underlying consensus that whatever solution, flexible and dynamic as it seems they will need to be, the answers ahead will contain a distillation of those who have come before. Kuhn's observation of our corporate journey is well taken. Even our critics have been valuable. While unreservedly accepting this observation, I propose that there is a better way than most have been going. I believe that Pentecostalism is unique to other theologies in its fearless acceptance of subjectivity. In the context of criticism around the recent Toronto Blessing, a reply was made with regard to the danger of being deceived (This applies from both intellectual and spiritual causes). The reply, which may sound as being excessively Fideist to some, was that Christians should trust more in God's keeping power, than in our susceptibility to be

¹²⁰ W. J. Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, "The Role of Emotions & Virtues in Proper Cognitive Functioning" (Leister: APOLLIS, 1998), 175.

¹²¹ Zimmermann, 18.

deceived. Far from an irresponsible passive posture, this is a place of power where we should stand in the ensuing appearance of all things being brought under the feet of Christ. This is why our hermeneutic must be eschatological.

Grenz and Franke opine that "...as those who are in Christ we already are a new creation; yet this new creation is an *eschatological* reality. We are, in other words, the community of the risen and glorified saints that we *one day* will be"¹²² (My italics in the latter part). Pentecostals will pick up the "hedging" in their statement, and although certainly not claiming the bodily resurrection, they do recognize that Col. 3:1 gives us a past tense position, which Grenz "avoids." For Pentecostals much of what still remains to be accomplished in other theologies has already begun at their Baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is one reason why they are continually alert to fulfillments of promises as "this-is-that." Kevin Vanhoozer calls attention that James McClendon¹²³ argues from Acts 2 "that Scripture is addressed to readers today."¹²⁴ Vanhoozer rejects this because it is his opinion that it relocates the Word of God and divine authority from text to tradition. At the root of his context is again the issue of authority, which involves a Christological hermeneutic. Yet they admit that, "A theology is not thoroughly eschatological because eschatology appears first but because it is oriented toward eschatology at every turn."¹²⁵ In his discussion about what makes a theology eschatological, he continues, "Theology is thoroughly eschatological when at

¹²² Grenz and Franke, 270. Former italics in original.

¹²³ James W. McClendon Jr., *Ethics: Systematic Theology* (Nashville: Abington, 1986), 1:31-33.

¹²⁴ Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, 410.

¹²⁵ Grenz and Franke, 263.

every turn the theological construction finds its orientation from the perspective of our human *telos* together with the *telos* of creation as a whole. — It looks to the completion of God’s creative work—that is to the biblical narrative in its eschatological culmination—for the revelation of not only who God is but who we are and of what creation is as well as the revelation of God’s purposes for all creation including humankind.”¹²⁶ Knowing who we are is a sadly underdeveloped theology that we can only touch on here, but on it hinges our purpose and why we are still involved, not as spectators, in an on-going cosmic drama.

Within the hermeneutic discipline Kevin Vanhoozer elaborates upon a “Speech-Act Theory” from linguistics to aid our understanding. He claims that perlocutions¹²⁷ are normally preceded by the illocutionary, but notes that the order is reversed in John 20:31, which he regards as “strategic communications.” This schema would normally be expected in homiletics, advertising, and politics. I would think that only academicians would be interested in illocutionary speech, where the end is, hopefully, more pristine. In a series of meetings at Wheaton College, Vanhoozer and Dallas Willard differed on this matter. Vanhoozer’s position was due to his view that the Holy Spirit is the (illocutionary force) Spirit of understanding.¹²⁸ The view that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to give understanding would be common, while others see the need for even less involvement, as that only affecting the will

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Perlocutionary meaning that which the speech act aims to accomplish in the reader, over and above the illocutionary effect of producing understanding. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*. 410; Or according to Silva, 380. Illocution is what the speaker wants to accomplish. Perlocution is the effect the speech act actually has on the hearer.

¹²⁸ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Disciplining Hermeneutics: Interpretation in a Christian Perspective*, Roger Lundin, Ed. (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1997), 163.

as the safer option. The academy, lacking in any acknowledged Pentecostal prophetic ministry, which Pentecostals consider an on-going ministry to bring the Church to maturity, is hesitant to go beyond these bounds.

Pentecostal Paradigms

Pentecostals are very familiar with terms like “spiritual warfare,” “deliverance,” and supernatural manifestations of the “darker kind.” Author and seminary professor, Jack Deere recounts an incident not unusual in Charismatic experience, in his book, *Surprised by the Voice of God*.¹²⁹ The situation involved a supernatural vision God gave to him concerning a student with a deep sin in his life. At the time the student was talking with him in his seminary office Jack Deere visually saw words, naming the sin the student was trapped in. Detailing the implications if acted upon, especially in a seminary environment, Jack Deere sensitively confronted the student, who confessed the truth confirming the vision. Such an occurrence is not usual for Pentecostals, but it also is not at all unexpected or unfamiliar. When the book appeared on the market, a common reaction of Pentecostals was that they were surprised, that he was surprised (*ala* the book’s title) that such a thing had happened. Such a major paradigm shift of one’s world view has serious ramifications regarding his expectations regarding the nature of the involvement of the Holy Spirit and Scriptures.

¹²⁹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 14-17.

It is understandable that supernatural occurrences leave those with imposed limitations of the activity of the Holy Spirit uneasy and academically impotent. Why this should happen reveals the spirit of control that can lie beneath intellectual and scientific inquiry. The usual response of skeptical scientists is a claim that without controlled experiments, they are unable to evaluate the evidence. For classic Pentecostals, speaking in tongues is normative with their understanding of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. A major problem is that the structure of the academy has been formed within the Cartesian paradigm and there is no place for serious consideration of non-documented unverified testimony, which is a part of the character of the phenomena. The very nature of this inquiry determines its outcome, which is well documented.

Even regarding this paper, how can I insert within this thesis a statement that I have personally heard and recognized an actual language of both the tongue and the interpretation¹³⁰? I know this as truth, and such a thing seriously affects my perspective when addressing the “reality” of the supernatural to those not within my experiential reference. No academic argument can possibly be presented for the supernatural within the present system, and I am not advocating that it should be. But it does reveal the inability of the system to address issues outside of scientific boundaries, which crushes Christianity to naturalism. Even if these issues are “devotional” and not academic, if they affect the church, should the academy not be responsible? A parallel comparing a legal matter would be, if an issue in need of adjudication arose, but it was neglected because all authorities claimed it was outside

¹³⁰ Don Basham, *The Miracle of Tongues*, “I Stand By the Blood of Jesus” (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell, 1974),49-50.

of their jurisdiction.¹³¹ It also should help the academy to understand why Pentecostals usually find little interest in participation. For Pentecostals, the experience provides an entirely different level of context. Seminary libraries have a great many dissertations and studies claiming that there are no scientifically validated healings, while existing documented medical records make claims to the contrary.

For Pentecostals, hermeneutics must function within its own paradigm, and issues that are outside of it are already settled. Unwillingness to academically dispute these matters is similar to the scriptural episode of the man Jesus healed who had been blind.¹³² The Pharisees brought him before their council several times pretending to seek understanding, while behind their questioning was a “power agenda,” which they finally invoked. When paradigm shifts occur, the leaders within the immediately prior system have the greatest reluctance to participate, because to move beyond is a move away from one’s power base. Goldingay noted, “University-based experts have a vested interest in making biblical study difficult and thus worthy of a place in a university in the first place.”¹³³ This is why paradigm shifts can be self-organizing and cleansing agents. The vested interest implications have been noted by Thiselton when commenting on Walter Wink. “Because of a deliberate suspension of participational involvement, ‘the outcome of biblical studies in the academy is a trained incapacity to deal with the real prob-

¹³¹ Thiselton brings out both Ebling’s and Gadamer’s parallels between theological and judicial hermeneutics. A.C. Thiselton, I Howard Marshall, ed., *New Testament Interpretation*, “The New Hermeneutic,” Ch XVI, “Subject and Object: Understanding as experience” (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992), 315.

¹³² John 9.

¹³³ John Goldingay, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 236.

lems of actual living persons in their daily lives.’ The kind of questions asked by the New Testament scholar are not those raised by the text, but those most likely to win a hearing from the professional guild of academics. Scholars seek to silence their own subjectivity, striving for the kind of objective neutrality which is not only an illusion, but which also requires ‘a sacrifice of the very questions the Bible seeks to answer.’”¹³⁴ Thisleton goes on to explain that just discovering theoretical methods is not sufficient. He agrees with Gadamer that in true understanding, man is grasped by truth through experience. (*Wahrheit und Methode*) Thisleton is not opposing scholarship, but noting how it serves to complicate matters. However in the negative, careful observation can discern paradigm shifting as elements within complexity seeking their own stability, and politically this brought about a redistribution of authority during the Medieval Church and beyond. Van Huyssteen positions that, in reference to John Bowker, “the issue of the science & religion relationship is of POWER. Religion has wanted to have its own authority.”¹³⁵ As the Truth has a spirit, a meaning, and a physical manifestation, so also does its negative. Evil, Control, and Power are an unholy trinity that doggedly pursue Truth in an attempt to extract energy into its own life agenda.

¹³⁴ W. Wink, *The Bible in Human Transformation: Towards a New Paradigm for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia 1973).

¹³⁵ van Huyssteen, *Rationality*, 4.

Theology and the Invisible

An early philosophic observation was that although Good can exist without Evil, the converse is not true. The heading of this section immediately causes Pentecostals to take notice, for as earlier noted; the reality of evil has been confronted by Pentecostalism with the arrival of a heightened awareness of the reality of spiritual realms. Where I would desire to move our deliberations would be toward the very essence and root of evil, and not the more obvious manifestations. That it remains hidden is testimony of its invasiveness into theology. During the complex mixture of political and theological re-posturing during the Reformation, the struggle for authority (empowerment), the battle lines were Word, reason, and tradition.¹³⁶ The contamination came in when the Scripture was attacked with regard to its essence. Others demoted Scripture as subjective to reason, (Hooker, and Erasmus), while tradition struggled with its Roman roots. At the risk of becoming overly complicated, I would like to make an observation concerning evil. As postmodern thinking has moved away from static elemental thinking toward dynamic processes, I propose an aspect of evil, not only in its static and more visible form, but in its derivative (By this I mean not only the direction something is going, but how it is changing). Simplistically, it is easy to observe if something is moving toward light, or away from it. But if something that has been moving toward the good begins to slow, that is not good. Taking Augustine's "evil" as that which is "not God" and applying some metaphors from thermodynamics, it can be seen as entropy. In the above example, an individual that is relationally far away from God, but

¹³⁶ See, Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker: And the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997).

heading in His direction, and increasingly does so, is moving from evil (a lower state of organization) to a higher and better good place. (Entropy is a dynamic concept relating to energy exchange).

Mark Buchanan in his book, *Ubiquity-Why Catastrophes Happen* explains; “Because of the human craving for stability, especially on the part of those who are in power and who benefit most from the existing order, nothing will give way in the fabric of existing institutions until the strife and discontent build beyond some threshold. The people do not rise up in revolution until their discontent becomes so great that they have no other recourse.”¹³⁷ Another even simpler way to view this is in the Darwinian concept of the “survival of the fittest,” or that even people need to consume ordered substance (other living things) in order to maintain their own order (Life, as opposed to loss of order, which for people is death). Self-interest, survival and promotion at all costs are the root sins, and are the very nature of spiritual entropy. Even Jesus, as he had already climbed the cross irrevocably, was challenged to save himself. Since the fall and man’s removal from a system of unending relational life with God in the Garden, man has been in the closed “penal colony” of death (increasing entropy or disorder and corruption) along with the other rebels “cast down to the earth.” We find ourselves in what has been colloquially called, “A dog eat dog world.” This is a place of thirst and hunger, and things can only become worse until life breaks through powerfully enough to put all things in proper order. Sin does not seek that which is already sinful to obtain its “nourishment.” It “eats the fat sheep,” because they are full of life; demons have been already cut off

¹³⁷ Mark Buchanan, *Ubiquity-Why Catastrophes Happen* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), x.

from life and are spiritual parasites, seeking other life to prey upon. Creation has been consigned to death and corruption, and we are dying as Adam's race. From a totally secular understanding, "For example, not only are dissipation, decay, and death processes marked by an increase in entropy. Even the production of order and complexity, of biological novelty, beauty, 'design,' requires an overall increase in entropy in their underlying physical systems."¹³⁸

This explanation of evil is only a fragment of the ongoing theological speculations. Some who would see it solely through the scientific analogy of entropy would not even call death "evil," as it theoretically is for the "good" of the species ("The end justifies the means" ethic). My inclusion of this material is to bring out three points. We have been thrust out of God's intimate communion, and this is "what is out there." Given time, corruption affects everything, including Lucifer, who has lost more than just his former estate, but is the personification of godlessness. The second observation is that Jesus invaded our darkness bringing hope to those who would be drawn to his light and come to him as their source of life. He, himself, is the source of life. In the above biological analogy, Jesus is at the bottom of the spiritual food chain. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood; you have no life in you." (John 6:53 NIV) The third point is that he has come to redeem us, give us a new nature, and be within us eternally. But at present he has allowed us to be with him in heavenly places while still in the world as ministers of reconciliation. In this posture it "seems" dualistic, but it is a dynamic eschatological transitional

¹³⁸ Robert Russell, World Wide Web; <http://www.meta-library.net/physics/suff-frame.html> "Physics & Cosmology," accessed 11/19/05.

process. Pentecostals believe that they are not just called to verbally witness, but to be his witnesses in this present cosmic battle.

The Redeemed Nature of a Christian

With the anti-supernaturalism inherited from the Enlightenment still prevalent within the Western Church, eyes remain blinded in their ability to perceive supernatural implications within the Scriptures. Blindness has been metaphorically associated with vulnerability, deception, and spiritual incapacity throughout the Bible. We will consider more debilitating implications in such an impotent theological position, but we must first realize who we are and why we are here. We are entering occupied territory and the drama is all too real. Most who have struggled with the task of deriving meaning from what we read know there is no place to stand that provides a truly objective and omniscient vantage point. Even if there were such a place, our own finitude and fallenness would immediately disqualify us. We are trapped in the circle of needing our tools the instant we invent them. With regard to the interpretation of Scripture we remain frustrated that we lack true access to the intentions of an author; we find that our own writings are also corrupted for those we hope would hear our “messages.” We do not expect less from others than we apply to the texts we read, but still we must press forward.¹³⁹ All is not lost, for as we saw in the previous deliberations, we are not alone in

¹³⁹As a brief response to William A. Dembski’s argument in *The Fallacy of Contextualism*, (*The Princeton Theological Review*, Oct 1994), consider Walter Bruggemann’s *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination*. (1993, Augsburg Fortress Press, Minneapolis) pg9. In his reply to those who dismiss “context-conditioned” interpretation says, “---they do not deny the power of context in their discernment. They want to insist only that as their own view is contextual, so also is every other view, including those that claim to be objective and non-contextual.”

our endeavors. Although unable to stand in that place of perfection, we can be in intimate communication with one who does. The question now before us is, just where do we stand? Now that we are no longer restricted to rationally limited sight, do we still need the analogy of dualism? Understanding the dynamics of paradigms has helped us embrace change in more constructive ways. Garrett Green claims, “Paradigms function heuristically by revealing the constitutive patterns in more complex aspects of our experience that might otherwise remain recalcitrant, incoherent, or bewildering.”¹⁴⁰ One of the linguistic tools that can enable us to see where conscious reason cannot is the metaphor. Metaphors, in their different forms, have usually successfully eluded those attempting to capture and contain ideas with syllogisms and constructs. It seemed that Jesus was always teaching conditionally to those with “ears to hear.” Major teaching platforms have developed, such as that of Christian Swartz with his insight into biotic growth principles,¹⁴¹ and Margaret Wheatley’s use of chaotic theory concepts in business management.¹⁴² They are like metaphors, and do require familiarity with thinking in these paradigms. For a postmodern society which has steadily become more technological, schematics and diagrams are more commonly understood. During biblical times agriculture and Hellenism were major linguistic delineators. For Jacob it was a dream, something common to all men.

¹⁴⁰ Green, *Imagining*, 53.

¹⁴¹ Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996).

¹⁴² M. J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organizations from an Orderly Universe* (California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1992).

An Anthropological Model

I am going to put forth a proposal that the traditional dualistic model of the physical-metaphysical split is, although dimensionally misleading, still reflective of what Arthur Peacocke calls a “candidate for reality.”¹⁴³ This is definitely *not* a return to the Cartesian system, but a tool or schematic representation of functional relationships. In an exact sense it is not a model, in that it does not depict “reality,” but is only serves as a “visual metaphor.” A purpose of models is to provide a limited workable item with which to perform tests and experiments. Vern Poythress defines them as, “Models are detailed analogies between one subject an another. The subject needing explanation or visualization is called the ‘principal’ subject, while the one used to do the explaining is called the ‘subsidiary’ subject.”¹⁴⁴

I also think that it is important that I refer to a particular work done by philosopher-theologian, Dallas Willard. He is considered a leading figure in the transitional dialogues between evangelicals and postmoderns in America; and his work is certainly not unsympathetic with postmodern issues. In this section I attempt to establish an expanded view as graphics, showing relationships of “soul,” “body” and “spirit.” There is some resistance against this in that this subject has been overworked and it is old, and—it is “not new.” The reader will probably pick up some of my defensiveness in light of certain seeming conflicts with present thinking about deconstruction and holism. In his paper, “Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation and the Resto-

¹⁴³ Grenz, *Beyond*, 271, cites Peacocke’s descriptor, rather than as simply reflections of reality itself. See Arthur Peacocke, *Intimations of Reality: Critical Realism in Science and Religion* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 25.

¹⁴⁴ Poythress, 485.

ration of the Soul”¹⁴⁵ Willard soundly condemns positivism, “...observing the intellectual and moral chaos that rules modern society—not least, intellectual society itself.” He does go on to say, however, “People in our intellectual culture today vaguely suppose, by and large, that ‘something has been found out’ that proves this view wrong. Adopting postures and phraseologies of thinkers such as Hume and Nietzsche, they often heap scorn on Plato, Descartes and Dualism. But nothing has been found out to that effect. Apart from the unfortunate, though historically necessary, episode of Empiricism/Positivism, and its paralyzing after effects, one would never have supposed it had.” There seems to be some inconsistency within postmodern thinking regarding “parts.” As an example, metanarratives have been discounted, yet they are a holistic concept of history. Willard quotes Professor Moreland,¹⁴⁶ “The soul is a substance, in the sense that it is an individual entity that has properties and dispositions natural to it, endures through time and change, and receives and exercises causal influence on other things, most notably the person of which it is the most fundamental part.” Willard adds about Moreland, “As he carefully explains, the human soul must be treated as an entity in its own right, with its own peculiar nature and relationships. It is the fundamental but not the only component of a human person and life. That is the position uniformly maintained by the Western tradition of thought up to Hume, and in many quarters long thereafter.”

I have set about to briefly establish a three dimensional schematic to help visualize relationships between different realms. This includes application into man’s makeup in regard to the “body, soul and spirit” question. I

¹⁴⁵ Willard, *Spiritual*, 101-109.

¹⁴⁶ J. P. Moreland, “Restoring the Substance to the Soul of Psychology.” (*Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1998), 26, 29-43.

reiterate that this is not a dualistic world view, but a representation of our *being* that explains relationships, which are important elements of my thesis. Visualizations are as contextualized as linguistics, and need to be seen as place holders¹⁴⁷ for morphemes¹⁴⁸ or bits of information. Observation of optical illusions can help one understand linguistic contextual difficulties and limitations. Again, such a diagram is only a tool, and is used at the risk of establishing a predisposition of being used in a context for which it is unsuitable. I use it with caution, particularly because it has served me in visualizing a number of relationships. I use it because I believe there is a close scriptural precedent.

In my consideration, the word *tripartite* is not accurate for our use in the makeup of man, for we do not want to return to building from parts; but the 3-fold usage I propose should qualify as a graphic example in Garrett Green's words as, "—a religious paradigm: a normative model of 'what the world is like,' embodied in a canon of Scripture and expressed in the life of a religious community."¹⁴⁹ Perhaps the "canon of Scripture" part is stretched, but my schematic is based on the dream Jacob had on his journey

¹⁴⁷ Comment by Hanson that sense data is perceived in two different ways: psychological and logical. Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science*. (1958, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.), 17.

¹⁴⁸ the smallest linguistic unit that carries a *semantic* interpretation.

¹⁴⁹ Garrett Green, *Imaging*, 133. Also consider the three stages of societal learning as proposed by Auguste Comte are; the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. These could image the spirit, soul, and body realms.

to find his bride.¹⁵⁰ Jesus used that image to teach about himself which I consider as justification for my use and expansion upon that image.¹⁵¹

My concept involves three aspects that are not truly divisions, but must be seen holistically and as a continuum within the image, and the analogy itself as a second continuum in its totality. Garrett Green says, “The clearest way to represent the relation of an image to concept,is not as a dichotomy but a spectrum, extending from the pregnant image, full of implicit or potential application, to the developed concept, in which the underlying analogy has been articulated and delimited.”¹⁵² This particular one I use very closely accommodates popular diagrams used for some time by Pentecostals, Charismatics, as well as some evangelicals to illustrate the body, soul and the spirit. The model I am about to describe has enabled me to imagine cosmic activity and interaction much more clearly, and like a set of axioms, they continue to give me insight and understanding into God’s Kingdom. At the onset, I wish to convey that one purpose in this exercise is to help some of the church understand its role of a conduit of life into a dying world.

A drawing and pictorial explanation, “Schematic Based on Genesis Chapter 28” has been included as Figure 1 in the Appendix. There is an associated one labeled, “Schematic Viewed From the Earthlies,” Figure 2 that is also included. These graphics are used in an attempt to visualize relationships and function, as a schematic or map and not as specific parts. They

¹⁵⁰ Gen. 28.

¹⁵¹ John 1:51.

¹⁵² Green, *Imaging*, 70.

may not always be exactly consistent with observations by others such as Dallas Willard, who correctly makes the following observation:

The spirit in man is not the soul, but is the central part of the soul, the power of self-determination. It is the heart or will: the power, embedded in the soul, of choosing. It is that in the human being which must above all be restructured. From it, then, the divine restructuring can be extended to the rest of the life, including the body. For the spirit or will also is the executive center of the self, which—given the birth from above—enables the individual to restructure or ‘reprogram’ the ‘wrung’ soul, along with the body, through ‘spiritual disciplines... The most illuminating and rational way of thinking about the soul is to regard it as that component of the total person which coordinates all of the capacities and dimensions of the human being and leads to their interactive development to form an individual life.’¹⁵³

It is this dynamic of renewal that reveals the elusive, ill-defined doctrine of illumination as a shadow of what occurs under the power of the Spirit.

For many Modernists the spiritual world is inhabited by irrationalism, ghosts, a few passive angels, and a fearful horde of even darker entities. It is a place where we will be able to safely dwell in the future, but for those who obtain their present certitude by means of rational control, it can be an intellectually fearful domain. The Age of Enlightenment was an attempt to throw off such imaginary and mystical images, and redefine reality in a much safer way. The attempt was to divide existence in such a manner that we no longer had to deal with those things we had little knowledge of and even less con-

¹⁵³ Willard, *Spiritual*, 103.

trol. Although apparent solutions seemed in hand, the boundaries continually shifted and the priorities were uncertain. Earlier mystical and typological abuse had been minimized, but at a great expense. Studying the scriptural narrative of Jacob's paradigmatic dream at what became called, Bethel,¹⁵⁴ can provide fresh meaning to the mind's eye. Typological rules from seminary classes can crumble as multiple relationships and intertwined intricacies are able to become clear. Indeed, what Jacob saw was the form of the house of God, and a powerful image of the archetypically complete man.

In these following comments I will refer to Figure 1 in the Appendix, along with the identification in the graphic. Readers need encouraged by Scripture's own testimony of Jesus' reference about himself to Nathaniel at the end of the first chapter of John's gospel, to look a little more imaginatively at Jesus' explanation. Most commentaries note the Genesis 28 Scriptures, pointing out the parallels such as "The Son of Man, replacing the ladder, is God's link with earth."¹⁵⁵ "As Jesus evokes the imagery of the entire Genesis scene, he himself becomes the place of God's revelation and dwelling as ancient Bethel had been."¹⁵⁶ It is a precursor to Moses' tabernacle as

¹⁵⁴ Gen. 28, "the house of God."

¹⁵⁵ In Jn 1:50-51. Jesus promised Nathanael a greater basis for belief, probably referring to the miracles in chapters 2-13. From 1:48, 51 it can be inferred that Nathanael was meditating on Jacob's life, particularly on the incident recorded in Genesis 28:12. Jacob saw the angels going up and down a ladder. But Nathanael would see . . . the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Just as Jacob saw angels from heaven communicating with earth, so Nathanael (and the others; though you is sing. in John 1:50, the you in v. 51 is pl.) would see Jesus as the divine Communication from heaven to earth. The Son of Man, replacing the ladder, is God's link with earth (cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 26:64). Perhaps Jesus was also indicating that He is the new "Bethel," God's dwelling place (Gen. 28:17; John 1:14). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

¹⁵⁶ John 1:51 Jesus' final statement details what Nathanael can expect to see (v. 51). The Greek verb and subject here suddenly become plural; more people than Nathanael will view this strange sight. Oddly, Jesus' prediction or promise is not literally fulfilled in the Gospel. Its obscurity is, however, illumined by the recognition that there is a direct

the place of communion with man on the earth. From an ancient dream, this model continues to aid visualization for some, of “the perfect man’s” existence in the world and beyond. When Jesus told Nathan that he would see angels, the *Jerome Bible Commentary* reads, “As in Genesis, the reference to the angels is to signify the meeting and communication of God with man.”¹⁵⁷ Here is insight into purpose and activity in our relationship with the indwelling Christ. Too often the theological emphasis has been in an abstract sense, which is much more nebulous, leading away from any conscious and deliberate discourse. For those who would object that it is not vocal, they need to remember that we actually do not hear with our ears, but our minds. Hanson observes, “People,” he says, “not their eyes, see. Cameras, and eye-balls, are blind.”¹⁵⁸

In Scripture we find reference to a third heaven (3), which was identified as Paradise in 2 Cor. 12:2-4. If there is a first (1), we infer it to be the physical universe, including sea shells and galaxies. The second (2), as in Jacob’s dream, would then be the empty realm connecting the first and third.

reference to Jacob’s dream (Gen. 28), particularly to the ascending and descending of the angels of God upon the ladder (28:12). In John 1:51, of course, they ascend and descend upon the Son of man (i.e., Jesus). (John seems to play upon an ambiguity caused by the masculine gender of the Heb. pronoun that stands for “ladder.”) As Jesus evokes the imagery of the entire Genesis scene, he himself becomes the place of God’s revelation and dwelling (cf. John 1:14) as ancient Bethel had been. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*.

¹⁵⁷John 1:51 Nathanael’s faith has been motivated by a miracle extrinsic to Christ’s Person; although this is not reprehensible, far greater will be the faith that comes from an intimate knowledge of Jesus himself (cf. 14:1). What the “far greater things” are that Nathanael will see, appears from the following. 51. amen, amen, I say to you: This is a characteristic of Jesus’ solemn pronouncements in this Gospel; the expression occurs only in Jn (25 times in all), but something similar is found on his lips in Mt 5:37. you shall see the sky opened: The reference is to Jacob’s vision in Gen 28:10-17; Nathanael, however—and all genuine Israelites like him—will see angels mounting and descending not on a ladder, but on the Son of Man. As in Gn, the reference to the angels is to signify the meeting and communication of God with man. *The Jerome Bible Commentary*.

¹⁵⁸ Norwood Russell Hanson, 6.

It could possibly be the place of great entropy and the place of outer darkness where those that lost their first realm are consigned. Closed off from God's heaven, it does have access to the earthly realm which is also under decay and evil. A much simpler model to imagine would be a pipe, with two ends through which life flows. One end exists in the first heaven—the earth—lies—the realm of our bodies (5). The other end exists in the third heaven, the realm of God's throne and an opening to heaven (E). It is a pipe *with* two ends, as we *are* a soul (7), *with* a body (5) and a spirit (4, 6), and man is one,¹⁵⁹ a continuum. Integrally the soul is merged with the first heaven, and it also flows into the third with an increasingly spiritual nature. This area would have within it both a physical mind and a spiritual one. Drawn from an earthly “end view” perspective it would resemble the commonly used Body, Soul, and Spirit concentric circle diagram. (See Fig 2) A similar model in quantum physics is a *wormhole*,¹⁶⁰ which we are mathematically and even graphically enabled to visualize. Delitzsch supports a modified trichotomy in his book on *Biblical Psychology*, and in his commentary with Keil in reference to Proverbs 14:30, that “heart, soul, and flesh” is the Old Testament trichotomy.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament*, (1962, Zondervan Pub. House Grand Rapids, MI) 223-228. The etymology of the Hebrew *néfesh* is “breath” or “throat.” (Is5:14, Hab2:5) The passageway between the outer and inner man. See also Franz Delitzsch, Robert Ernest Wallis, *A System of Biblical Psychology*.

¹⁶⁰ Lorentzian traversable wormholes would allow travel from one part of the universe to another part of that same universe very quickly or would allow travel from one universe to another universe. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wormhole>, 7 Nov 2005. Wikipedia, Wormholes.

¹⁶¹ “Heart, soul, flesh, is the O. T. trichotomy, Psa_84:2; Psa_16:9,10; the heart is the innermost region of the life, where all the rays of the bodily and the soul-life concentrate, and whence they again unfold themselves. The state of the heart, i.e., of the central, spiritual, soul-inwardness of the man, exerts therefore on all sides a constraining influence on

Several comments are in order regarding the schematic drawing. Notice that I have given the name of the Second Heaven as “Empty Realm.” There is no biblical evidence or mention of this except as an inferred necessity between heavens one and three. Since no direct reference is made about such a place, we are left to speculation. There are other spiritual realms alluded to in Scripture; such as, “Abraham’s Bosom,” “outer darkness,” “Hell or Hades,” “lower parts of the earth,” “prison,” and the “the pit.” An excellent summary of differing positions may be found in G. Barton Payne’s text, *The Theology of the Older Testament*.¹⁶² In all of the thinking regarding the ungodly there is the common elements of the grave, death, darkness, and corruption. With Augustine’s evil as that which is Godless, one can apply some present concepts of entropy to this realm, especially in the degenerative commonality of the various thoughts. Does emptiness qualify as attainable maximum entropy, or does equilibrium require that something must exist within it with some energy? The occult religions have appropriated “chaos” extensively, as well as popular games and commercial spin-offs. Several scientists have registered their unhappiness that philosophy has taken excessive liberties with Chaos. A Chinese physicist, Huajie Liu expressed his concern about such illegitimate usage:

Some postmodernists and feminists and mysticism borrow nearly arbitrarily fashionable scientific concepts, including chaos, nonlinear, bifurcation, fractal, to argue for their beliefs. There are many misunderstandings surrounding the chaos theory in its translation from strict mathematics and natural sciences into cultural criticism.... Chaos theory has nothing to do

the bodily life, in the relation to the heart the surrounding life.” Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Pro 14:30.

¹⁶² Payne, *Theology of the Older*, Appendix G, 527-9

with so called postmodernist theory. The most important philosophical impact of chaos on scientific reasoning is its violation of operational causality.¹⁶³

In Figure 1, the left representation is labeled Alpha. This represents an unregenerate man. His spirit is dead (6) and he is incapable of knowing matters spiritually. He would also be typical of the “natural,” or “soulish” man. The center man is labeled Beta. This is a Christian as his spirit has been reborn, and is in communion with the Holy Spirit in the 3rd Heaven. The Holy Spirit is depicted as in the process of sanctification, or cleansing and renewing the mind. The third man is labeled Omega. He is the Christ, and the fulfillment of Jacob’s dream. The term “Spirit Filled” is more easily visualized with this image. Note that in all three, the bodies may receive from the earthlies (1), but in Beta and Omega the Holy Spirit, called “The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead,” is said to impart life even to our mortal bodies.¹⁶⁴

If the 2nd realm is a place of entropic darkness and the abode of evil personalities and powers, Christians exist in the very presence of their enemies, and the Scriptures that speak of strongholds in the battlefield of the mind are graphically represented. B. B. Warfield considered the “leading of the Holy Spirit” as synonymous with “sanctification.”¹⁶⁵ A number of other biblical expressions may be seen as logically complimentary and not contradictory, even leading to functional insights. We need to be mindful that such models only serve as tools; applicable only in certain instances and some-

¹⁶³ Huajie Liu, “A Brief History of the Concept of Chaos” (Department of Philosophy, Peking University, 100871, Beijing, P.R. China) World Wide Web <http://www.phil.pku.edu.cn/personal/huajie/CHAOS.HTM>, Accessed 9 Sept 2005.

¹⁶⁴ Rom. 8:11.

¹⁶⁵ B. B. Warfield, “The Leading of the Spirit,” from *The Power of God Unto Salvation*, Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1903.

what of an art, which is what is usually said about hermeneutics itself. A less tenuous stretch in our model, Figure 1, considers that it (Omega) also applies to a “Spirit-Filled” Christian, a fraternal member of Jesus. This we do by appealing to Christ as the second Adam and the prototype of redeemed mankind. In another section we referred the Pentecostal experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and its associated expression of “being filled.” Teachers in the past have used the analogy of a water glass, which may be filled, but it is limited and static. A pipe analogy not only allows for a dynamic process, but brings the flow of “from” and “to” into play. For “visual people,” the rivers of living water¹⁶⁶ flow out from the throne of God, into our spirit and through us out to be incarnated in the earthly realm. (D) Reading that the Kingdom is within us becomes more easily visualized for some people with such a model, as does understanding the need to be much more than just the consumer of God’s life in us. The need to be a “doer of the word” as James exhorts us, and the implications of that which might inhibit that flow of life within us, together help us think about things in the unseen world. These are things that Descartes wanted to separate us from, but they are here among and as us, although not spatially defined.

From a truly postmodern perspective the previous discussion would probably be seen as a return to structuralism and counter productive. My secondary intent of its use is to hopefully “redeem” and reinterpret the dualistic analogy, understanding that, for the most part, the church is still caught in the subjective/objective split. Until a fresh paradigm change should come and there be a time we no longer speak “Enlightenment,” perhaps this re-

¹⁶⁶ John 7:38.

definition might open up some new thoughts. The diagram must not be seen spatially, but relationally. All realms are overlaid, and are one. There is always the danger that any tool, even the glorious metaphor, will become seen as reality. Green warns, “Metaphors are potential concepts; concepts are petrified metaphors.”¹⁶⁷ Ultimately I hope that the model is not perceived as a dichotomy, but as a spectrum. We will later look at some possible implications of our present nature as Christians.

Pneumatology, Experience, and Scripture

Postmodernism has identified major weaknesses in Foundational models of Biblical hermeneutics. Questions continue whether theology should determine our hermeneutics or if we can even have theology without it. Of course such things are mutually existent, but like certain strange attractors, they never quite take the same path around as they head toward what is hopefully some stability. This does not immediately seem to be the case as some see Scripture, which projects the accelerating increase of knowledge in Daniel’s appraisal of the end, and Paul’s exhortation that in the last days the world be always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.¹⁶⁸ This certainly sounds like the present postmodern world, although there is never anything new under the sun. A powerful Scripture concerning the church reveals the nature of the hermeneutic task ahead and its goal:

...to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become ma-

¹⁶⁷ Green, *Imagining*, 70.

¹⁶⁸ Dan. 12:4; 2 Tim. 3:1.

ture, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (Ephesians 4:12-18 NIV)

There are several important observations from this Scripture concerning the path ahead of us that does lead to stability. It *will* happen and some people somewhere in time will say, “‘This-is-that’ which was spoken by Paul concerning *us*, the Church!” Until such a time, there will be didactic pressure to attempt to divert the Church from that path, and it will come from an evil agenda. Love and truth will be the defense of the Church and the Academy respectively. Effectual community will be realized, with gifted leadership to prepare the people. And lastly, it is crucial that we resolve the issue of finitude and depravity, for light cannot have *communion*¹⁶⁹ with those in darkness, regardless of how bright they seem. This does not mean monastic separation from the mission field!

We may try to ignore the problem of evil and its spiritual implications, even within the academy, but biblically it still stands—confirmed by

¹⁶⁹ This is emphasized that the issue is noted as one of *communion*, and not association, as Paul clarified such a misunderstanding in 1 Cor. 5:9-13., ref 2 Cor. 6: 14-18.

the real world, and we must face it. Such matters are worthy of detailed discussion, but we will just attempt to open up some of the issues here. As the Church enters the Twenty-first Century radical changes are upon her with relentless force. Whether this trend will culminate in events of serious magnitude is difficult to anticipate now, and although things have never been “as they were,” we are not to look back. Like an old Pentecostal adage, “We have not come this way before.” This does not mean that we do not occasionally retrace some of our journey in an attempt to pick up some of the pieces we lost along the way. We just do not want to camp back there. Professional ministry dropouts seek solutions to these questions and form virtual relationships on the internet and blogs, while congregations try again and again to rework the Church to its former place in society. Most encouraging are two factors: one from within the Academy, and another of reports of explosive grassroots Christian expansion on a global level. The Academy now has an increasing number of contemporary scholars that have been awakened by the questions of Postmodernity, realizing that Scriptures do indeed have much to say about that which we had not previously been ready to consider as an alternative. The exploding church increase in other parts of the world has generated an unstructured church similar to that of the early Pentecostals. Their textbook has been the Scriptures and their tutor the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁰ Here is found a hermeneutic, not born from philosophical scholarship, but from an experiential connection with God and His word. But those who have gone before them need to tell their stories, and Pentecostals need to relate their experiences. Perhaps the hermeneuts should mentor *both* histo-

¹⁷⁰ David Garrison, 35.

rians and emerging chronographers, embedding a common history that will enable our readers to faithfully receive a more accurate message.

In that Jesus is the one we long to be like, and are even told in Scripture that we have his mind, should we not only teach *what* he taught, but *as* he taught? Is this culturally feasible? It follows that in order to impart Scripture as he did, it would entail knowledge of how he viewed the Scripture he taught. We have previously noted that Jesus and those he personally disciplined used what was mainly a *peshet* hermeneutic, which was very close to “This-is-that.” It will require mature scholarship, especially from within the brotherhood of those who walk in an experiential relationship with God.¹⁷¹ It seems that the Pentecostal Experience brings with it a spiritually “innate” *peshet-like* thinking, and along with that a spiritual curiosity of looking for signs, types, metaphors, and patterns of a “that” event antecedent. Like any newborn in the wilderness, the world is a dangerous place and even a lion cub can be undone by its curiosity (Perhaps this explains Montanius’ errors in the early church). This would only be an addition to a more comprehensive hermeneutic model.

The following is an apologetic for the way I intend to occasionally move on in this thesis. Postmodernism has brought with it some wonderful insights and analogies from an ever-growing list of disciplines, and none more fruitful than *science*. I have already, and will bring in some of these “insights,” mindful of the use of religious imagination, as Green and Brueggemann have demonstrated.

¹⁷¹ As a young charismatic within a Cartesian religious system I was often challenged by friends, “why do I insist getting my theology from my experience.” As is usually the case, my retort came too late for that season, but my later reply was to ask them why they insisted on getting their theology from their *lack* of experience.

Language serves the purpose of “mind-touching.” Metaphysics marvels that something like the mind of man can affect the tangible world. Even though Malebranche’s Occasionalism was unsuccessful, he attempted to address a major mystery¹⁷² as to the mechanism that jumped the dualistic divide. As has been done with the attending work of God, he suggested that God actually does the connecting, since He alone bridges both. The Scripture does say that in Him we live and move and have our being, so in that manner we are upheld by his thought for us. There are others who would say that everything is tangible and “that,” *is* reality. Some have considered that “thought” and even abstractions, all have their seat within our biology. They claim that what we think as physical is actually unreal except as chemical and electrical interactions. Augustine, Aquinas, and others worked the combinations, and Descartes won the day, and the Church lost. Of course science is a marvelous tool and has dwarfed that great tower in Babel by actually reaching the moon. But the magnificence of language still had treasures to give man, for “thoughts” were able to be formed by a mind, contained within tangible words, and make the reverse trip back to mind again. Mind to mind is a devotional that even humanists can experience, but we Christians have surpassed it all. We can access and have the mind of Christ. We are able enter into communion with Almighty God! Even more amazing, this isn’t only us accessing God; it is God accessing us. Dallas Willard says, “It is residing in Jesus’ word that permits us to enter the reality of God’s rule and become free from the domination by other realities.” He goes on to clarify, “Similarly, by acting on knowledge of electricity we become agents in a world

¹⁷² Dallas Willard, “Hermeneutical Occasionalism.” *Disciplining Hermeneutics: Interpretation in a Christian Perspective*, Roger Lundin, Ed. (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1997), 168.

where it has play.”¹⁷³ It is not just an arena of our own empty invention, or again that dualistic, evasive hypothetical level; what we access through his word is his realm, where we can actually live and commune with the Lord.

When reading Scripture, does at any time God give new information similar to a natural communication process, or does he merely sovereignly superintend the progression, in a sense, guaranteeing his desired degree of accuracy? Where in the process does God intervene to correct the final information? If adjustment only occurs as the reader brings it into his spirit, then the “objective text” prior to his correcting activity, is incomplete. Bultmann fairly well established the impossibility of preventing some contextual “contamination.” The result then is the Holy Spirit must add new information; either corrective or another adjustment to assure that “pure” data is communicated. In the “text to spirit” (one can replace “spirit” with “mind” if that is a problem) interface, either text or spirit cognition, or both must be adjusted. The result is that information has been added, whether it was on the text side or the reader, the objective or the subjective.¹⁷⁴ If information is indeed added, the next question to follow is, “how much”? This takes the discussion to a totally new level, and one most Pentecostals would welcome. Evangelicals look for another, less threatening role that is played by the Holy Spirit, in which most would limit his actions to opening our natural mind.

¹⁷³ Willard, *Disciplining*, 172.

¹⁷⁴ That information has been added has entropic implications. The addition of information is at the sacrifice of some other higher system. (It moves down the order). If the Holy Spirit does not give it, does it come from the reader himself? The term “willing” is in itself a result of new information if it results in less overall entropy. (evil) There are two words used to convey the opposite of entropy: negentropy, and information. Both lead to increased order and life.

To be fair to those who want to eliminate all subjective elements in interpreting the Scriptures, it obviously must be confessed that, particularly in the early church, allegorical interpretations went places that no serious Christian would want to end up. In his article on these issues¹⁷⁵ Daniel Fuller claims that history has shown the futility of subjective interpretation. He begins by stating, “It is well known how Origen, despite his firm belief in the inspiration of the Bible, greatly distorted its intended meaning through his hermeneutical conviction that the proper understanding of Scripture could be gained only through a direct illumination of the Holy Spirit.” Fuller exegetes 1 Cor. 2:13 to make his point:

According to 1 Cor. 2:13, the biblical spokesmen uttered the divine message “not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Spirit.” The problem with this understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation is that the words of the text can play no essential role in conveying its intended meaning, even though it is these very words which the writers were inspired to use in transmitting God’s message to men.

Fuller makes his case out of the Greek words for “received,” *dechomai* rather than *lambano*. The result is to establish that the actual work of the Holy Spirit is to deal with the *will* of the reader. He misses the point that the context of the single verse he uses is in regard to salvation, and deals with an unbeliever. An important issue that follows his conclusion is found in his following remark; “Both [agnostics and believers] can work side by side, since no other tools are called for than those of description in the terms

¹⁷⁵ D.P. Fuller, “The Holy Spirit’s Role in Biblical Interpretation,” ref. in W.W. Gasque and W.S. LaSor, *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978)189-198; accessed 8/2/2005, World Wide Web: http://www.fuller.edu/ministry/berean/hs_role.htm.

indicated by the texts themselves.” This position relates to other observations I make in this thesis that such a union is naïve, not understanding agendas of deception under which unbelievers are serving. It also denies the root problem of communion with God and the very purpose of Scripture. Finally it justifies the entire Enlightenment process which has done at least as much harm as that of subjective aberrations.

But there are other problems; one, that only those who are redeemed have a spirit that is alive. God will need a “work around” for the unsaved.¹⁷⁶ But when a man is regenerated he receives a *new* spirit. This one is the upgraded Adam II “model” spirit. Immediately it begins to reprogram the mind [sanctification] to work with the new Adam II spirit. The reprogramming renews the old mind, discarding false ideas and destructive imaginations.¹⁷⁷ In the meantime the new Adam II spirit has direct access to the Holy Spirit.

A logistic problem is then, Adam II needs a new language; a language of the spirit (1 Cor. 14:2). The spiritual language is able to be translated spiritually, without the use of the human mind or any hermeneutic. (1 Cor. 14: 13-14) If it is the Holy Spirit that facilitates the functioning of this gift, he then is able and has already functioned in this capacity in a “spirit baptized” believer. If it is somehow the believer’s own supernatural ability, this is something else to be considered. As a protection for the church in these matters, the community of congenial gifting is called to judge and confirm the accuracy with regard to the purposes of the Holy Spirit (So they also seem to

¹⁷⁶ See Figure 1 in Appendix, “A.”

¹⁷⁷ See “The Holy Spirit, Hermeneutics, and Transformation: From Present to Future Glory,” paper by Gary L. Nebeker. Grace University, Omaha, Nebraska. Accessed Nov 1, 2005. http://www.garynebeker.com/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=45

have access to revelatory input). Individual revelation is respected and considered, but needs to be compared and evaluated by others for confirmation.

Returning to the schematic Figure 1, observe that it is Jesus himself that bridges what was a dualistic separation (the far right image, omega). He was the archetype of a new race of men, who we are becoming. Paul makes it abundantly clear that man was created to have a body that will walk a “new earth.”¹⁷⁸ It was sin that split the unity in the Garden, and only in the Second Adam will the breach be restored. The Pentecostal insistence on the focus on Christ is well founded. Our graphic deliberations here might seem mechanical and devoid of relevance; recall the unity as Bonhoeffer was earlier quoted in the section “Why Post-Pentecostals Need Their Own Hermeneutics”:

There are, not two realms [i.e., a realm of grace and a realm of nature], but only the one realm of Christ-reality [*Raum der Christuswirklichkeit*], in which the reality of God and the world are united....Not two competing spheres that coexist and contend with each other about their limits so that questions about these limits would be decisive ones for history; rather all of reality is already drawn into Christ and brought together in him [*in ihm zusammengefasst*] and only from this center and towards this center does history move.¹⁷⁹

The issue we have described involving the gifts of tongues and interpretation engage the theological question of the “Detachment of the Spirit from the Scriptures.” J. T. Mueller maintained that the “illuminating witness

¹⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 15; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1.

¹⁷⁹ Zimmermann, 322. Quoting : Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethik* (DBW 6, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1998), 43-44. Zimmermann also says, “Protestant hermeneutics conjoins the so-called subjective and objective sides of interpretation (the reader’s experience and the text) in the second Person of the Trinity,” 113.

of the Holy Spirit never takes place apart from God's Word as set forth in the Scriptures."¹⁸⁰ This makes the purpose of the Holy Spirit with men directly involved and restricted to Scripture, which is totally untrue of his activity in the rest of the Bible.

Creation, as unspoken words of earthly, scientifically available evidence, is sufficient for establishing contact, but extremely limited in its capacity to communicate.¹⁸¹ God sent his word as Scripture, and that improved the communication and prepared the next stage.¹⁸² Drawing us even closer to himself, even to the greatest revelation man can have of God, in that he sent us his son and in fullness. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." (Col 1:15). As John said, he was the word made flesh, within the tangible world. But everyone had not come to that place and Jesus said to his persecutors, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (John 14:9b, 14:11a NIV)

Somewhere along this stream of revelation back to the Garden, men "set up their tent" at a mountain where they met God. Some are there marveling at the elemental¹⁸³ things—God's "foot prints" and insights of the Enlightenment. Others, captured by the transforming presence of the God within the Scriptures, claim the journey is over, at least until the *eschatos*.

¹⁸⁰ J. Theodore Mueller, Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 273.

¹⁸¹ "Natural Revelation" See Psalm 19 for this and Special Revelation.

¹⁸² Gal. 3:24 – The law was a tutor to bring us to Christ.

¹⁸³ Gal. 4:3-9.

There, it is not only a tent they raise, but an academy has been constructed. Aware that the passage has not really taken them all the way to the Garden, Pentecostals at last find the Life, and with a great triumph claim, “No! You do not yet have the “full gospel,” but we have found it, and ‘This-is-That’ which we have been looking for. We are experientially back with Jesus and the return complete.” But, Paul had been on mountain tops before, and as did Jesus at the “Transfiguration,” he saw another mountain beckoning in the distance, and he knew his journey was not yet complete. His finish line was, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.”¹⁸⁴ The place where the resurrection will bring us is beyond the Garden and what Adam knew.

We will commune within the heart of God, and it is the Absolute the postmoderns have rightly proclaimed that man can never find. The Absolute *everything*, must find us. Paul knew, as Jesus, that there was a cross of his own, awaiting on his own mountain of *Calvary*, and that life still had to be poured into creation that entropy would be destroyed.¹⁸⁵ Evangelicals rightly observe that “Jesus paid it all,” but few see that *being* a witness means we have much yet to do. The light of Scripture on the path ahead needs a hermeneutic substance that will withstand the winds of adversity in the places the church has yet to go. For us, we need a hermeneutic that illumines the path far enough ahead that the church can prepare herself for the true end of this transitional crossing:

¹⁸⁴ Phil. 3:7-16, 10, NIV.

¹⁸⁵ Col. 1:24.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:7-10 NIV)

Doing Truth

A position typically held by postmoderns is that truth is relative. Although conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists often are resistant to this statement,¹⁸⁶ they usually ultimately agree with it from a human perspective. It is difficult to find something that is not *relative*, for the definition of the word itself demands it. In an attempt to avoid embracing anything “postmodern,” some evangelicals acknowledge the weaknesses in modernity, but only set about trying to reform it, still failing to see the bankruptcy of foundationalism.¹⁸⁷ Peter Hicks acknowledges that but replies, “My answer is that reason in the modern period has been found wanting, but that is not necessarily because reason in itself is flawed; it may be because of the way the modern period has used it.” He continues, “These factors, then, of-

¹⁸⁶ Dennis McCallum, Gen Ed, to *The Death of Truth: What's Wrong with Multiculturalism, The Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity*, (Minneapolis, MN: Xenos Christian Fellowship, Inc. Bethany House, 1996) On page 244, the Editor, Dennis McCallum says, “Biblical Christians can never admit postmodern assumptions.” The title says it all, but what is notable is that on the back cover are recommendations from a dean and a professor of influential evangelical seminaries, as well as several other well known leaders.

¹⁸⁷ One such book is by David F. Wells, *No Place for the Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

fer the possibility of developing a distinctive evangelical epistemology. True, the very contemplation of such an exercise in a ‘post—Christian age’ may seem to some hopelessly irrelevant.”¹⁸⁸ He does go on to present six theses, which again are concessions only in moderation. He adds that evangelicals have erred by “resisting a dichotomy accommodating both propositional truth and personal truth; either truth located in the Bible or truth located in God.”¹⁸⁹ For our consideration hermeneutically, the question is: if God alone is the source of truth, should it not be his onus to justify truth within the Scripture? He interprets Scripture, Scripture does not interpret God. He has done this by sending the Holy Spirit of truth¹⁹⁰ to be with us forever. But many of those who acknowledge the necessity and work of the Holy Spirit within believers limit his power of any epistemic value and only as persuasion. It is this conviction that has shaped evangelical evangelism, their apologetics, and homiletics, all very consistent within the confines of Enlightenment. This has determined their hermeneutic expectations to only accept the relationship of the Holy Spirit and truth to one of conviction, and not content or signs and wonders.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics makes the following two statements: “WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives. WE DENY that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.” Norman Geisler explains that work of the Holy Spirit. “This does not imply that a non-Christian is unable to understand the meaning of any Scripture. It

¹⁸⁸ Peter Hicks, *Evangelicals & Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age* (Leicester: APOLLOS1998), 137-138.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ John 14:16, 17; 15: 26.

means that whatever he may perceive of the message of Scripture, that without the Holy Spirit's work he will not *welcome* the message in his heart.”¹⁹¹ [my italics] It is the *will* that conservative evangelicals see at the target ministry of the Holy Spirit in both believers and unbelievers. Americans have developed some powerful methods in “moving” one's will, both politically and economically, and churches have not been hesitant to use them.

Replacing the Holy Spirit's work in evangelism with secular methods has caused many Pentecostals to see this as not only an insult to the Trinity, but contrary to the entire testimony in the New Testament. Christians lament that society has marginalized the church, when it should weep over the demise of the American harvest. Those who have walked among shaman know that the counterfeit is eager to trade a “blessing” for “bondage,” and for Americans, the blessing has been technology. While the church remains convinced and content, the postmodern world is crying for answers that God has already placed within his people, if they could see who they are.

The Chicago Statement of Biblical Hermeneutics declared:

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message.

WE DENY that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to any one anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Geisler explains the above declaration:

Here stress is laid on the fact that the Holy Spirit not only is the source of Scripture, but also works to produce faith in Scripture

¹⁹¹ Norman L. Geisler, *Explaining Hermeneutics*: “A Commentary on the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics. Article V (Oakland, California: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy,” 1983).

He has inspired. Without this ministry of the Holy Spirit, belief in the truth of Scripture would not occur.

The Denial is directed at those alleged “revelations” which some claim to have but which are contrary to Scripture. No matter how sincere or genuinely felt, no dream, vision, or supposed revelation which contradicts Scripture ever comes from the Holy Spirit. For the utterances of the Holy Spirit are all harmonious and non-contradictory.¹⁹²

Again we find ourselves with the problem of not just semantics, but of the inability to see across a paradigm gap. In the negative of the declaration that denies anything contrary to the teaching of Scripture, that “teaching of Scripture” must first be interpreted. This means that the best the statement can read is “our interpretation of the teaching of Scripture” which certainly takes the “holiness” out of the authoritative declaration. What can restore such a loss is none less than the Holy Spirit. We can see why Jesus was so adamant about the necessity of his departure in order for the Holy Spirit to be with the church. His presence is not just convenient to have as a hidden persuader, he is absolutely crucial for life here on earth. Scripture even says his presence within believers keeps their bodies alive.¹⁹³ For those who constructed the Chicago Statement, anything that the Holy Spirit might do to even slant “the approved teaching” could not be the Holy Spirit, so they were granted Papal-like infallibility.¹⁹⁴ The implications of this doctrine di-

¹⁹² Chicago Statement-, Article IV. But consider that demons *believe*. Ja 2:19. Also Peter’s “sheet” Acts 10:11, 11:5 contradicted Levitical food laws..

¹⁹³ Rom. 8:11. If the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives within—.

¹⁹⁴ If one reads the list of endorsements to that document they would find only spiritual giants of evangelicalism. This is not criticism of men but a reminder of grace in our finitude. Of course their understanding and endorsement also individually differed contextually.

rectly impact the pesher hermeneutic as the example of Acts 2 and Joel 2 showed. If the Scripture in Joel “meant” what happened in Acts, then not only is authorial intention reduced to a minor place in hermeneutics, but the teaching of Joel prior to Acts 2 revelation was altered. There existed an authority that went beyond natural limitations. Peter Enns observed, “how the Apostles handled their Scripture has run the risk of being misunderstood in evangelicalism wherever modernist assumptions of proper hermeneutics have been considered supremely normative. More specifically, the implications of understanding apostolic hermeneutics for what it is, a Second Temple phenomenon, has been in direct conflict with an evangelical doctrine of Scripture, which includes among other things the notion that proper interpretation must be consistent with the author’s intention.”¹⁹⁵ Enns also said that “As Christians with a high view of Scripture, we are dependent on ‘the whole counsel of God,’ the entire Bible, both OT and NT, for directing us in all matters of faith and practice. And we are encouraged in this by observing that the Apostles themselves, by virtue of their recurring referencing of the OT, clearly set the church in this hermeneutical trajectory.”¹⁹⁶ A question we cannot deal with here asks, what aspects of their lives were purely apostolic for that unique time and what part were an exemplar for us of the prerogative of the Holy Spirit in them as believers?

Here we see the climax of God’s revelation of truth; natural revelation in creation, special revelation in the Scriptures, incarnational revelation in Jesus Christ, and finally—personal truth by revelation in the Holy Spirit. In

¹⁹⁵ Enns, 6.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

the quest for truth, *reason* does play a part for man, but as one of the “elemental” things of the world and as a part of natural revelation;¹⁹⁷ Scriptures are there to lead us to his testimony and life with Christ. Once we come into God’s family as children, taking our place by faith, we no longer are under the old rules.¹⁹⁸ Continuing on, Gal 4:9 says, “but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and destitute elemental powers? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again?” While it is true that religious obligation was most likely the expression of those elements, rationalism—the fruit of that tree, was a part of the tyranny. Reason and logic are as demanding and relentlessly controlling as any sword. Rationality can usurp the certitude of faith and return us to a darker time of greater spiritual poverty. We must first be released from our world system which has been sealed off until the restoration of all things. But in Christ we have escaped spiritually, and we are *now* seated with him in his kingdom Paul says that since we are there we are to set our minds on his kingdom with Christ. That is to be the focus of our affections, for in the old world we are dead and are not to receive from a system that is life-starved. But creation is still in transition, and we still are involved as Jesus prayed we would be.¹⁹⁹ Being spiritually minded is not to always be thinking about “spiritual” things, but to always be thinking about things, spiritually.

Col. 2:8 warns us, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, accord-

¹⁹⁷ Gal. 4:2.

¹⁹⁸ Gal. 3:24-26.

¹⁹⁹ John 17.

ing to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Now that we have the mind of Christ, we are able to know the thoughts of God through the Spirit of Truth. Our Counselor does not only mediate our legal standing, but he is the divine exegete that is able to facilitate communication even beyond the limitations of language.²⁰⁰

Moisés Silva writes, “When John tells us in his first epistle that we do not need teachers to instruct us because the Spirit anoints us with his instructions, we are thereby assured that God has not left us to our own devices in our response to revelation. Similarly, Paul states a fundamental thesis in 1 Corinthians 2:11—16 when he insists that the things of God can be understood only by those who are spiritual, that is, the people who have received God’s Spirit, who alone understands the things of God.”²⁰¹ Are there then truths that only Christians can know, and does that not then make knowledge and conceptual truth relative?

All Things Are Relative to Christ and His Kingdom

The first issue is, what is truth “relative to?” Conservatives immediately bring a moral context into their argument about “relativity,” and rightly so, for we live in society’s perversity. But, relativity does describe an aspect of our very thought processes. Whether in linguistic metaphor, or a scientific experiment, it is still the embedded Cartesian system in operation. Here is an

²⁰⁰ Rom. 8:26, 27.

²⁰¹ Moisés Silva et al., “Today’s Hermeneutical Challenge” in *Has the Church Misread the Bible?*, 31.

elementary *Gedankenexperiment*, which should be amiable to those familiar with imaginative constructs.

Consider a table with a book and a pair of reading glasses on it. On the book is a coin. If the book is moved across the table without disturbing anything else, consider the following question: Has the coin moved? Quite obviously it has, relative to everything except the book. So from the place of the book, the answer would be would be, “no.” From all other places the answer would be, “yes.” Let us consider some other observations. The “law of contradiction”²⁰² then only holds within a given place, or system, and the extrapolation of this is that rational constructs cannot hold across some systems. Personifying the articles, we ask how the book knew the coin didn’t move. I would propose that the book first had to “know about” the coin, and it did through intimate contact within the same system. As soon as its intimacy was broken, they were in different systems. Even though the true answer the glasses would give would be that the book moved, but it had no knowledge of that truth because it was in another system-outside of its senses, and must remain agnostic. If the glasses could have *seen into the other system*, it could have expressed a limited, but probable answer to the question. It follows that only the one in the place that perfectly observes “all systems” is qualified to make any claim regarding *absolute* truth. Other observers not intimately in the same system can observe, and thereby give some, though not infallible, evidence. There are other observations I would like to make concerning seeing.

²⁰² Given that it indeed is a law, for the sake of the argument.

In our table experiment we concluded that the eyeglasses could offer a probable answer. We know that eyeglasses do not actually see, but, neither do eyes. People see, for sight is highly complex and only starts in the eyes, but it is the brain that makes sense and gives needed understanding. The difference is similar to Dirkie Smit's comments about understanding and knowing.²⁰³ The organ of the eye "explains"(knowing) what data is being generated, but the brain must make sense (understanding) of it. Experiments have been conducted where special goggles that inverted what the eyes saw were given to subjects. At first it was extremely difficult to walk across the room, but after an extended time the brain "put" everything right-side-up again, and things appeared to be normal.²⁰⁴ Even though scientists have minutely analyzed compound eyes of insects, they can only conjecture as to what reality must look like to the insect. They see different wavelengths of light and perceive sounds beyond human senses. Their reality is just as real as ours, but must be decidedly different. Even with sight, we are dependent upon what is reflected back to us to gain any understanding of what is actually "out there." All of these are different systems and we have limited access to them, unless they are intimately within our own being.

The problem of knowing truth with absolute confidence and accuracy is considered impossible, especially from both a scientific and a philosophic framework. Most all would agree that "something" we would consider as reality or existence *is* out there, and distinct from ourselves. That is not too

²⁰³ Dirkie J. Smit, Simon Maimela and Adrio Konig, Eds., *Initiation Into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics*, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the 20th Century" (Pretoria: J L van Schaik), 299.

²⁰⁴ Optics, Department of Physics, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. World Wide Web: accessed Dec 3, 2005, http://www.physics.niu.edu/~willis/phys251/chapter_26_day_3.html,

hard to embrace considering we have all inherited self consciousness from Adam. At least we are able to tell what is a “part of us,” but the larger challenge is trying to comprehend what “is not.” Our problem is not primarily acknowledging that something is there but determining its meaning. The question before us is how to access the “truth” that is there.

Scripture deluges us with epistemic exhortations concerning truth that, we are told, are crucial to our being. The Greek word $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ occurs forty four times in various forms in *Nestle Aland NT Greek Text*. The Fundamentalists have used this as proof that Postmodern’s denial of truth is a concerted attack upon the Bible and Christianity and they are enemies of Christ. An alternate evaluation of the situation is that God in his sovereignty is causing the Church to reconsider what it has embraced as truth by the questions Postmoderns ask; and they are not the enemy but the harvest field. What then are we to do about the search for truth?

The Scripture states that we love him because he loved us first.²⁰⁵ There is a corollary that follows in that we seek him because he first sought us. So it is God’s initiative to restore the relationship before it is ours. We, after all, are the ones who broke covenant. Most often our search is actually for knowledge more than God’s person. The fruit from *that tree* is unfortunately very addictive, but like most “highs,” is empty. Some insight into communication from outside systems is given by Smit²⁰⁶ in his brief consideration of Schleiermacher, when he states, “The language we share cannot adequately express the unique experience of the individual author or

²⁰⁵ 1 John 4:19.

²⁰⁶ Smit, 300.

speaker. The receiver (reader or listener) must therefore reconstruct, *reproduce*, the intention or meaning of the speaker, writer, or sender in his or her own consciousness. Is this possible? Yes, because we are ‘congenial,’ that means, we, both listeners and speakers, as human beings, share the same human spirit.” I would propose that this is a principle found within Scripture²⁰⁷ which opens up some help to the communication within systems.

Smit, or more precisely, Schleiermacher applied this to communication from man to man, but there is even better news for biblical hermeneutics. God does two things that, in the context of restoring us to his system, also impacts communications in such a way that all of the uncertainties that have been rightly noted as hermeneutic problems are *able* to be made irrelevant. Until we are eschatologically able to be fully restored to God’s system, the Holy Spirit has come to us and mingled within our personal system, in that “...whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.”²⁰⁸ In addition, our nature has been transformed and we have become partakers of his divine nature.²⁰⁹ No longer are we separated in the spirit even though the consummation is yet to occur. The Scriptures referred to have usually been processed through the foundationalist filter, and are accordingly appointed a less mystical and personal interpretation than Pentecostals would prefer. For most Evangelicals the relationship between the intimacy of communion and its celebration as the “Lord’s Supper” is still symbolic, that is, lacking any mystical impartation. However, the Assembly of God does acknowledge it

²⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 2:10-18.

²⁰⁸ 1 Cor. 6:17 NAB.

²⁰⁹ 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15; 2 Pet. 1:4, word *koinonia* used for “partaker,”- congeniality.

as our sharing the divine nature.²¹⁰ Pentecostals are not only more experientially receptive, but allow their experiences to have supernatural implications. The *new nature* of a redeemed believer needs theological development, which I propose modifies the doctrine of Illumination from being passive. Revelation is not natural, but one of a participatory action, congenial with the Holy Spirit.

One of the first things young theologians discover is that they have great difficulty speaking with other theologians and also understanding what writers of theology mean, as if they are in a foreign territory.²¹¹ Historically people seem to have had that difficulty with lawyers. Language is not always to communicate, but sometimes to exclude and limit. God used it at Babel and Jesus used parables in order to separate out those whose hearts were not right to receive his message.²¹² Usually Jesus was extravagant with his use of metaphor. Far from putting forth precise words of a theologian, bounded and constrained to scientific precision, he broadcast it to “whoever had ears to hear.” How can we put such words through our analytic filters to decipher them, and then attempt to translate them into our scientifically restrictive vessels? Again, foundationalism has caught us unaware. But remember, the root of the problem goes to that tree in the Garden. Not only did man fall

²¹⁰ The approved doctrine of the AOG as accessed through the World Wide Web. “The Lord’s Supper, consisting of the elements --bread and the fruit of the vine-- is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4)” <http://ag.org/top/beliefs/truths.cfm#6/>; accessed 11/20/05.

²¹¹ In an educational publication through the United Nations, the failure of the academy in preparing teachers is strongly criticized for its closed hierarchical organizational structure with its own societal rules. Donald A. Bligh, David Jaques, David Warren Piper, “Methods and Techniques in Post-Secondary Education: The establishment of academic territory,” UNESCO, No 31 (1976). 17.

²¹² 2 Cor. 4:3,4; John 12:40; Mat. 13:13-16.

there, but language itself fell, losing the ability to communicate its *spiritual essence of intent*. I suggest that not only had the receiver, man, been irreparably damaged,²¹³ but also the ability of words themselves to contain that power was lost, for they are “place-holders” for thoughts of a fallen mind.

Language had lost its spirituality, or the ability to carry spiritual information. Compare: “-which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”²¹⁴ This Scripture is somewhat difficult and there have been significantly different translations, however this, I believe is supported by indications that God’s word *within itself* possesses power. This highlights the question if the Holy Spirit empowers the word as it goes forth, or if the power is implicit within the word.²¹⁵ If human language as a part of creation²¹⁶ has itself in some way been corrupted by the fall and vulnerable to the corruption of the fallen system through which it passes, as Dallas Willard put it, “How do we have mediation without modification?”²¹⁷ Here we encounter the absolute necessity for the superintending work of the Holy Spirit. If, indeed what was lost in the Fall did more than just damage man’s rational ability, the traditional understanding involved in the doctrine of Illumination will not be sufficient. A question to consider might be; “Just

²¹³ He could not be healed. He had to become a new man—a new κτίσις of man. 2 Cor. 5:17.

²¹⁴ 1 Cor. 2:13 NAU.

²¹⁵ The discovery that the Greek used in biblical manuscripts was the common *Koine* and not a heavenly language as had been thought, should not have major significance here, but it shows history’s mindset.

²¹⁶ Rom. 8:21, Creation is described as in slavery to the corruption from the Fall.

²¹⁷ Willard, *Disciplining Hermeneutics*, 169.

what is it, *specifically*, that a redeemed man can apprehend that one not redeemed cannot?" The usual way taken around this question is to interpret the passages in 1 Cor. 2:10-16 in the context of man's will. The work of the Holy Spirit seems more *phronimos* than *epistemic*. Vanhoozer says, "The spirit progressively disabuses us of those ideological or idolatrous prejudices that prevent us from receiving the message."²¹⁸ This is true, and similar to how the Holy Spirit works in an unsaved person enabling a response to God's call. It is also true that Scripture speaks of blinding the eyes of those who are evil.²¹⁹ This issue involves some thorny questions in Soteriology that would interrelate with eternal security, and what, if anything, would occur in the mind of one who falls away, if that is a possibility for the reader. Is regeneration or even an "illumination" by the Holy Spirit a paradigm shift, and if so is it reversible? Vanhoozer does a formidable job of dealing with these questions in his comprehensive book on hermeneutics, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*²²⁰

While he acknowledges the value in the "This-is-that" hermeneutic, he does not fully endorse it as he sees it as pitting the Word against the Spirit. His complaints about its limitations seem to spring from his lack of a Pentecostal context, asking questions that are more readily answered within that framework. He agrees with other scholars²²¹ that Paul's hermeneutical position was centered in the Spirit-experience, through which Scripture was

²¹⁸ Vanhoozer, *Disciplining Hermeneutics*, 164.

²¹⁹ Isa. 6:10, Mat. 13:13-16, John 12:40, 2 Cor. 4:3-4.

²²⁰ Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning*, "Reforming the Reader: Interpretative Virtue, Spirituality, and Communicative Efficacy" 409 cf.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 411, Stephen Fowl, James Dunn, and Richard Hays.

to be read. He does express concern with the experiential element, likening it to Bultmann's difficulty in maintaining the historical Jesus in light of subjectivity. To the question of if the meaning is "in" the text or if it is the product of the encounter between the text and the Spirit-led reader, he questions how a Spirit-guided interpretation can be distinguished from a more mundane interpretative practice. In this question he does acknowledge the possibility of "less holy spirits," but whether he is acknowledging a personally directed evil is not clear. He does acknowledge that, "When we struggle to reach understanding, we are not contending 'against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers' (Eph. 6:12 RSV). Reading is a struggle with the text against those powers that would distort understanding."²²² With regard to his perceived role of the Holy Spirit, he maintains that "the Spirit's role in bringing about understanding is to witness to what is other than himself (meaning accomplished) and to bring its significance to bear on the reader (meaning applied)." He sees the Spirit as working in three aspects in bringing readers to understanding. The Spirit convicts regarding its authority. The Spirit illumines the letter, but not altering the text, but ministers the meaning to the reader. He agrees that the spiritual sense is also the literal sense properly understood. The Spirit cooperates with the sanctifying process.

When presented with the option of the "This-is-that" approach he draws back claiming that spiritual interpretation enables the text to mean something other than it says. ("this means that") He uses the Joel 2 and Acts 2 Scriptures as his example. My position is that the purpose and meaning in Joel 2 was *always* its fulfillment in Acts. He is nervous about the possibility

²²² Ibid., 413-429.

of multiple meanings, which can raise reasonable hesitancy. An interesting observation arises in that, excluding the Acts fulfillment, not much could be hermeneutically accomplished in finding truthful meaning to Joel 2. There are legitimate concerns here, but the alternative to *complete* dependence on the Holy Spirit leaves even greater room for error. Vanhoozer's conclusions bring a balanced inclusive approach which will serve adequately for those who are evangelical but not Pentecostal. As his last words he does develop his view of a "Hermeneutics of the Cross." This also has an eschatological edge on it, with the same reservation he had about *peshet* interpretations. His reluctance there is based on the apparent lack of a future dimension to such an existential hermeneutic, and the tentative "not yet" emphasis demanded in some Reformed eschatology. His Trinitarian position from the cross emphasized a humility, which he stated as, "What Christianity gives to hermeneutic is the contrast between a 'hermeneutic of the cross' and a 'hermeneutic of glory'".

"Those who read according to the hermeneutics of glory revel in their own interpretative skills, impose their interpretive theories on texts, and eclipse the text's own meaning."²²³ *The following is what should be the distinction of Pentecostalism:* Evangelicals are still on the "Cross" side of their Christianity. Jesus' resurrection was not the harvest of his being planted on the cross, but on the proper day of joyous celebration, Pentecost; and that was when his seed was resurrected with life and power.²²⁴ What the Western secular world still sees as Christianity is pride and arrogance. From the Post-Pentecostal perspective, it is unrestrained joy with intimidating boldness.

²²³ Ibid., 465.

²²⁴ John 12:24 Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies-

[They did note at Pentecost that the disciples appeared drunk. Gordon Fee is mistaken when he says that “the crucial issue for Pentecostals in hermeneutics lies at the very heart, namely with their ‘distinctives’: (1) the doctrine of subsequence... and (2) the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Spirit.”²²⁵ I suggest that those particular issues are what doctrinally separate him from his evangelical brothers. I make this point to call attention that it is not that Pentecostalism has seen the poverty of foundationalism, but from where Pentecostals are communally with the Holy Spirit, they have had a better opportunity to see a superior spiritual life. One can be called a Pentecostal and still have not made the paradigm shift to the other side of the cross. Some Pentecostal churches call themselves, “Full Gospel” churches. One would think that the matter is then settled and the superlative has been attained. This is why I chose to occasionally use the name Post-Pentecostal in this thesis.

From “This-is-That” to “This-is-Him”

Pentecostals have been characterized as seeking experiences; however this is only partially correct. A considerably more accurate identification would be that they are seeking experiences *with Christ*. Möller would strongly hold that, “at the centre of their faith and theology is Jesus Christ: Savior, Baptizer in the Spirit, Healer, and Coming King. In light of this, it is not far-fetched to call Christ Himself the Pentecostal paradigm.”²²⁶ Of

²²⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*. 84. Fee places the emphasis on the *means*, and not the *significance*.

²²⁶ Möller, 185.

course human nature is drawn to the spectacular, but most competent pastors have taught their congregations that “the signs should follow them, not the other way around.” Warnings that the Holy Spirit will never contradict Scripture or lead someone to act in an unscriptural manner have only encouraged the Pentecostal to look at Scripture to validate their experience. The argument that experience replaces Scripture is then not correct. This is the *perlocution, illocution* shift again; the result seeks out the cause. The paradigm shift that Pentecostals have entered into is strongly eschatological in that many of the graces that had been *imputed* doctrinally to believers have now been appropriated into the present reality of their lives. The separation of our very being that started with pre-Christian philosophy has been reconciled, and man has become a whole being in Christ. This was why it is crucial for Pentecostals to understand their true identity as spirit-filled believers. It is not that Pentecostals have that which others do not, but they have presently appropriated their rightful inheritance as having been made available at the resurrection. The reason it has been often taught as a subsequent experience is that it is *temporally* on the resurrection side of the cross.

With this jump in time that which even still lies ahead is seen more clearly. As Jesus said, “But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Mat. 12:28 NIV). Most evangelicals accept that the kingdom is here partially. Pentecostals just walk more closely to that “line” than others, and sometimes have come to realize that they have indeed, crossed over it and are out of place. And it does seem to be fuzzy and personal. There are other Scriptures that indicate that there are places in our faith, where others have yet to come. Paul’s discourse on food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8, and his injunction to the Romans in chap-

ter 14, indicate personal responsibility to one's understanding and faith. When Scripture states that if one acts upon doubt it is sin, it certainly has more than a trace of relativism. Often when we attempt to develop a normative theology we find that we are guilty of presumption and fall into being judged as we have judged. Zimmermann comments on this. "Modern fundamentalists who react against this so-called liberal theology unfortunately proceed from the same assumption as the 'enemy,' namely, that a text can have only one normative meaning but many possible applications, which can never become normative."²²⁷ Guidance of the Holy Spirit must occur in the whole of life even though fundamentalists have alarmingly warned against the separation of the Spirit from the Scripture. Those that claimed to be prompted in social or spiritual experiences were labeled spiritualists, disturbed people, and fanatics in their appeal to the "inner guidance of the Spirit" apart from the written divine Word. J. T. Mueller called it "alleged 'inner promptings of the Spirit.'"²²⁸ The roots of that Evil Tree are so deeply within our very being that Jesus alone spoke to the legalist within us all when he said, "You pore over the Scriptures, believing that in them you can find eternal life; it is these Scriptures that testify to me, and yet you refuse to come to me to receive life!" (John 5:39 NJB). I would propose that in this context we now focus toward a better hermeneutic.

Common Experience in a Place of Timelessness

However one works through these issues there is a common agreement that language, as amazing as it is, cannot provide complete and flaw-

²²⁷ Zimmermann, 22.

²²⁸ Mueller, 279.

less communication. An obvious relationship of context occurs with words that communicate beyond the value within the word structure itself. We need to go back to pick up the contextual bridge. Since we cannot avoid it, perhaps we can engage it. If the communion of a common language will not entirely resolve the problem, the communion of common experience might help. Earlier in the paper I recounted some observations gleaned while attending meetings where the Lord's presence overpowered differences to such a degree that the worldly contextual matters that normally come to play, such as age, gender, or social status became, at least during that time, irrelevant. I could venture an imaginary scene from some of those meetings, where brothers and sisters from hundreds of years in the past could have been sitting there with us, and the same congeniality would be there. We have experienced such things in our families. Brothers sitting together watching and involved in a sports program on television are able to communicate to one another with a minimum of words. Literally grunts and single syllables enable intelligible communication. Outsiders would be totally left out. If this is observable through the common experiences of life, how much more the common family experience of sitting at our Father's feet. I have witnessed this on the mission field where I was welcomed into homes where there was no direct verbal communication available. But we communicated far beyond that which sign language could provide. Outside in the village, it was gone. Missionaries have stories, but they seldom are asked to relate them in a "non-devotional" gathering in the academy. Horizons in the spirit are much closer than in the natural.

Subjectivity

Probably no issue within Postmodernism is as volatile a topic as subjectivity. Other closely related issues that deeply worry leaders emerging from modernity are: imagination, hidden context out of sight over the horizon, embracing chaos forming self-organization, relativism, holism, freedom from control, and most of these all are rooted in fear. The “fear” aspect that still affects the bias in the academy against subjectivity shows the deep dependence still held in an often unacknowledged regard for a supposed objectivity available within rationalism. This also gives us insight into the birth of Enlightenment from the Early church’s encounter with Gnosticism and its stepchildren. These are reservations among foundationalists considering Pentecostalism as a valid expression within the church. Scripture and history have recounted events during times of encounter with the unseen world when the spiritual has broken through into the earthly realm. It can be frightening in ways totally unfamiliar to first world people, whose rationality has vanquished all of the ancient dragons. There are paradigm shifts and probably somethings more life-changing, which could be called paradigm crashes.²²⁹ The events I refer to are not demonic encounters, but happen when God’s presence is manifested. Recall Isaiah’s vision of the Lord, high and lifted up, or Job finally having his time before God to present his case. Lazarus’ resurrection struck fear into the Pharisees and precipitated a conspiracy for Jesus’ death. Jesus walking on the water or his very presence before Pilate brought fear to friend and foe alike. The judgment of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 brought “great fear” over the church and community as

²²⁹ What happens to old paradigms? Do they haunt us in our dreams?

well. As is seen when Paul explains in 1 Cor. 11:30 when speaking about the Lord's Supper, communion with God can be a dangerous matter. When one limits what the Holy Spirit can and can not do, they are back to contending for control. Even chaos with its seeming threats, cannot give birth to its promising new journeys in the presence of control. The "bottom line" against the Pentecostal emphasis upon tongues, when pursued to the root, is an issue of "self-control."

In this next section I will attempt to look at some other problems with subjectivity. Partly because of the topic, I will take a little more postmodern turn and include personally subjective observations and personal conclusions without attempting a proper academic procedure. A common occurrence in a spirit-filled Christian's life is an increased awareness of the reality and presence of the Holy Spirit. When reading the Bible there is an expectancy that the experience will actually increase and bring an awareness of knowledge that was not previously there. It is as if one would audibly hear a teaching, and just seconds after the last word was spoken-would have a latent sense of it just having been said, except in this case, the spoken part of it is never did happen as an event in time.²³⁰ An actual sense of hearing God audibly occurs rarely, but is not unheard of. I relate this in order to bring out vulnerability in spiritual exercise.

In order to be aware of what Elijah called, "the still small voice"²³¹, one must first silence the strong sounds of other thoughts competing for our

²³⁰ Concepts of "being led by the Holy Spirit," or operating in knowledge gifts *i.e.* "words of knowledge" or "prophecy" are similarly experienced. The Holy Spirit speaks. Jn16:13.

²³¹ 1 Kings 19:13.

attention. This is probably one of the reasons Jesus spent long periods alone in prayer. A saying that has circulated in spirit-filled quarters is, “It is usually harder to know when God is not speaking, than when he is.” In our desire to hear, or even “make an experience happen,” we often do something, that in electronic terms amounts to turning up the gain. Several things happen; negatively this contributes to what has been called “flesh,” in traditional Pentecostalism, and in terms of present scientific understanding of systems, it is positive feedback—the howl in the PA system when it is set too high. This causes an increased sensitivity to any very small noise which is then able to cause a “tipping” event ...the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back.” The system then enters a condition that attempts to increase infinitely. It will move into stress which will then cause one or more components to breakdown.

In another well known optical phenomenon where one focuses on a blank CRT television screen that only displays noise, after some minutes, there occurs a sensation of observing patterns or even fleeting pictures on the screen. Children play games of watching clouds to find animals and familiar objects within cloud shapes. In certain religious groups significance is occasionally made when a stain on a wall, or light passing through a window at a certain time of day depicts a religious icon or figure. Recently a toasted cheese sandwich, with what appeared to be an image of the Madonna, was sold at an astounding price. Kuhn’s observation of finding what one is looking for is not limited to the science laboratory. When there is nothing there to sense, the mind fills in with our expectations. Experiments with sensory deprivation have established that subjects suspended in a sensory free tank

will begin to hallucinate after a prolonged time without any sensory stimulus. Can we ever trust our mind?

In the search to find an “outside” reference that was thought to be objective, rationalism seemed to satisfy that requirement, and the Age of Enlightenment was born. Sadly it had limited success with only elemental things, for it lacked the ability to transfer its mathematic purity to other matters that crucially needed to have certitude.²³² In lieu of providing the required objectivity, it constructed abstractions that it was able to logically calculate, which, for religion were dogmatic propositional statements. Moule states, “. . . in the Bible, God’s self-revelation is personal rather than propositional. That is to say, ultimately revelation is in relationship, confrontation, communion, rather than by the communication of facts.”²³³ A solution for the difficulties of subjectivity is not able to be found in objectivity, if for no other reason than it is not sufficiently attainable. The authenticating result hoped for from objectivity is only attainable from the relationship between the sender and the receiver, and not from the information itself. Writer-reader hermeneutics must be acknowledged as the defining problem in any doctrine of illumination for the Scriptures. Any attempt to solve this problem with multiple authors and multiple readers must resolve the relationships within those respective individuals. The outcome is dependant upon those deliberations.

One of the uses from complexity and chaos theory has been applied to communication. A problem in all communication systems is that of main-

²³² Einstein is reputed to have commented on the frustration of converting the purity of mathematics into the physical world.

²³³ C.F.D. Moule, “Revelation,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (1976, New York: Abingdon), 4:55.

taining the veracity of information exchanged. In all processes in the physical world noise, distortion, and uncertainty affect the process in some degree. Prior attempts have sought to use negative feedback or filters to increase accuracy, but when systems are stressed in attempts to decode weak signals, gain must be increased and they become susceptible to even minor interference. Using self-organizing methods within chaotic conditions have been found to provide faithful reproduction and can encrypt the information enabling it to be received by only a specifically prepared receiver. Self-organization has been an encouraging advance in computer systems and information technology, and has given insight to ways of facilitating solutions to emerge from very complex situations. We will enlist some of these insights when we develop our organizational matrix. One important understanding that has had broad application is that of a common bridge between the dual levels of the Cartesian paradigm, the physical and the metaphysical, or in our application, the objective and the subjective. “Organization” has been seen as a common “element” in both “worlds,”²³⁴ and could provide a better method to handle the split.

Errors that have been attributed to subjectivity have not always been caused by internal self-referencing subjectivity, but from lack of corrective forms of feedback. This might mean that in the instance of a Pentecostal prophetic word or interpretation of tongues, correction has not been properly brought into the exercise by the community as Scripture has instructed. Again, it is helpful to remember that 1 Cor. 13 informs us that not only is our knowledge presently incomplete, but the complete spectrum of spiritual

²³⁴ This “organizational quantum” is related to the “bridge” American evangelicals are advocating as supporting “intelligent design” against evolutionary “natural selection.”

exercises—even martyrdom are invalidated by an improper and loveless agenda. That it is legitimately supernatural does not of and in itself legitimize its use. Neither objective nor subjective activity is mechanical; we are always involved with the person of Christ. Even Truth must be spoken in love to be effectual.

Possibly one of the causes that lead to Gnostic corruption involves selfish creative skills and imaginary speculations. Words that have been used by critics of Pentecostal expressions are: wildfire, overactive imagination, superspirituality,²³⁵ emotionalism, and the general term of fanatic. They all point out the *excessive* expression of what otherwise would be acceptable. These criticisms are not entirely unfounded, but it is noteworthy that the word “excessive” is very subjective itself, and relative to the situation. Evangelicals all believe in the truth that Jesus said where two or three were gathered together in his name, he was there in their midst. Each individual has his own understanding of that Scripture, but if Jesus physically appeared as he did in the Upper Room, they would find a new meaning to Pentecostalism. Experience and context are unavoidable; it is a matter of what one does with it. Regretfully, Gnostic tendencies start when one makes an experience a principle or normative doctrine, and this, regrettably, still happens within some Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

An example of this situation occurred when a Bible teacher “discovered” that the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden represented man’s independent recourse to reason and thinking. This is not an unreasonable observation, but was this a revelation, or a subconscious reason-

²³⁵ Francis A. Schaeffer, *The New Superspirituality, The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1982), Vol. 3

ing that suddenly broke through into his awareness, or “divine insight” sent by the Holy Spirit? His conclusion was that the Holy Spirit “showed him” that trees in the Bible *usually* represented man’s thinking. When he read the passage where Jesus partially healed the blind man, and was queried by Jesus about how well he saw, he responded by telling Jesus that he saw men as trees walking.²³⁶ The teacher’s interpretation of that passage then was that the spiritual (and Spirit endorsed) meaning was that having a renewed rational mind was only a very limited partial healing, but one needed to go on to have one’s spiritual eyes healed to be complete. These private interpretations are then integrated together doctrinally into the large spiritual context. (Some traditional eschatology has had a similar birth.) Another man was spiritually impressed that the acknowledged typology of Moses’ Tabernacle as developed in the book of Hebrews represented a pattern applicable to many other occasions in the Christian life. Charismatics have “used it” for the study of worship, or even the restoration of the Church. This man used it for almost everything, for he saw the totality of Scripture through that particular “revelation-knowledge” filter. Green states, “It is important to acknowledge the need for the full linguistic range, against the tendency of some (especially when speaking about religion) to romanticize the metaphoric at the expense of the conceptual.”²³⁷ He explains that the scientist needs the conceptual (which might have at one time been metaphorical) and the poet needs the metaphor. The devil’s temptation of Christ in the wilderness was not one of scriptural authority, but of hermeneutics. The question of any continuing revelational content is in great dispute, partly because

²³⁶ Mark 8:24.

²³⁷ Green, *Imagining*, 71.

such revelations inevitably affect other Scriptures occasionally resulting in heresies. The Gospel and the Scriptures are holistic and disturbing one truth affects all of the others. This is a reason why evangelicals are so cautious about the concept of revelation, and decide on a very passive doctrine of illumination. Denying actual information exchange, the Holy Spirit is, it seems, at our beckon call to only clarify our thinking and clean up our logical constructs. But one could offer the argument that experience is valuable and legitimate as it is both inevitable and necessary *for* interpretation, not an impediment. Western Christians continually struggle in thinking in conflict metaphors²³⁸ and usually only consider dichotomies, not continuums as options.

Even Foundationalists will agree that the reading of Scriptures should change the reader's world view, which is a radical paradigm shift. Garrett Green commenting on Kuhn's use of paradigms notes that imagination can provide a "gestalt-shift" that causes the radical sudden change that characterizes an exemplar paradigm shift. "The paradigmatic imagination is the ability to see one thing as another."²³⁹ Green continues, "I will argue that imagination can be acknowledged as the point in human experience where revelation is encountered without thereby implying any inherent 'natural' connection with God."²⁴⁰ That means that an unredeemed natural man, without the Holy Spirit, is able to experience revelation *as an experience*. (Not necessarily *divine* revelation). For Christians it follows that for Christians what is

²³⁸ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1980), 23.

²³⁹ Garrett Green, *Imagining*, 71-73.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 43. [It is important to understand Green's use of the word "imagination." He allows E. Kant's "Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is *not itself present*."62].

perceived as revelation—along with a possible paradigm shift, may or may not be initiated by the Holy Spirit.²⁴¹ Ways of establishing a reasonable certainty that our leading is from the Holy Spirit, and he is involved, are scripturally bound to the need for such spiritual activity to function within a healthy and mature Christian community, experienced in adjudicating such situations. A Pentecostal church needs to be a self-organizing community, as the Holy Spirit’s authority functions within the giftings of the individuals.

Austin Farrer’s concept of the doctrine of Illumination is weaker than Pentecostal’s would prefer. He sees it as, “Divine truth is supernaturally communicated to men in an act of inspired thinking which falls into the shape of certain images.”²⁴² Green opines, “Revelation gives an access to God superior to that granted by natural reason but is inferior to direct vision which is our ultimate goal. Faith—the name for that intermediate kind of knowledge—thus has an indirect relation to its object.”²⁴³ He also states that “As long as theologians persist in describing the reception of revelation solely in biblical and dogmatic terms, the problem of ‘revelation-positivism’ remains.”²⁴⁴ This regrettably is the situation with many Pentecostals and Charismatics, for they continue, in denial of their “birthright,” locked into the foundationalist paradigms inherited from their scholarly fundamentalist

²⁴¹ Green does not say this, but what the natural mind can do, certainly the renewed mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit can. If subjectivity is encouraged as a necessary relationship with the Holy Spirit, the tendency for gnostic errors and paradigm shifts would be greater and suitable checks and safeguards important.

²⁴² Austin Ferrer, *The Glass Vision* (London: Dacre Press, 1958), 57.

²⁴³ Green, *Imagining*, 111.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 38.

brothers. Even Pentecostal theologian Gordon Fee separates “devotional reading” from “proper hermeneutics” and “solid exegesis.”

The reason one must not begin with the here and now is that the only proper control for hermeneutics is to be found in the original intent of the biblical text. As noted earlier in this chapter, this is the “plain meaning” one is after. Otherwise biblical texts can be made to mean whatever they mean to any given reader. But such hermeneutics becomes pure subjectivity, and who then is to say that one person’s interpretation is right, and another’s is wrong. Anything goes. In contrast to such subjectivity, we propose that the original meaning of the text be a main goal.²⁴⁵

Green brings Paul Tillich’s position into the deliberation of the function of faith, which sees faith as guaranteeing the scriptural integrity. Green correctly objects, “An ecstatic faith experience thus usurps the role of guarantee attributed by the New Testament itself to the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). Rather than faith guaranteeing Scripture, the New Testament claims that the Holy Spirit guarantees both faith and Scripture.”²⁴⁶ I do not think that Green is extending his references to Pentecostals, but he does seem to see such faith as a contender. A question should be put forth regarding how, other than in principle, did the Holy Spirit “confirm” the Scripture, or even Paul’s preaching?²⁴⁷ Experience does not justify itself, it is the Holy Spirit that justifies the experience, because the Holy Spirit must be in the experience. Biblically there were signs and wonders for confirmation. In order to understand the meaning of the New Testament textual elements, one needs the New Testament experience that gave cause for those words. Be-

²⁴⁵ Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 29.

²⁴⁶ Green, *Imagining*, 112.

²⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 2:4-5. Also, how was the Canon validated, subjectively or objectively?

cause we continue to learn how vulnerable we are in our finitude, the necessity of a moral element in our hermeneutics also becomes more apparent. Experience is life, adventure and the dangers of the journey; a most difficult context to bring into our culture, especially attempting to provide academic objectivity. Perhaps Western's individualism and experiential sterility can be lessened with a more dynamic and cooperative hermeneutic community.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO A HERMENEUTIC MATRIX

Pentecostal Hermeneutics is a participational hermeneutics, thus an Organizational Matrix is most suitable. The quantum leaps that computer and digital technology have made in the Western world have brought new insights into information technology. We have constructed robots with artificial intelligence and proceeded with such development according to how we thought human intelligence functioned. This has brought considerable adjustment in our understanding of how people actually think. As an example, an older well known observation has been that we are aware of different functions within the two hemispheres of the human brain. One side has been observed to function more visually, while the other is more verbal. There are many other characteristics that seem to generally be processed by one half or the other. It has also been observed that people tend to operate with different combinations of preference depending on the situation, and there is an interchange of information and processing between the hemispheres in a healthy brain.

A common example of this is, if asked directions regarding how to travel to an unknown place, some people will linearly prefer to write out a list of turns to take, and possible distances between each one. Another person will draw a sketch in the form of a map. Considerable effort throughout the years has been devoted to studies of this subject. Dualism seems to be a part of the structure of the universe when referenced from human thinking. We cannot blame it all on Descartes, or on the philosophers. I am suggesting

that the solution is not to deny duality, but find ways to philosophically and scientifically understand how the parts function together. A working Matrix must accommodate the individual operational characteristics, preferences, and legitimate styles of the participants.

Scripture is replete with dualistic definitive or numerical fractal-like images.²⁴⁸ Although these might be “stretched,” some of the pairs are: male/female, Old Testament/New Testament, Gentile/Hebrew, spirit/body, visible/invisible, redeemed/unredeemed, good/evil, life/death, Jesus/Antichrist, and heaven/hell. A question arises if these are true dichotomies, or poles of a continuum. Perhaps their existence is only as a descriptor for a unique situation in space and time as it affects people.²⁴⁹ Even in the computer world scientists are exploring other digital modes. Quantum physics has brought other systems into play in our attempts to interpret the physical world, and such tools might prove valuable in aiding interpreting the world of scriptural text. This does not mean that they must be complicated, but people think according to their experiences.

While teaching Church History to a particular group in Africa I was more successful using verbal stories and even mural-like drawings to communicate time oriented events, than conventional Western time indicators. It had nothing to do with intelligence, but everything to do with world view. Paradigm shifts are unnecessary for those born into a given system in order to function in a natural manner. The problems develop when one attempts to

²⁴⁸ In a sense, a fractal is a graphically observable fraction. There exists a common part within the totality of individual parts in the expression.

²⁴⁹ J. Derrida had considerable interest in deconstructing such binary poles. The binary on/off was immediately workable with electrical circuitry and most suitable in the development of computers.

change paradigms, because “they have a life and culture of their own.” God has chosen to communicate with us using words. But he also has used “natural revelation”; and I suggest two other “languages,” “the Word made flesh,” and “spiritual words spoken by the Holy Spirit.”²⁵⁰ Written words are not verbal (by definition), they are “informational place holders.” They have at times been only symbols, but later morphed into written languages such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, or Oriental scripts. These subjects are well beyond this paper, but we do want to acknowledge the validity of a Cartesian-like system, in its rightful place. Jesus said that one should render to Caesar what is due him, indicating that Caesar did have some validity. However we occasionally find that we are using the very mindset we are attempting to deconstruct. Our purpose here is to determine a self-organizing matrix that can be used to process more types of information than exegesis and more familiar hermeneutic procedures are able to establish.

The purpose is to not merely attempt to identify and understand multiple dynamics that do or could occur with the reading of Scripture, but to find solutions to problems we find. Questions remain if this is within our ability. Viewing the subject/object split from different perspectives serves no purpose unless some insight is found to at least minimize its effects, which I think has already been happening within the academy. With the scriptural admonitions that we only partially understand what is before us, and are only able to communicate limited portions of that, some will remain a riddle until the eschatos.²⁵¹ Whether that is a goad or a nail²⁵², it should serve to define

²⁵⁰ 1 Cor. 2:13. Those who have heard them understand. Those who have not, only speculate of their existence.

²⁵¹ 1 Cor. 13:9-12.

one's expectations and priorities. An analogy has been given for this type of situation where one is in a theatre and a fire breaks out. The response is different if he knows if the doors are locked, or not. Paul kicked against his goads until his paradigm shifted.

Until such a time of revelatory intervention, most scholars are convinced that our most brilliant minds have found no single key and the doors remain locked. The question before us is what can we do? What are our options? As a Pentecostal I have experiences and knowledge that I cannot simply ignore. Awareness of the situation does not necessarily follow that one is able to eliminate its effects. At the risk of alienating postmodern autonomous sensitivities, I will suggest some matrices through which relevant questions can possibly be processed. Contextual circles seem to be with us even physiologically, and perhaps some are able to be used constructively.²⁵³

A familiar model depicting the trichotomist viewpoint, is derived from the schematic in figure 1 in the Appendix. Looking at the spirit filled person, omega from the earthly (bottom) end, as one would look through a pipe, the image would appear as in Figure 2, in the Appendix. The progress through the schematic would then follow as the Scripture would be processed

²⁵² Ecc. 12:11.

²⁵³ Knowledge in the physical dimension is able to have significant influence philosophically. Physiologists have determined that individual consciousness exists as a mixture of memory and immediate sensory perception. This appears to occur outside of the brain but within the neural connectivity from the eye to the brain. Where damage has occurred that shuts down the memory effect within the eye/brain connection, simple activity such as pouring milk into a glass becomes very difficult. Some very short term memory must exist that is able to anticipate the "yet unreal" micro-future in order for eye-hand coordination. It seems that even the most basic things we do are within a contextual situation. It is perhaps this circularity that enables progress, not hinders it. One ref., William J. Cromiel, "The Harvard University Gazette," Harvard Gazette Archives, April 15, 1999. World Wide Web: accessed 10 Dec 2005, <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/1999/04.15/lookingahead.html>; see also <http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/bb/consciousness/> for links.

through the differing facilities in our model. The first encounter of the Scripture would be in the physical world according to the physical senses. In the case of scriptural text, it is visual observation. This is an elementary discipline that probably accounts for many problems non-academics encounter in reading Scripture, as it is not always easy to consciously “see” what is written. Having observed what is actually in the text, the mind can then bring context and intellectual facilities to bear upon what has been observed. This would more formally move into the exegetical arena. Franke notes,

Careful exegesis is required in an effort to understand the ‘original’ intention of the authors by determining what they said. However, the speaking of the Spirit is not bound up solely with the supposed “original intention” of the author.... a text can be viewed metaphorically as ‘having its own intention.’ This ‘textual intention’ has its genesis in the author’s intention but is not exhausted by it. Therefore, we must not conclude that exegesis alone can exhaust the Spirit’s speaking to us through the text. While the Spirit appropriates the text in its internal meaning, the goal of this appropriation is to guide the church in the variegated circumstances of particular contemporary settings.²⁵⁴

It is here that the spiritual, renewed mind would adjust and begin to bring specific spiritual words together with spiritual thoughts. Notice that the Holy Spirit has not been placed in the diagram. Where one would place his activity would depend upon theological convictions. Pentecostals would be comfortable with his involvement even prior to actually reading the particular Scripture, and throughout the entire process.

²⁵⁴ Franke, 22.

The next area again has spiritual implications; this would rest with what spiritual input the Holy Spirit provides. This is an intimate place of illumination, inspiration, and—for Spirit-Filled Christians, an opportunity to receive whatever pleases him to reveal. Franke²⁵⁵ comments that:

“Puritan notion of further light has been expressed in the language of literary theory by Northrop Frye²⁵⁶ who notes that, to an extent unparalleled in any other literature, the biblical texts seem to invite readers to bring their own experiences into a conversation with them resulting in an ongoing interpretation of each in the light of the other. For this reason, Frye suggests that readers properly approach the text with an attitude of expectation, anticipating that there is always more to be received from the Bible.”

We do not submit commands to a computer that has an obligation to perform our expected task. This is not even mere communion with another person, but with the Holy God. Most Christians would acknowledge that it was he who summoned us, or is at least waiting for our response. For those who are presumptuous and unwilling to posture themselves in humility are likely consigned to quench their thirst from their own cisterns. If our motives are right, he may well allow our minds to follow our hearts and hear how to serve him in the revelation he gives us. If we are not willing to embrace and respond accordingly, we may only hear echoes of our questions. We properly acknowledge the Holy Spirit is our advocate, but from some teachings about illumination one would think he was on a retaining fee at our demand.

²⁵⁵ Franke, 21.

²⁵⁶ Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 225.

Following through with the diagram, we again have the spiritual mind fuse with the physical. With his grace we may grasp meaning and application, and become as those who would incarnate the prayers of the Church, “thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” As with the entire process, how much life will be transacted from our effort will be determined by what we bring to his word. Our context does not just affect how we perceive things; it also determines how the Lord sees us. Another observation of the Word moving through an individual in Figure 2, is that it moves from “Reading action” into spirit, and from spirit into “doing action.” Zimmermann makes an interesting observation from Richard Hays:

The Christian’s tradition’s reading of the letter-spirit dichotomy as an antithesis between the outward and the inward, the manifest and the latent, the body and the soul, turns out to be a dramatic misreading, indeed a complete inversion. For Paul, the spirit is scandalously identified precisely with the outward and palpable, the particular, human community of the new covenant, putatively transformed by God’s power so as to make Christ’s message visible to all. The script, however, remains abstract and dead because it is not embodied.²⁵⁷

The more familiar idea in the “text to action model” is expanded to, “text to mind action” to “mind to spirit action” to “spirit to mind action” to “mind to incarnational action.” In more familiar terminology, the process would flow from *observation* to *interpretation* to *revelation* to *application* to *implementation*. Stanley Grenz presents a similar approach for response to crucial issues we face in life, “To live as Christians in the contemporary situation requires that we engage with that situation. Such engagement in-

²⁵⁷ Zimmermann, 120; in the context of German Pietism and Phillip Jacob Spenser quotes from Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 150.

volves a threefold activity that we might summarize with the words *attuning*, *analyzing* and *applying*.²⁵⁸ *Attuning*, for him, involves observing and listening with heart and mind; and done through “the ears of our Master.” *Analyzing* follows naturally in that we go deeper to burrow beneath the surface to pierce to its core. Prayer for wisdom and discernment is crucial for Grenz in the next stage of “*applying*.” This is often left out of sermons, counsel, and forgotten in self-deception that comes from failure to be, as James exhorts, a “doer of the word.”²⁵⁹ More than a simple list of steps, we must extend our thinking beyond the Scripture to that word living within us. Pentecostals require a hermeneutic to interpret their experience; for a Pentecostal the word of the Lord is not limited to that on paper, but that which is “spoken” subjectively. It is not of the same *type* of authority as the canon, but if “the Lord ‘tells you’ not to get on a scheduled airplane flight,” the consequences could be far more significant than hermeneutic insight. Scripture is always authoritative because it comes from the throne, as does grace and love.

Authority and Scripture involves a reader like a child living at home with his parents. The “chain of command” model is not how family usually functions. The child naturally has two parents, and they both have authority. Life does go on as family leadership emerges. The business society has developed an organizational tool that has not only made life easier under complex circumstances (such as painfully working under a micromanager), but has enabled greater strengths to emerge from the workers. The *organizational matrix*, already mentioned, is able to give insight how to functionally

²⁵⁸ Grenz, *Moral Quest*, 18-19.

²⁵⁹ James 1:23-25. Also see Du 30:14 for outward-inward-outward pattern.

integrate the authority of the Scripture (objective) with the guidance of the Holy Spirit (subjective).

Finding Matrices

We have already given increasing attention to a matrix as a tool for hermeneutics. A “matrix” is a relatively recent word that has conveniently been appropriated within widely varied disciplines for its ability to replace dogmatic and static constrictions with ongoing order. It can describe an existential framework within metaphysics, capture the “essence” of data grouping, or provide a defining structure in biology, geology, chemistry, or human growth and activity. Most disciplines use the word in a specialized sense. The chemical usage provides some help for us in that it refers to a relatively passive or secondary substance that contains or supports the primary one. A vitamin tablet may have binders or inert substances that provide a carrying base for the more valuable chemicals. The Cambridge dictionary acknowledges it as “a substance in which other things are fixed, buried, etc.” With that metaphor, the organizational structure of a church congregation is subordinate and secondary to its spiritual purposes and life. Culture is a matrix within which the church must operate contextually, but without diluting or changing the Gospel (McCallum). Philosophically this is considered by many Postmoderns as impossible as the popular phrase, “the medium is the message” proclaims.

From a Cartesian perspective a matrix can function as an amalgamation of realms of the subjective and objective. Unlike fixed rules or formulas, it can be living, dynamic, self-organizing and express non-linearity in

“complexity theories.” *Merriam-Webster* gives the simplistic one line definition of a matrix as, “something within or from which something else originates, develops, or takes form.”²⁶⁰ Another simplistic definition is often given of “hermeneutics” as “the science and art of interpretation.”²⁶¹ These are two elements of the hermeneutic split that also need reconciliation and new paradigms.

A problem with new paradigms is they cannot be manufactured, but are usually experienced by those who woefully stare at what has been falling through the gaps in the flooring. Wentzel van Huyssteen notes concerning the need for, not necessarily a common language, but rather a common frame of thought, “On the rational scientific level...kindred spirits are people who have experienced (or missed!) a common conceptual transformation. Therefore, before theologians too can communicate meaningfully, some paradigmatic shift has to occur. Such a transformation is never made gradually; it is a conversion, a sudden gestalt switch that cannot be forged rationally or otherwise.”²⁶² Of course, we as Christians know the Lord of Paradigm Shifts, and can pray for them, as many do for revival. Unfortunately, like Moses, most leaders who do this have found that they can neither go

²⁶⁰ some of the characteristics of fractals

²⁶¹ This is often a definition given in a semi-academic context or as a position in a church class. Example in an Apologetic web page: "The problems I encountered were the result of different rules of interpretation. These rules are part of a discipline known as hermeneutics, which many consider to be both an art and a science." Don Closson, "Understanding the Bible" (Richardson, TX: Probe Ministries) World Wide Web: <http://www.probe.org/content/view/688/77>, Accessed Dec 1, 2005. Some other Web sites: [Http://www.endtimes.org/glossary.html#sectH](http://www.endtimes.org/glossary.html#sectH), <http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/hermeneutics.html>.

²⁶² van Huyssteen, *Theology*, 66.

back, nor are they able to cross into the new land.²⁶³ In the meantime all that most of us can do is call attention to the increasing poverty of our present place and hope for a Joshua. The goal is to provide a setting from which to see the distant mountains of a better place.

Marius Herholdt has seen the shape of things further on as he laid out the markers needed to navigate the waters ahead. Postmodern's deconstruction of theology's offspring begs for a reunion of those remnants into a functional encompassing matrix. He projects that, "..... postmodernism will view every aspect of theology as an expression of the whole from a specific perspective. To avoid fragmentation, one will have to show how every subdivision of Systematic Theology....also includes the others."²⁶⁴

Extending the Matrix format another level, what could be helpful is an *Organizational Matrix*.²⁶⁵ This incorporates two authorities, a vertical or "executive" who is the expert and has final authority and oversees the second. The other one is the horizontal or "functional" authority, who is responsible for training and equipping the workers. Unlike the "chain of command," which can involve a destructive "micro-management" style, the organizational matrix is more a partnership. A colloquial term used in industry is a "basket weave." Viewing this spiritually brings clarity to the difference between the matrix and the chain of command idea of ministry, which per-

²⁶³ To shift metaphors, old wineskins cannot hold new wine.

²⁶⁴ Marius Herholdt, 223-224.

²⁶⁵ R. Max Wideman, "Wideman Comparative Glossary of Project Management Terms v3.1," [D01001], [D01005]. Business registered under author, max_wideman@sfu.ca. World Wide Web: http://maxwideman.com/pmglossary/PMG_M02.htm. Acc. Dec 1, 2005.

petuates itself “down the organization” as a hierarchical authoritative and legalistic system. The system structure causes thinking that reproduces itself down the chain, controlling and inhibiting unfulfilled life within it. This is vastly inferior to the way Scripture unfolds our relationship in serving God.

Another way of understanding the function can be seen from an Old Testament Scripture:

...(blessing)... if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach..... No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. (Deuteronomy 30:10-11, 14 NIV)

There exists the objective, that written in the Book of the Law, that in the mouth (passageway *into* the person), then in the heart, the very center of being—the subjective; then (*outward*) obedience. Here is the unity of the person, with the common “fractal” pattern of God’s Word throughout. In an organizational matrix, the executive (Yahweh) does not organize from without, but sees to it that the “right” workers have the “right stuff” within. Margaret Wheatley suggests in her book²⁶⁶ that management hire the people that “have within themselves” what the company desires. Those employees are then released into the work environment and in time will manifest the results desired, for it comes from within them. It may well take working through pe-

²⁶⁶ Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1999), 95. Other titles are: *A Simpler Way*, and *Finding Our Way: Leadership For an Uncertain Time*. World Wide Web: <http://www.margaretwheatley.com/>, accessed 10/10/05

riods of chaos, but that which is within will emerge. This is much in accord to the way the Lord works with us. We know the Scripture says his word is in our hearts, for it is the subjective that is the spring of life, not the objectivity that Enlightenment opted for. If it wanted the best of dualism, it picked the wrong realm. External control is necessary for children, but God always looks for the heart motivation, and not the outward manifestations. “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”²⁶⁷

Jesus said that his desire was that our work with him should be in a way animals were yoked together. It was his yoke; his work we are to be with him in, and that it should be easy.²⁶⁸ It was about as intimate a working relationship one could have. It is not a patronizing arrangement, as a parent might do when they ask their small child to “help” prepare the meal. It is as it was in the “other” garden when he asked his disciples to pray with him. A Pentecostal distinctive is the people expect to function within his body, do the things he did. “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12). John continues with even more astounding statements. He said whatever they asked, anything, he would do it. Then immediately he told of the *paraclete*, the Spirit of truth who would come and live within them, not just among them. Some theologians doubt that Jesus himself ever did any of the miracles, and that the Scriptures were written as less than accurate records. But most evangelicals just work it the other way. Yes, Jesus did miracles, but believers are not capable. It is the hermeneutic circle all over again. Their theology only allows the interpreta-

²⁶⁷ Prov. 4:23.

²⁶⁸ Mat. 11:29.

tion that Christians can only do that which Descartes relegated to the immaterial invisible world. Some would allow the Apostles and those who were with Jesus to do some tangible acts because Scripture says that they did.

The implications and the cost of interpreting those Scriptures are too expensive for many. This is what morality in hermeneutics should address. Even if one breaks free and in his imagination is able to picture himself actually doing something supernatural, the images of others behaving in an embarrassing Pentecostal-like behavior will dissuade him. This is where we must pull down the strongholds of the enemy. Accusations of pride and even blasphemy will come from without and within, and until one is settled in his mind and heart as to their true identity and relationship with Christ, they can never read certain Scriptures with clarity. Still, Pentecostals have been occasionally accused of seeing more in Scripture than is there. In the record of the “Great Commission,” Jesus told his disciples that he had all the authority and would be with us in the work, and I do not think he just wants to watch.

Pentecost was the celebration of the planting of two hands and two feet and reaping the harvest of thousands of hands and feet. He desires to work through us doing what he did in his other body. Whether or not God can finish his work in the earth without us really is not the question. Was the Garden merely a stage prop or perhaps it was also a foreshadowing of greater things. We are told we will judge angels and reign with him. He who overcomes will have the right to eat from that tree of life in God’s paradise, and be given authority over the nations. It will take a more powerful hermeneutic than we now have to unravel those Scriptures, but in the days ahead, we trust that now that imagination and realms previously too esoteric to be

seriously considered by any other than poets will be responsibly considered. Perhaps we are able to offer some tools to help prepare the way.

Elemental Cells

A Holistic development of any postmodern hermeneutic should allow some degree of synthesis of different disciplines, such as internal-external evidence, philosophical and scriptural considerations. The proposed matrix should have freedom from foundationalism, but not from reason. John Franke²⁶⁹ clarifies this by quoting Francis Schüssler Fiorenza:

...to engage in nonfoundationalist theology is to accept that it is a 'self-correcting enterprise' that examines all claims and relevant background theories without demanding that these be completely abandoned all at once. Nonfoundationalist theology does not eschew convictions, it simply maintains that such convictions, even the most longstanding and dear, are subject to critical scrutiny and therefore potentially to revision, reconstruction, or even rejection.²⁷⁰

Alister McGrath adds additional balance into the problem:

Reason is the basic human faculty of thinking, based on argument and evidence. It is theologically neutral, and poses no threat to faith—unless it is regarded as the only source of knowledge about God. It then becomes *rationalism*, which is an exclusive reliance upon human reason alone, and a refusal to allow any weight to be given to divine revelation.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Franke, 15.

²⁷⁰ Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 287.

²⁷¹ Alister E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism*, 91.

Establishing a hermeneutic organizational matrix requires clarity in understanding what the lines of authority are, what is each one's responsibility, and determining the points of interaction and supportive overlap. For our application, the easy part is recognizing the spiritual executive position. Of course the Holy Spirit is the expert and final authority, or is it Scripture? Kevin Vanhoozer has already been quoted as claiming that the Spirit is subordinate to the Word, that "the Spirit may blow where, but not *what* he wills."²⁷² We often struggle to resolve the root problem of authority. Even from some of our past comments we saw with German Pietism, the Spirit was not always the "subjective" part of the equation. Occasionally reversals catch us between paradigms. When we have an *expectation*, either from our doctrinal or rational position or our context and experience, *we could be assuming authority we do not have*. Peter was confronted with this situation when he was shown the unclean food and instructed to eat. That occasion had two lessons; one about him and one about God. The lesson that God's inclusion of the Gentiles is in his redemptive plan is straightforward and one easily seen from our distance in time. (A distant separation of horizons does not always introduce problems). Grace extended by those who have just eaten from that table is relatively easy to give as inclusionary. The hard part of the lesson for Peter was that the Jews were to be excluded. The Jewish world view was centered in who they were, and that God was with them. Their entire concept of identity was wrapped up in their history as a nation. What made it even harder to face was that God made it that way. All of the promised blessings and promises for Israel were there hanging before Peter

²⁷² Vanhoozer, *Disciplining Hermeneutics*, 163.

like ripe fruit. Their time had come; he had just witnessed the arrival of the Messiah, and this was the fulfillment of his Fathers' dreams and expectations.

Paradigms move in leaps, not in a crawl. They are instant, not progressive. For Peter the lesson about Peter was that he had to release his expectations of how things were going to proceed under God's executive direction. He had to release the authority he had placed in his knowledge and his past understanding. That might be why the food in the vision was not merely Gentile food but food that was *unclean* to the Jews. Lesslie Newbigin stated,

Personal knowledge is impossible without risk; it cannot begin without an act of trust, and trust can be betrayed. ...If the place where we look for absolute truth is in a story and if (as is the case) we are still in the middle of the story, then it follows that we walk by faith and not by sight. If ultimate truth is sought in an idea, a formula, or a set of timeless laws or principles, then we do not have to recognize the possibility that something totally unexpected may happen. The certainty we have rests on the faithfulness of the one whose story it is.²⁷³

This is the present dilemma of Christian Modernity and one it must walk through.

Faith as a topic of study is complex. Elementally though, the root of faith is a trust that comes from relationship. It is the atmosphere of sacred communion, and is fundamental for the Scripture confirms that everything that is not of faith is sin.²⁷⁴ Faith is an element of the place where God is, where outside of that place is entropic decay and evil. Our matrix must exist

²⁷³ Newbigin, 14.

²⁷⁴ Rom. 14:23, Even though the context is food offered to idols, I believe its purpose within the text is normative.

within the world for that is what is to be redeemed, and that is the other lesson about God that Peter needed to comprehend. It is about God's Kingdom agenda, and not our own, and it is the essence behind the power of the cross. When life from within the sanctuary ventures outside, it must do so with a "negentropic" mission. It was as Paul exclaimed in Col. 1:24. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church." (RSV) Within Paul there still existed life that could be poured out into His church on the earth, giving even a temporary respite from the spiritually dehydrating effect of creation's exile. Those who labor for the church in the mission that we call hermeneutics are not exempt from this call. In order for the work to be efficacious, sacrifice is required.

If we look at the major tasks in the interpretative agenda, one of the major ones is to minimize contextuality by the reader. Modernity pursued rationality and scientific objectivity as their approach to the problem, only to find that the very tools they attempted to extract the sterile truth with were themselves contaminated and ineffective. The commonness found within communion can eliminate those things that separate us when we experience them in community. Those that would attempt to interpret and understand the Scripture, or the story, must be communing within that story. Scripture clearly indicates that Jesus would build his Church, but it is silent on building an Academy. The place where hermeneutics is to locate, call it an academy if necessary, must be *within* the Church community, not society. It must be a Christian functioning academy, although certainly secular ones will exist.

If hermeneutics is to be done within the church, that does not mean in an institutional sense, but within a body of spiritually mature and capable believers. We are told that we are to have no fellowship (*koinonia*, communion) with unbelievers.²⁷⁵ This is not advocating the return to monasticism, but if we *truly* understand what communion is, the conclusion is already evident. There is a necessary place for theological dialogue in secularity, but not in communion. Some would ask of the richness of Nietzsche, Derrida, or Rorty? These men all had brilliant minds even though their lives might not have been Christian. It sounds like a return to academic fundamentalism; but as Tertullian said, “What has Jerusalem in common with Athens?”²⁷⁶

If one is to serve as a priest at an altar of Holy things, which I believe Scriptures are, the priests should themselves be sanctified. This means evident morality, even proper academic integrity, recalling our exhortation in the end of the last chapter. Zimmermann calls it, “The ‘skill to walk in communion with God,’ a process commonly termed ‘sanctification’ in reformed theology, is the applicatory dimension of Puritan hermeneutics.”²⁷⁷ We must remember that the *Holy* Spirit is the divine exegete, and there are unholy powers at work. Academics might think that they are immune from demonic forces, but those who have experience, even within Academia bring a context that Pentecostals have long acknowledged. It is not merely a matter of achieving safety by invoking *theoria*.

²⁷⁵ 2 Cor. 6:14.

²⁷⁶ I agree with Zimmermann’s point, however, in quoting Thielicke in that “Only if human life is unconditionally sacred and humanity is made the measure of all things are we protected against its being made a thing or a tool and thus consigned to the scrap heap, as machines are when they are no longer of use.”³²¹ Soteriology speaks of reconciliation, not redefinition.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

Once one has had a supernatural experience with demonic personalities, the biblical narratives are read in an entirely different manner. Even for one trained in scientific principles, the nature of such activities and accompanying supernatural manifestations quickly make rationality irrelevant. Academics often become understandably nervous when such topics arise, because these matters are outside of their experience and rational control. Demonic and evil entities are usually rationally superior to even Christians, and to think less returns us again to the Garden, which was itself not truly a sanctuary from evil. It was not fundamentally the Garden that we were exiled from; it was the place of communion with God. That secret place is the only safe location from darkness. Those who inhabited it two thousand years ago have experienced the same as we that go there today. There, the language is one we have all known, as it is outside of time as we presently know it. Communion or communication of spirit and person does not require language, and is not affected or limited as that which passes through the physical world. It is the spiritual language Paul wrote about to the Corinthian church. The horizons are not so very distant.

Christ and the Matrix

If we return to the simple dictionary definition of a matrix as “something within or from which something else originates, develops, or takes form,” and see it as a dynamic living being, it is a short jump to recognize Christ as one able to fulfill that description. Zimmermann and others are correct in proposing that hermeneutics must come from theology, even though there must also exist a holistic circularity. We are called not to fellowship Scripture, but the Godhead, and in and only from that communion to know

God as he discloses himself to us. Simplistically, we know the Father by what he has said; we know the Spirit by what he has done; and we know the Son by who he is, and that knowledge is personal and a key that unlocked the Reformation. The life is in the Son, and to have that life we must know him, personally. Through him the Godhead is disclosed, and personal knowledge with Christ is relational. In our proposed model of an organizational matrix we must diligently avoid focusing on it, but we must see *through it* to the person of Christ as he then puts all things into perspective.

I suggest that the first issue that must be resolved is the matter of authority. Things he did, what he said all upset the understanding of authority. To the occupied Jews his instruction to give Caesar that which was owed him was an example of the “paradigm crash.” They saw authority, as we still do today, as linear, and for the Jews; Caesar was not in their direct chain of command under God. Paul wrote that Christians are under civil authorities, which we saw demonstrated in Jesus’ submission to the cross. Authority is relational, and in that our understanding of truth itself must be defined. This does not mean that truth is relative in a modern understanding, but it is so defined in Christ. It is relational, personal, and relative in order to be relevant. It is in this context that truth has authority. Jesus seemed to always be speaking of his desire to share; his glory, his inheritance, his throne, his house, his ‘received Father’s love’, his resurrection, his communion in the Godhead. He even said, about his own life, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.”²⁷⁸ The world has seen authority linearly because of a lin-

²⁷⁸ John 10:18.

linear selfish worldview. Even though it is a true statement,“in order to have authority, one must be under authority,” discloses this perspective. It is unto him that all things are to be reconciled.²⁷⁹ Holism is only one philosophical indication of this spiritual truth.

In our matrix, authority must be granted to each of the individual considerations (cells) within a holistic framework. Each has its own authority; the individual, Caesar, the Word, the Spirit, Christ, experience, the community, the cosmos, and even the enemy.²⁸⁰ There is the sovereign superintendence of the Godhead, administering authority only after (relational, not temporal) the free expression endued within the authority of the individual elements. Just as there are criteria that science uses to denote life, there are similar ones noted concerning spiritual existence. Seen as perhaps the horizontal axis in the matrix²⁸¹ they would be as a series of characteristics from one view level. (Not a *viewpoint*).

The reading of Scripture should be: relational, moral, effectual, sacrificial, self-organizational, supernatural, and subjectively personal. These are the characteristics that have been indicative of a living word. In the case of hermeneutics, as one looked at genre' in the past, the allowance must be made for the Scripture to be seen regarding its contextual authority, and given freedom to be holistically integrated into the whole. Hermeneutics must be seen as releasing interpretation, not controlling it; and release must first come from within and then find its way into the objective world.

²⁷⁹ 2 Cor. 5:17-19; Col. 1:19-20; Heb. 2:7- 3:1.

²⁸⁰ This was dealt with on the cross.

²⁸¹ There is a hesitancy to even use terms that have been so long associated with the Cartesian system.

A reading should be relational in that it knows its identity and authority in the relation to the person of Christ. Ultimately the relation must be none other than the fullness of communion that occurs at the *eschatos*. This communion presently available is not inferior in any way to that yet to be experienced; it is only we who are unable to participate fully in it, as we are now incomplete (then—face to face, 1Co 13:12, 1Jn 3:2). In Pentecostalism the baptism of the Holy Spirit is understood in terms of the “promise of the father,” specifically as Jesus is the agent that baptizes a believer *into* the Holy Spirit. In Eph. 4:4 and 1 Cor. 12:13 there is another reference to Spiritual baptism, and in those instances the Spirit as the baptizer baptizes the believer into the body of Christ.²⁸² When we are regenerated the Spirit baptizes a new believer into the body of Christ, which is community. It is here that protection and an additional presence of Christ exists, as Jesus informed the disciples about the sacredness of their assembly, even as just two. It is here that the greatest balance for subjectivity exists, as the gifts in the body and the wisdom in its maturity. Not only can discernment and interpretation correct spiritual manifestations, they are available to the whole gathering. It is not just subjective revelation the prophets need to judge, but the cisterns of our own making. When Jesus was baptized by John, he was identifying with humanity in their sin, not merely as an initiation into spiritual power. It was in that *something* which followed him into the desert and tested his finitude as a human. His reply, “It is written...,” was the integrity of the word in power to settle the questions.

²⁸² 1 Cor. 12:10 in the NIV makes the distinction of the option of *eis* as “by” or “into” in the Greek.

A moral reading should be that which, once we capture it, is able to be brought into that communion with us before the Lord. Righteousness and holiness have never been apprehended by philosophy, and although acknowledged in the realm of the heart and imagination, they must be brought forward and their authority released. Agendas and mixture are often hidden from others and ourselves, and only when purged will we have the integrity we are seeking. Bill Gothard said that freedom was not the right to do what you want, but the *power* to do what is right. As much as is possible we need humility to bring our reading before the light of the Lord, especially within His community. Sometimes the ideas we hold, we hold viciously as our own possessions, when they might not be our own after all. There is an intellectual equivalent of the common word, “disillusioned.” No one wants to be disillusioned, but also does not want to embrace an illusion. Our ability to release our perceptions is related to our awareness of our finitude.

An effectual reading must perform what the word was sent to accomplish. With this is the very distinguishable characteristic of life, which is reproduction, but even more—the true *missio Dei*. But within creation that dynamic has always been seen as sacrificial. Evident from the smallest living cell, its own life order has had a cost. Death has always been the curse of sin, both from its touch and its own internal decay. When sin consumes life, it prolongs its existence, but with ever increasing entropy. The law came that sin might become utterly sinful.²⁸³ The word when read effectually cleanses and brings truth and freedom. It is, as Jesus taught his disciples, brought about when the grain of wheat dies in order to bring the harvest. The glory in the cross is that it is transitional, not terminal. In the process of carrying the

²⁸³ Rom. 7:13.

life to be consumed, we become conformed to that very life. From the view of the cross, sacrifice is not death, but promotion that has been purged from selfish agendas. Involved with incarnating or being a “doer of the word” as James exhorts, is our sacrificial obedience to it, born from the same joy that enabled Jesus to embrace his cross and mission.

Control is death throughout the cosmos, as we have already worked through with our deliberation on authority. The antithesis of love is not hate, but that which controls. A simple statement of Jesus, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments,” illustrates how important the direction of flow is (entropy). Within this conversation Jesus tells of the Spirit of Truth who is to come, and the greater things the disciples would be able to accomplish in faith. This all took place in the context of the father’s self-disclosure, and although almost all translations of John 14:15 use the English word “commandments,” it does not communicate the sense of that statement today. The word *entole* is used in Jesus’ personal sense, which was in his priestly authority in disclosing the father. A legitimate use of *entole* is in a normative sense as “a precept relating to lineage, of the Mosaic precept concerning the priesthood; that which is prescribed to one by reason of his office.”²⁸⁴ It was not the Law. (*nomos*) With my italics added, the direction becomes reversed, and not conditional, but relational. “If you love me, you *will* keep my true instructions.” The obedience is a result, and so it always has been throughout God’s self-revelation. The reverse, is death. God cannot control and force love anymore than he can create a square circle. And the love has always allowed release, with the hope of response. From the Chil-

²⁸⁴ *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon.*

dren of Israel to the ten lepers Jesus healed, he seeks the return of the love-slave to have his ear pierced, as he delights in the Father's will. The psalmist sang, "I find my delight in your will, I do not forget your words." (Psalm 110:16 NJB) Love releases the nature of the created to obey the law within that will only be realized in freedom. In the language of complexity, Jesus is the *strange attractor* that draws us through the chaos and into himself. Self-organization is the resulting dynamic of that love. Green in his section on the "Hermeneutics of the Cross" quotes a wonderful passage from Kierkegaard:²⁸⁵

The absolutely greatest thing that can be done for a being, greater than anything one could make it into, is to make it free. It is exactly here that omnipotence is required....Only omnipotence can take back while it gives away, and this relationship means, of course, exactly the independence of the recipient. God's omnipotence is therefore His goodness. For it is goodness to give away entirely, but in such a way that, by omnipotently taking oneself back again, one makes the recipient independent....The art of power consists precisely in the capacity to set free.²⁸⁶

The word supernatural is used regarding the matrix to describe, not some characteristic that belongs in another dimension or in Descartes' upper story, but is the union of all realms as they are overlaid upon one another. It should represent what the "natural" actually is. Scripture does not encourage God's people to look somewhere else, even be it heaven, but that our eyes would be opened to see what is already here. It is invisible, but that condi-

²⁸⁵ Green, *Imagining*, 146.

²⁸⁶ Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970), no. 1251 (62-63).

tion is not because of its substance, but because of our corrupted eyesight; almost like Heidegger's *Dasein*. Hope is still placed in the inaccessible, but faith touches its reality in its substance. To see the supernatural is to expect more than what our limitations are able to accomplish. Signs and wonders are spectacular to us because our eyes have not become accustomed to the even greater brilliance that our names are written in heaven. All that would pass through the matrix of the person Christ should be considered as how they would appear through his eyes, and this can only result from communing with him as he observes them. What is subjectivity other than Christ in us, the hope of glory?

Even as the community has a major role in discerning subjective experiences, especially regarding Charismatic gifts, they still need to be submitted for rational integrity as a consideration. Although not in a Pentecostal context, Wentzel van Huyssteen in his precise theological terminology captures the need for responsible scholarship to move into deeper scholastic waters and not avoid subjective issues:

Even pneumatological justification by intra-ecclesiastical testing does not absolve theology of conceptualizing and theorizing, nor from theorizing the way that pneumatological element itself is experienced and formulated.... This is, of course, bound up with the fact that the essential nature of the personal act of faith can also be defined satisfactorily only with reference to its eschatological structure. The critical exposure theorizing implied in the theologian's personal pretheoretic commitment will therefore have to take into account the skandalon character of the Christian gospel. The skandalon is a fundamental issue that will and must be a conscious methodological and epistemological problem for systematic theology. Correctly understood,

however, it need not become an irrational theological premise.
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The attitude of self sufficiency has already weakened popular Pentecostalism in their view that simplicity is a virtue in itself. On the other side, with the exception of a few efforts in denominational schools, little has been done in following through on the move into responsible spiritually perceptive academic realms because of the weight of modernism still tangled around their feet. There are many that would claim that they already hold to classic Christian presuppositions and follow the principle of allowing “Scripture to interpret Scripture,” which they deem sufficient. Although this statement appears acceptable to some, the application and expectations need to be radicalized by a closer look at the issue of contextualization and the implications of the Pentecostal/Charismatic understanding of the interaction of the Holy Spirit and the believer. To be unaware of the places Pentecostals have yet to travel can generate a pride that has mistaken grace for commendation. For all Christians there is only one book, the Bible, and it stands alone as a holy book.

The primary purpose in this dissertation is not one of practical theology, although it should provide answers in how we are to interact with Scripture according to the purposes for which it exists. Because hermeneutics has popularly been considered as both an art and a science, it ought to have a nature of an extremely flexible tool, or better, a living part of our being; versatile in order to allow personal expression while sufficiently practical to perform the assigned task. Thinking of even constructing a hermeneu-

²⁸⁷ van Huyssteen, *Theology*, 121.

tic model in a postmodern perspective should bring us back from constructing inanimate parts to what should be a living organ of a living organism, namely a Christian. Being citizens of a Western technological society predisposes us to think in terms of tools that are objective, rational, reproducible, and independent of any quality of the user, except possible skill. Even agricultural activities and their associated problems are approached with a technological solution in mind. Christian Swartz in his book, *Natural Church Growth*,²⁸⁸ noted that the agricultural metaphors Jesus used in his teaching were not just convenient and familiar to the culture, but were directly related to biotic growth principles.

In his book, Swartz lists characteristics he found in an extended global survey that were all common to all churches investigated that reported spiritual growth (not necessarily numerical). One of the eight listed was “Empowering Leadership.” The churches surveyed were from a very large spectrum, and that they were Christian. Size ranged from less than 100 member country churches, to slick megachurches. The only ones that were passed over were those that were pastored by well known or otherwise charismatic personalities (in the social sense). Few had strategically planned an activity Swartz recognized as “empowering leadership,” but had done it as it seemed the right thing to do. Swartz described empowering leadership several ways.

The main emphasis observed in the growing churches was, unlike most traditional operational structures in churches, the leadership in oversight of the ministry identified already existing natural leadership functioning within the congregation. An example might be of a middle aged lady

²⁸⁸ Christian A. Schwartz, *Natural Church Development*, (D-25924 Emmelsbüll, Germany: C& P Verlags-GmbH 1996).

school teacher that observably had a gift in evangelism. When the church felt the need for a specific time of emphasis on evangelism, instead of enlisting an outside specialist in evangelism, they approached the lady to take charge of the program and invested the church's resources in her leadership. For that period, the music ministry, children's ministries, Bible study groups operated with her oversight. When the goals were achieved, all returned to the way it was. The model here, Swartz noted, was taken from biology; when growth or an urgent need was detected in one part, the resources of the entire organism became available to bring things into balance. Where traditional church procedure was to recruit help according to the immediate needs, these churches recognized the resources already sovereignly provided.

The other aspect of this way of seeing the life of the church was that people were seen as vital members to be not only used, but recognized and supported. This is not unfamiliar to Pentecostals who have seen this pattern in the "Five Fold Ministry" mandate to equip the believers, but has too often been practically neglected as the western business pattern has gained popularity. Although there are major changes in American commercial operational structures, larger well established businesses usually have grown too large to make changes. The concept of an organizational matrix is one of the successful derivatives from the industrial management world that might provide a progressive vision for the Church.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Applying the concepts presented in this thesis into our matrix for use in hermeneutics would entail characteristics inherent within such a structure. To review these properties, the prime emphasis needs to be communal in a personal, subjective relationship with Jesus Christ. He alone is the bridge between the subjective and objective realms. As we read the Scripture he is there with us as Spirit, not mechanically translating but as we are one spirit with him, his thoughts become ours. This alone has the *potential* to overcome any possible hermeneutic problem that could be encountered. As is every aspect of life's journey, he is with us and we have no lack:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4 NIV)

We have seen that the Pentecostal view should be from the resurrected side of the cross, *realizing* we have already become partakers of his divine nature. This enables us to know the divine language that is the essence of the manifestation we observe in the natural world as text.²⁸⁹ It is the Word which is totally unique and only “of itself.” Without a reference it cannot be known to the “soulish” mind. Our matrix needs an expectancy and openness allowing the Word to speak as it wills. As one still of a human finite nature, Jesus’

²⁸⁹ I am not suggesting a position such as Barth's where it “becomes the word,” but I refer to that which is “behind” the written and spoken materialization.

last view from the cross entailed a final purging from the temptation of self-love.

In the sacrificial view from our cross we understand that we are sent with his word, as he was sent by the Father. That as bearers of that word we are able to participate in its redemptive purposes against the darkness that is in the world. The word we steward has a mission; it has its ongoing encounters as poetry or prophecy, with subtle natures that require freedom and time to perform its purposes. As a participational hermeneutic, each expression is given authority within its own purpose. We cannot build our own theologies and plans out of that which has its own destiny and individual preferences. We are not wordsmiths building with the Word, but caretakers. As Pentecostals, we need to remain alert to see that which was once an objective “that,” reveal itself subjectively in its eschatological fulfillment as once again an objective “this.”

Such a matrix must become a part of the hermeneut’s being, and within a community of believers that acknowledge those who have developed the wisdom of the ancient seers to disciple each generation with the knowledge and authority that continually emerges as the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord. I have critically accused the Academy of its unholy marriage to the commoner, rationality. Reason needs to be restored to its place as servant to the Spirit. But the Church is responsible to forget the Academy’s past indiscretions and restore it to a respected place as priestly stewards of the Scriptures.

An organizational matrix is specifically formed to allow two (or more) different authorities to adjudicate matters in such a manner that their differ-

ing authorities both have direct, non-conflicting access to the responsible implementers. We have been locked in a hermeneutic split between the Word and the Spirit, which we have mistakenly identified as being between the objective and the subjective. That which we have called subjective has been seriously mislabeled. Both are reality and they are one, although they are not yet seen as one. In our models it was indicated that the objective Word is taken within a believer, is restructured and “sent” back to the objective world to be manifested. The impartation to the disciples at Pentecost was, the Holy Spirit who had subjectively transformed them was consequently to be manifested objectively to the world with power, as it was witnessed by those observing. The Word, even with the *ekousia* was not sufficient²⁹⁰ without the *dunamis* of the Spirit, which was not yet given. In John 20 they received the Spirit, but the *dunamis* is not just the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is an imparted empowerment. It was that which Paul mentioned when he said that “my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (*dunamis*).”²⁹¹ This is power to make spiritual matters very objective. There is no duality in the Spirit and the Word or in their authority. In terms of our matrix, they are functionally related, and holistically one, just as the visible and the invisible realms are. What has been perceived as separate authorities are one, but functionally different. The statement by Vanhoozer that the Spirit is subordinate to the Word because perlocutions “proceed from” illocutions is inaccurate and does not *necessarily* follow.²⁹² He also identified

²⁹⁰ Luke 9:1; Mat 28:18; John 20:21-22 NIV “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

²⁹¹ 1 Cor. 2:4 NAU.

²⁹² Vanhoozer, *Disciplining Hermeneutics*, 163.

the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ as the Spirit of understanding which is woefully inadequate, and indicates the non-Pentecostal view from the impotent side of the cross. A Pentecostal hermeneutic enables a reading that not only takes the Scripture within and interprets it, but is able to reinsert that Scripture back into the world with power; it is not to just enlighten understanding, but to produce an aggressive and effectual strategy for the Church.

Margaret Wheatley related an example of the release of control during her experiences working with the military:

Both the Army and the Marines now have the technology to provide every individual soldier with information about what's occurring on the battlefield, information that formally was known only by the commanders. Through extensive field tests, the Army has discovered that when individuals have such information and know how to interpret it because they know the "commander's intent," they can make decisions that lead to greater success in battle. They respond quickly and intelligently, and assume responsibility for their decisions. Although it has been difficult for some of the older commanders to turn over so much control, the evidence is very clear that a network form of organization produced the results desired.²⁹³

Jesus said, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15 NIV). This is how authority works through love. The application for reading and understanding the Scriptures shows that objectivity and subjectivity do not compete, but complement one another, as do all of the elements, for

²⁹³ Wheatley, *Discovering*, 107.

within each one of a believing reader is the Spirit of Christ. It is not that we must find out how to make interpretation flow, but how to release what is already there. Most hermeneutic systems are built to control and protect; built on the wrong metaphor. It is release and love, when the Truth is spoken, that produces life in the Body.

A Place for Experience

We all are well aware that Jesus was born in a stable and that he did not recruit his disciples from the religious organizations. God didn't sovereignly see to it that Elijah's school of prophets endured until it could provide the Messiah's first team when he showed up. But it seems we still do not get the message. God never seemed to be impressed with the professional ministry. The Priesthood of Levites seemed to be the closest parallel, and even Saul was an early beginning of God's accommodation to man's desire for worldly systems.

If an organizational matrix theme was applied to the Academy it would be an entirely different organ in the Body. As it is now, only intellectually administered material is processed within that structure. Metaphysics has been in a different department. God's purpose in the giving of Scriptures was not that they be tabled like a political bill before the government to be contemplated and re-discussed, or not sent down the administrative line until someone assigned to the matter consulted the regulation handbook. Vertical authority and horizontal authority need to intersect in the real world where the resources of the Christian community live.

Poythress pointed out the effects in regeneration, but he allows more:

We should note, however, a certain uniqueness to the largest disciplinary matrix or context for biblical interpretation...the deepest factor influencing biblical interpretation is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Without this work of the Spirit, a person cannot understand what the Spirit teaches in Scripture....This work of the Spirit affects the heart and the mind of people in the deepest and fullest way. We cannot fully describe the Spirit's work by saying, for instance, that regeneration is merely making available to a person in an intellectual way some new analogy. Doubtless the Holy Spirit enables the person involved to see the relevance of certain relations and analogies, but not only analogies in the Bible itself, but relations between the biblical teaching and the person's own life and experience. But it would be false to say that the work of the Holy Spirit is exhausted in making clear any one analogy.²⁹⁴

If this is true and all of this is available from regeneration, where does Pentecostalism and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit profit in the hermeneutic task, and what do they have to offer? Does the Spirit stay hidden in the subjective, or should we expect him to make "an appearance" in the objective world? Pentecostals expect so, most other Christians, do not. The authority of both the Spirit and the Word are said to be able to accomplish what they are sent out to do. The fact that the Holy Spirit operates in and through a believer now enlarges our matrix from two, to three authorities. Believers do indeed have authority, but this thesis is not to resolve that issue. I refer the reader to two books entitled, *A Believer with Authority*, and *Binding and Loosing*,²⁹⁵ already quoted in this paper.

²⁹⁴ Poythress, 491.

²⁹⁵ K. Neill Foster, Paul L. King, *Binding and Loosing: Exercising Authority over the Dark Powers*, (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, Inc. 2000), and Paul L. King, *A Believer with Authority: The Life and Message of John A. MacMillan* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2001).

Postmodernism has found a crack in the fortified walls of the academy, but the castle remains intact. Subjectivity has at least caught the attention of those that consider themselves the guardians of Christian Orthodoxy. Until experience has been granted access to those prized corridors, Pentecostals will never be taken seriously and the Church will continue to remain impotent. Three times the Lord spoke aloud in the presence of others, and some heard and understood, while others thought it had merely been thunder. How can a philosophically created hermeneutic ever presume to interpret thunder? As we are bound by our presuppositions in our conclusions, it also follows with the questions we allow. If we don't get it right we will only hear thunder.

We seek quantum answers from Newtonian equations. We know that we need answers that are spiritually alive while we refuse to allow spiritual data into our calculations. Kevin Vanhoozer asserted that, "reality comes mediated by language." In response, Dallas Willard pointed out that we can replace the word *language* with *experience* or *consciousness* or even *thought*, and we are still left with our need to discern reality and derive its meaning for us as Christians. "How do we have *mediation* without *modification*,"²⁹⁶ he asks.

The book of Hebrews contains an exhortation that such problems should be expected in spiritual immaturity, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."²⁹⁷ This is a skill that takes time to develop, requires continual applica-

²⁹⁶Roger Lundin, *Disciplining Hermeneutics: Interpretation in a Christian Perspective*, Roger Lundin, Ed. (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1997), 19.

tion, involves discerning senses with some intellect, and implied is the freedom to learn experientially, which cannot happen under control that prevents failure. Sadly, this is much more appealing to postmodern thinking than within the historic Church. It is possible that what is needed could properly happen as a mentoring and discipling situation within a Christian community. Changes are occurring within Evangelical ranks with greater acceptance of the supernatural and fresh understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in hermeneutics.²⁹⁸ Some have suggested that formal hermeneutics should be discontinued altogether. The real challenge for the Church is not to relegate the academy to a remote monastery safely away from our life adventures with the Spirit, but after centuries of serving the Prince of Enlightenment and mastering its skills, it now needs released to serve its new master. Michael Polanyi has explained that religious reality is something ‘tacitly known’ that is expected to reveal itself indeterminately in the future. This is where Pentecostal faith and the expectation of manifestations would find fulfillment. Polanyi expressed the eschatological movement of Christianity into the future:

Christianity is a progressive enterprise. Our vastly enlarged perspectives of knowledge should open up fresh vistas of religious faith. The Bible and the Pauline doctrine in particular, may be still pregnant with unsuspected lessons; and the greater precision and more conscious flexibility of modern thought, shown by the new physics and the logico-philosophic movements of our age, may presently engender conceptual reforms which will renew and clarify, on the grounds of modern extra-religious ex-

²⁹⁷ Heb. 5:11, 14.

²⁹⁸ Gary L. Nebeker, “The Holy Spirit, Hermeneutics, and Transformation: From Present to Future Glory.” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 27. (2003) 47-54.

perience, man's relation to God. An era of great religious discoveries may lie before us.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ Michael Polanyi, 285.

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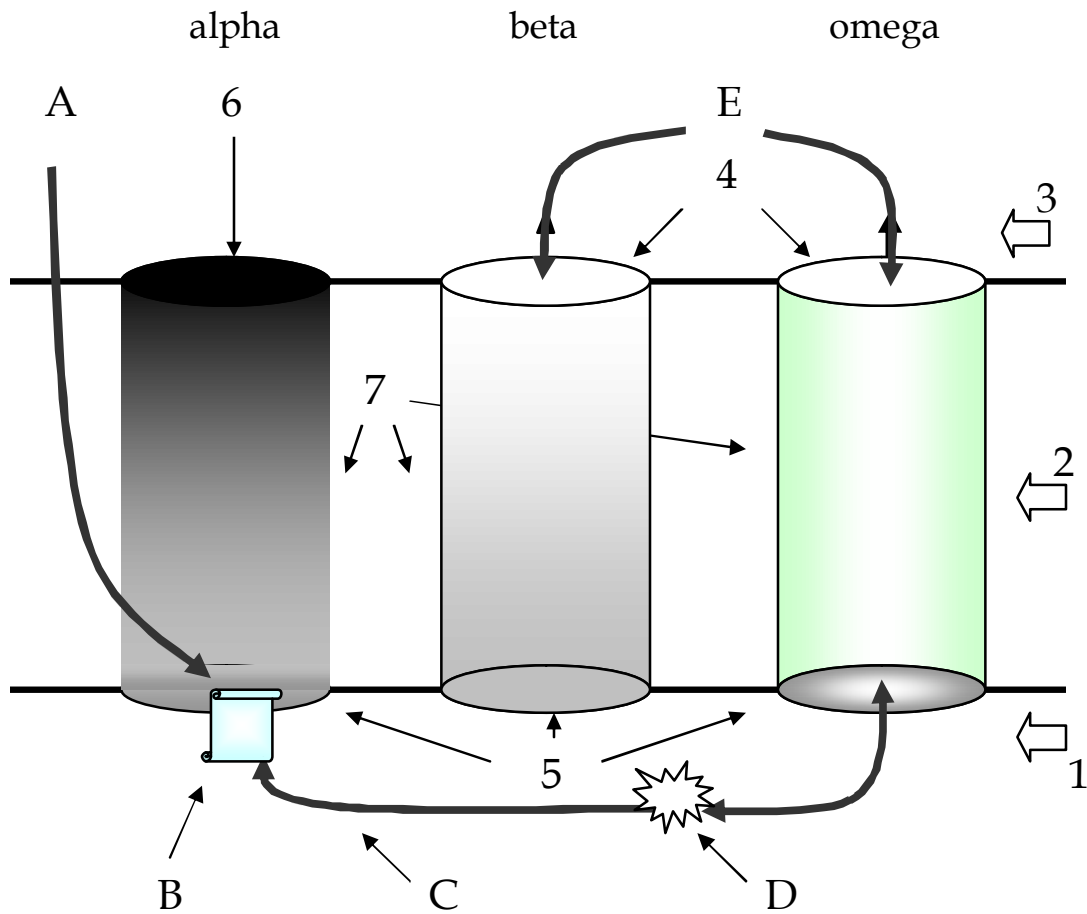
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APPENDIX

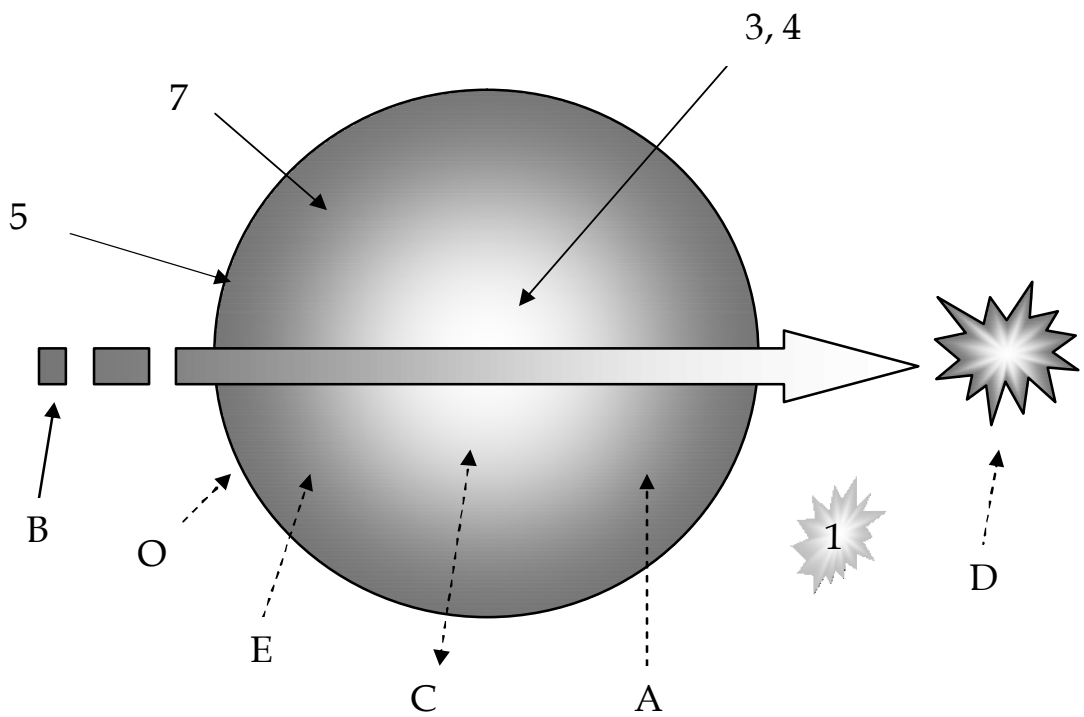
SCHEMATIC BASED ON GENESIS CHAPTER 28



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 - Earthly Realm - 1 st Heaven | A - Revelation to an unbeliever by the Holy Spirit. |
| 2 - Empty Realm - 2 nd Heaven | B - Scriptures |
| 3 - Throne of God -3 rd Heaven | C - Revelation of the Scripture by the Spirit/Believer. |
| 4 - Resurrected Human Spirits | D - Manifestation of the Spirit through the believer. |
| 5 - Human Bodies | E - Communion in the Spirit |
| 6 - Dead Human Spirit | |
| 7 - Souls; Physical Minds merge into Spiritual Minds. Viewed holistically as the individual. | |
- Alpha is unregenerate, beta is regenerate, and omega is "Spirit-Filled."

Figure 1

SCHEMATIC VIEWED FROM THE EARTHLIES



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
| O | Observation | 1 | Physical World, 1 st Heaven |
| E | Exegesis/ Interpretation | 3 | 3 rd Heaven, Throne |
| C | Illumination/ Revelation | 4 | Human Spirit, Holy Spirit |
| A | Application | 5 | Human Body |
| D | Implementation/ Manifestation | 7 | Continuum of the physical to the spiritual. (soul, mind) |
| B | Scripture | | |

Figure 2

VITA

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