

Tradition-Based Integration: A Pentecostal Perspective

Stephen Parker
Regent University

Pentecostal Christians are estimated to be second only to Roman Catholics in numbers. This expression of the Christian faith shares much theology with other Christians but brings unique emphases to the Christian life as well. This article articulates some of the deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice and explores how these inform a personal way of thinking about and engaging the task of integrating psychology and theology.

In typical Pentecostal fashion I begin with some personal testimony. It will be helpful to know that I was first exposed to Pentecostal thought and practice in a small rural church during my early adolescence. Pentecostal worship is lively, exuberant, and physically expressive; it also involves a good deal of congregant participation. I vividly recall Sunday evening services that lasted three and four hours in which a variety of people would be praying with each other around an altar at the front of the building as various worshippers sought forgiveness of sin, healing, deliverance, an experience of the baptism of/in the Holy Spirit, or a “blessing” from the Lord that would sustain them through the vicissitudes of life. These times were accompanied by singing, dancing, tears, shouts of praise and thanksgiving. I was often involved in these prayer services either to be prayed for or to pray with others. The prayers that focused on healing and deliverance were especially formative for me. I remember a sense of awe when such prayers were answered right there in the service, as the power and presence of the Lord were visibly present. But I also remember being just as intrigued about what was happening in those times when healing or deliverance did not come.

A key component of these services that was also formative for me was the Pentecostal practice of listening to and participating in “testimonies,” a time in the worship when a person was given opportunity to share how the Lord was at work (or not) in the person’s life. Testimonies were a way to give space for people to voice their victories, concerns, and laments. This time helped people recognize and acknowledge the joys and

sadness that are the fabric of life; they provided space for processing the healings that came and those that did not (cf. Belcher & Vining, 2000).

These Pentecostal practices left an indelible impression that continues to influence the way I think about and interact with the world and its various joys and sorrows. Before looking more closely at this influence, some further context on Pentecostalism will be helpful.

Pentecostal believers are described as the fastest growing segment of Christianity in the world (Anderson, 2004). This expression of Christianity includes a wide variety of groups from “classical Pentecostals” who emerged from the 1906-1908 revival at Azusa Street to more contemporary “charismatic” groups like the “word of faith” movement and indigenous third world movements (Anderson, 2004; Synan, 1997). The most obvious (though not universal) common factor among the groups is their emphasis on the present experience of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. When these more contemporary charismatic groups are included, some estimate the number of Pentecostal worshippers at over half a billion (Johnson, 2009). Having been around in a recognizable form for only a hundred years or so, many still speak of Pentecostalism more as a movement than an institutionalized religion (though it begins to show signs of more traditional religious groups; cf. Vondey, 2013).

My own roots lie in the classical Pentecostal tradition. What follows is an articulation of various aspects of Pentecostal belief and practice that inform my integrative activities.

Pentecostal Answers to Common Theological Questions: Windows to a Pentecostal Worldview

My first thought in encountering the common questions posed by the editors is that these questions do not fit a Pentecostal way of thinking. In

Please address correspondence regarding this article to Stephen Parker, Ph.D., Regent University School of Psychology and Counseling, 1000 Regent University Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23464 email: steppar@regent.edu.

fact, it is at this very point of trying to name theologians and theological doctrines that one encounters one of the defining characteristics of Pentecostalism. From their beginnings Pentecostals have engaged in a kind of “practical theology” in that their writings have been reflections on their lived experiences as embodied in their worship and practice (Fowler, 1983; Parker, 1996). Although correlating these experiences with those recorded in Scripture was always a part of this reflection, one will search in vain for early Pentecostal writers that sought to answer the traditional questions of systematic theology. Pentecostals did not begin their reflections with reasoned arguments for the existence of God. To the Pentecostal, such questions were resolved already via their experience and so the task was to understand this experience; to understand how God was present and at work in this experience, and how this contemporary experience compared with the experiences of the early Christians, especially as recorded in the book of Acts (cf. Vondey, 2013). Nevertheless, to help make the information on Pentecostals comparable with the other traditions covered in this issue of the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* (JPC), this section offers a brief introduction to some of the core beliefs and practices of Pentecostalism. It articulates some of the common overlap that Pentecostals have with other Christians while highlighting those things that are unique in Pentecostal belief and practice.

Central figures that have shaped Pentecostal theology. Early Pentecostal writers such as Charles Parham, William Seymour, and A.J. Tomlinson made their thoughts known through the writing of “gospel tracts” and religious newsletters rather than through theological tomes. These writings often took the form of testimonies accompanied by a kind of applied exegesis of Pentecostal experience in the light of Scriptural parallels (cf. Robeck, 2006). In addition to providing insight into the practical nature of Pentecostal theological reflections, this practice also provides important insight into how Pentecostals approached Scripture. In the pages of Scripture, Pentecostals found the validation for their experience. That is, the Holy Spirit was active now, just as the Spirit had been active in apostolic times. The Scriptures were authoritative but authoritative in large measure because one continued to see the Scriptures lived out before one’s eyes.

Only in more recent years, have Pentecostal theologians taken up the central questions that

belong to systematic theology and offered constructive (rather than reactive) arguments reflective of the Pentecostal emphasis on lived experience. For instance, Land (1993) has argued that one must begin with a Pentecostal spirituality rooted in an eschatological passion for God’s kingdom to develop a Pentecostal theology that takes in not only orthodoxy but orthopraxy, and orthopathy. Macchia (2006), Chan (2000) and Yong (2002, 2005) are three Pentecostal scholars who have used Lindbeck’s (1984) cultural-linguistic framework regarding the interrelationality between practice and doctrine to redefine how Pentecostal experience can responsibly inform Pentecostal theology (Neuman, 2012). Studebaker (2012) has recently offered a contribution to systematic theology by mining the central experience of Pentecostals (the baptism with the Holy Spirit) to argue that only when the Spirit is given its rightful due can the fullness of the Trinitarian God be known.

This is not to say that Pentecostal theology was not influenced by wider theological currents. Dayton (1987) has identified four key theological streams that flowed into early Pentecostalism. These include (a) the 18th & 19th century revival movements (e.g., the Great Awakenings), which included (b) the holiness movement (with roots in Wesley’s work), (c) the end-time prophecy movement with its emphasis on the imminent second coming of Christ, and (d) the divine healing movement. These four streams, combined with the Pentecostal focus on the active, present intervention of the Holy Spirit, often with signs and wonders converged to form five core theological emphases of the early Pentecostal movement; these core beliefs provide entree to the questions posed below. However, because these beliefs are lived out by Pentecostals, one should also note that in addition to these core beliefs, there are core practices that inform a Pentecostal way of being in the world. These include such practices as embodied worship, experiential spirituality, prayers for healing and deliverance, discernment, and testimonies (cf. Belcher & Vining, 2000; Land, 1993; Parker, 1996; Vondey, 2013).

Nature and character of God. For Pentecostals the central affirmation about God is that God is an ever-present reality, there to save, to heal and to empower. For the Pentecostal, God is especially the baptizer in/with the Holy Spirit. However, Studebaker (2012) points out that it is important to see the Pentecostal emphasis on the outpouring of the Spirit as rooted in a classic

Trinitarian view of God. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a work made possible because of the work of Christ, who through the Spirit continues to be alive and at work in believers. Because early Pentecostal writings focused on what God in Christ was doing through the Spirit and the availability of the empowerment of the Spirit for the work of mission and service, there was not a systematic unfolding of a doctrine of God in the classic sense. But all Pentecostals understood that it was God in Christ who was saving and reconciling the world unto himself and would affirm the traditional Christian vision of a God who both loves mercy and seeks justice.

Characterizing Pentecostals as Trinitarian regarding the nature of God does not mean they have solved all the problems that arise with such a doctrine (cf. Moltmann, 1981) or that they are uniform in what they affirm. Pentecostals express the whole range of Trinitarian theology from monarchical notions (e.g., Augustine) to theologies more aligned with the Orthodox notion of a *perichoretic* unity (Studebaker, 2012). There is even a smaller group of Pentecostals whose articulation of the trinity tends toward modalism (cf. Reed, 1988).

Nature of humans. Humans, though originally created in the image of God, are broken, fallen and in need of redemption. Because they deal more with God's work in humans, the five themes noted above fit better here and in the category to follow. The focus on salvation was part of the revival movements in this country (Dayton, 1987) and conveys several things worth noting. First, salvation is made possible by the work of Christ. Thus, Pentecostals share with much of Christianity an orthodox understanding of the person and work of Christ. On the human side of the equation, salvation is both an accomplished work, often gathered up under the theological concept of justification, and an ongoing work, often noted under the concepts of regeneration and sanctification. Second, one should note that the revival roots of the emphasis on salvation lent a clear experiential dimension to salvation for the Pentecostal. When one was saved or "born again," one viscerally experienced the deliverance from sin and rejoiced with shouts of praise for the "peace that passes understanding" (Phil. 4:7, Revised Standard Version).

Under the influence of the holiness movement, Pentecostals split over the nature of sanctification (Dayton, 1987; Land, 1993; Synan, 1997). One group moved toward a more Reformed notion of

sanctification as a progressive work never fully realized in this life and another group, more influenced by the Wesleyan aspects of the holiness movement, moved toward a doctrine of sanctification as a present, realized and completed work. This latter view was an extension of the notion that God empowers his people (that is, God actually infuses or imparts righteousness and not simply imputes righteousness). My roots lie in the Wesleyan influenced side of Pentecostalism and I have earlier reflected upon how aspects of Wesleyan theology influence the ways I think about integration of psychology and theology (Kilian and Parker, 2001).

Nature of the divine/human encounter. The divine/human encounter is a gracious act initiated by God and received by the human. For Pentecostals, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the quintessential sign of the divine/human encounter. God's loving, yet powerful presence is seen in the manifest activities of the Holy Spirit (such as speaking in tongues, healing and other charismata) (Anderson, 2004). God is seen as a God who calls his people to himself and empowers them for witness and for holy living. Christology also is seen through this lens. Christ is the only begotten, sent by God as the fulfillment of prophecy. He inaugurates the last days and sends the Holy Spirit with signs as a clear indication that the last days have come (Dayton, 1987). Similarly, belief in the Holy Spirit is not simply the recitation of the third article of the creed for Pentecostals but a living, present reality for believers, especially as witnessed through the manifestations of the charismata. This focus on the visible, contemporary presence of the Holy Spirit is central to Pentecostal belief and practice. Pentecostals live in a world populated by spiritual realities, where God is ever present in a visibly active way.

An aspect of the divine/human encounter that has been given special attention by Pentecostals is those encounters where God is present to heal (Onyinah, 2013; Synan, 2000). As noted, the focus on divine healing was part of a larger cultural movement in the United States. Evangelicals as well as some in the holiness movement had appropriated certain verses in Isaiah (e.g., 53:5) to argue that the same work of Christ on Calvary that secured salvation (forgiveness of sins) also secured healing of the body (Dayton, 1987). The nature of this healing was "divine" in that it came apart from the work of medical doctors. There also was a strong emphasis on this healing being instantaneous and complete. Divine healing was

preached as an aspect of one's faith. If one trusted in Christ's atonement for salvation, one could/should trust in Christ's atonement for healing from sickness. Some Pentecostals conducted great healing revivals, the most popular probably being those of Oral Roberts (Chappell, 1988).

The divine/human encounter for Pentecostals is also emphasized in the focus on sanctification and holiness, for the Pentecostal encounter with God brought about actual change and transformation. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the whole person is transformed; people act, think and feel differently through the empowering of the Spirit (Decker, 1996; Land, 1993).

Being so graciously and visibly encountered by God required a response for the Pentecostal. A key response to such encounters was a deep missionary impetus among Pentecostals. This missionary motivation was further enhanced by a focus on the imminent second coming of Christ (a concern also present in Evangelicalism). Conferences on the fulfillment of prophecy, the discernment of the end times, and the imminent second coming had swept the U.S. and Britain during the latter part of the 19th century. This movement also had a strong restoration motif that was attractive to Pentecostals who believed that in the last days God would do a new work (i.e., pour out his spirit and restore the world to righteousness) (Dayton, 1987).

Interlude: Exploring the "deep metaphors" of Pentecostal belief and practice. Before turning to the question of the unique ways in which Pentecostalism informs my understanding of the integrative task, it is important to acknowledge that there are shared theological streams that inform the way I approach integration. For instance, I share a common anthropology that recognizes that we are beings created in the image of God, who have fallen from relationship with God yet have been redeemed through Christ (cf. Jones & Butman, 2011). Furthermore, I affirm an anthropology that humans are relational in nature because they bear the image of a relational God (cf. Grenz, 2001). I also find that the key Christological images of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection inform the way I think about empathy, suffering, and growth in therapeutic encounters (cf. Hoffman, 2011). However, I also think my Pentecostal roots bring certain emphases to the work I do. To make these emphases clearer, I attempt to derive from the above articulation of core Pentecostal beliefs and practices, what Browning (1987) would call the "deep

metaphors" of Pentecostalism. I also borrow from Lindbeck's (1984) cultural-linguistic approach to religious belief to ask what it is that such deep metaphors regulate or authorize. The deep metaphors that follow are not exhaustive; others identify additional things (cf. Belcher & Benda, 2003; Brock, 1995; Decker, 1996; Dobbins, 2000; Menzies, 1985; Serrano, 2003). However, these four metaphors gather up several defining themes from Pentecostalism that inform my work.

Holy Spirit baptism. The first of the deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice of course is the emphasis on Holy Spirit baptism. One can see several things that the beliefs and practices associated with Holy Spirit baptism authorize or regulate. First, it authorizes (and gives guidance and understanding to) a sense of God's presence. That is, it opens the boundaries between God and humans and fosters a sense of intimacy with God (Parker, 1996). The Pentecostal lives in a world characterized by and filled with spiritual realities in which God is visibly present and active. Pentecostals would ill fit in a world reducible to only the scientifically observable or empirically verifiable. This means that on one hand Pentecostals expect spiritual warfare as part of their world, but on the other they also know and expect God's intervention during these times (cf. Serrano, 2003).

Second, Holy Spirit baptism authorizes a deep reliance on experience as a source of authority for the Pentecostal. Because the experience of Holy Spirit baptism is so closely aligned with similar experiences in Scripture for the Pentecostal (e.g., the book of Acts), one must not assume that this reliance on the authority of experience is disconnected from other sources of authority (like Wesley's quadrilateral). But having said that, it is clear that Holy Spirit baptism authorizes the experiential as a way to know and engage reality. Although one may come to know the world through thought, reading, and intellectual pursuits, one also comes to know the world through a realm of experience that points beyond the strictly rational as a way to know the world (cf. Parker, 1996; Smith, 2010).

Because Holy Spirit baptism is an experiential reality for the Pentecostal, this belief in the active presence of God creates expectations and hope for the Pentecostal. This is the third thing authorized by this deep metaphor. When Pentecostals pray they expect God to show up and do things (Decker, 1996; McMahan, 2004; Mathew, 1996). On the one hand this can create distress if

the intervention does not happen when asked for but on the other it gives a sense of hope when things might seem hopeless otherwise. For Pentecostals, Holy Spirit baptism makes the Christian life something that is alive and real and makes the person feel alive and real.

The fourth thing a belief in Holy Spirit baptism authorizes is a need for discernment. A people like Pentecostals who place such emphasis on *experiencing* the work of the Spirit have had to develop, through necessity, means by which the presence of the Spirit can be discerned; the history of Pentecostalism is rife with examples of emotional excesses and erratic behavior (Conn, 1994). Pentecostals have developed and employ a variety of cognitive (including use of Scripture), affective, behavioral and motivational strategies to help them discern the true presence of the Holy Spirit (Parker, 1996). Thus, one recognizes in Pentecostal belief and practice a healthy skepticism that all that is attributed to the Spirit is not necessarily from the Spirit.

"I can feel it in my bones": Pentecostal anthropology. The second deep metaphor of Pentecostal belief and practice is that of a holistic anthropology. Although one can read Pentecostal treatises on the nature of the human that convey a more aspective anthropology (e.g., the trichotomous view of the human; Cartledge, 2014), in their practice Pentecostals are much closer to a holistic anthropology (Land, 1993; Smith, 2010; Vondey, 2013). This holistic view is seen in several ways. First, one can point to the fully embodied nature of Pentecostal worship. While most worship might be thought of as embodied, in that one's mental, emotional, and spiritual concentration are all present in the body that worships, Pentecostal worship is particularly a bodily experience with its emphasis on shouting, dancing, lifting of hands, laying on of hands, and speaking in tongues. (I would note that in practice this bodily emphasis in Pentecostal worship both honors our embodied nature in that worship involves more than our highest thoughts about God, but it creates some tension when this style of worship becomes a substitute for other kinds of bodily action (e.g., greater social involvement outside the worship service). In this latter instance, it dishonors our embodied nature (Vondey, 2013).

The emphasis on divine healing also points to the holistic nature of Pentecostal anthropology in its practice. God is not only interested in the saving of souls; God is interested in the

restoration of bodies. Because both salvation of the soul and healing of the body are conjoined in the atonement for Pentecostals, the focus on divine healing creates a space to reflect on the close relationship between physical and spiritual healing and this interrelationship reflects the embodied spirituality of Pentecostal practice (Dobbins, 2000; Serrano, 2003).

Finally, one might note that the strong focus on experience in Pentecostal worship points to a holistic anthropology in practice. That is, a Pentecostal anthropology gives great weight to the affective dimension of humans and does not simply treat us as "thinking machines" (Smith, 2009, 2010). Pentecostalism, with its focus on experience, creates a space for a more holistic anthropology in which both the affective and cognitive dimensions of human nature are acknowledged (cf. Land, 1993). For the Pentecostal love of God involves our whole being (heart, mind, soul, and strength). The line of the shorter Westminster catechism about *enjoying God* is very real for the Pentecostal. In emphasizing the importance of affect in religious experience Pentecostals join a host of other Christian expressions that have called attention to the unfortunate splitting of the cognitive and affective in worship (e.g., Wesley on the religious affections, Tillich on the synthesis of knowledge and eros; Clapper, 1989; Gilkey, 1990), though Pentecostals may overcorrect at times.

Narrative structure. The third deep metaphor in Pentecostalism concerns the narrative structuring of life (Land, 1993; Vondey, 2013). This is primarily seen in two ways. First, the narrative structuring of Pentecostal life is seen in how closely Pentecostal narratives are connected to and rooted in the biblical narrative. This close connection has its own implications. For Pentecostals, the stories in the Bible are a lived, present reality. Thus, the Scriptures are authoritative for the Pentecostal, but not simply in a propositional way; Pentecostals have a much more dynamic engagement and understanding of the Word as a lived, spiritual reality. This also means that biblical narratives, and not just epistolary or didactic portions of Scripture, take on a normative quality for Pentecostals (Serrano, 2003).

The second way that the narrative structuring of life shows up in Pentecostalism is the key role that testimonies play in structuring Pentecostal experience (Dobbins, 2000). This time of sharing life stories helps accomplish several things. It helps interpret for others and often for

the one testifying what a proper Pentecostal life looks like. It contributes to a shared story among the participants, to which others can join their stories. Thus, testimonies are a way to order one's experience, to begin to make sense of what has happened in the context of God's larger work in the world and in one's life (Parker, 1996). Testimonies participate in a shared construction of meaning. As a communal activity, testimonies also elicit social support and spiritual strengthening. Often, testimonies lead to a time of special prayer for a person; a time in which several other members of the congregation gather round the person and lay hands upon them while offering prayers for God's strength and/or intervention.

Praying together: the communal nature of Pentecostal belief and practice. The fourth deep metaphor of Pentecostal belief and practice is the communal nature of its shared practice. The comments on testimonies have already pointed to one aspect of the social-relational nature of Pentecostalism. This deep metaphor shows up in other ways as well. In praying for others who are sick one sees something of the communal (social-relational) nature of Pentecostal spirituality and anthropology as well; one needs and is supported by the body of Christ in these prayers (Belcher & Vining, 2000; Dobbins, 2000).

An aspect of these prayers and Pentecostal worship that I recall from my youth was the nature of those who sometimes sought out these prayers. These times of prayer exposed me to a congregation that embraced those that other groups often did not: the poor, the downtrodden, the mentally and emotionally challenged. One of the indelible memories of my early years is a Pentecostalism concern for the sick and underserved and its reaching out to touch the untouchable brokenness in people's lives. (For those who stayed connected with Pentecostalism there is an interesting sociological phenomenon called "redemption and lift" in which adherents become upwardly mobile socially; cf. Synan, 1997).

Conclusion. In assessing this articulation of the deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice I note two things in particular. One is that there is an inevitable interpenetration between the metaphors. For instance, the experiential nature of Pentecostal belief and practice shows up in the focus on affect, in the focus on Holy Spirit baptism, and the sharing of testimonies about one's experience; the narrative

structuring of life not only shows the social-relational nature of Pentecostal experience, it includes stories told about Holy Spirit baptism as well as the Spirit's ongoing work in one's life that are communally shared.

The second thing arises in the form of a question: Might I be imposing a monochromatic vision on what is a more multi-textured picture? For instance, does lifting up the communal nature of Pentecostal experience give short shrift to the more individualistic tendencies in Pentecostal belief and practice? Similarly, does attention to the holistic nature of a Pentecostal anthropology ignore a concomitant emphasis on more dualistic anthropologies in Pentecostalism? Perhaps some of the deep metaphors are better expressed as paradoxes (e.g., communal vs. individualistic; holistic vs. aspective). This is the approach of a recent treatise on Pentecostalism by Vondey (2013) who identifies several paradoxes: Pentecostals are local and global, holistic yet extreme (too much focus on only charisma), ecumenical and denominational, orthodox and sectarian (e.g., modalistic theology), socially engaged yet triumphal (e.g., the passiveness of the health and wealth gospel), egalitarian (as seen in the Azusa Street Revival) and institutionalized (as seen in not implementing the equality impulse of Azusa), scholarly yet anti-intellectual. In traditional theological categories I highlight from the deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice a theology of God's immanence, an anthropology of human unity and relatedness, and an epistemology open to experience as a way of knowing, especially in its affective dimensions. This does not mean God's transcendence or cognitive ways of knowing are absent, but that there are sides of the paradoxes that stand out to me. I also am aware there are Pentecostals who would argue different points than those noted here (e.g., Brock, 1995; Decker, 1996; Dobbins, 2000; Serrano, 2003). Thus, this article must be read as a personal expression, though I trust Pentecostals will recognize the broad themes identified here.

Ways These Beliefs/Practices Inform the Relationship between Psychology and Theology

These deep metaphors influence the way I do integration across a broad spectrum of activities. This section looks at how these deep metaphors influence the ways I think about and engage with psychological theory and therapy.

In the Ways I Think About and Engage Psychological Theory

The first way these deep metaphors inform the way I think about and engage psychological theory is in the way they guide my vision of human health and wholeness. My vision centers in an anthropology that acknowledges the whole person because God is concerned to redeem and restore the whole person. It also is an anthropology that recognizes that humans were created for relationship, first to God and then to each other. Thus, relationship is essential to health and wholeness. Although such a vision is not unique to Pentecostals, it was from Pentecostals that I first became aware that God relates to and redeems the whole person.

This emphasis on the whole person and the way it is given expression in Pentecostal belief and practice also informs the way I evaluate various psychological theories. In my own integrative work I am drawn to theories that take account of both affective and cognitive sensibilities as well as behavioral and contemplative ones; I prize those theories that emphasize the affective as more primary (i.e., occurs developmentally prior to cognition), in part because experience plays such a critical role for Pentecostals. I value theories that recognize our embodied nature and that recognize a sense of human agency (a Pentecostal emphasis indebted to its Wesleyan roots). Similarly, the social-relational dimension of Pentecostal belief and practice draws me toward theories that place an emphasis on the importance of the relationship in therapy.

Another way these deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice inform integration is in what counts for authority. For instance, I give less authority to those psychological theories that are more reductionistic in their anthropology, epistemology, and cosmology (e.g., behaviorism). As a Pentecostal, experience is a source of authority and so I am drawn to those theories that create a space for experience as a source of epistemological authority. This latter emphasis also has roots in a Wesleyan view of the world (cf. his quadrilateral which included experience, reason, and tradition as sources of authority, all under the aegis of Scripture). As a Pentecostal I also see authority lodged in these four sources.

As a Pentecostal, I also view Scripture as a source of authority and draw deeply from its guiding images and narratives. However, granting Scripture authority is not the same as granting an interpretation of Scripture authority. We all work

with mediated views of what is scripturally authoritative. Thus, much of the integrative work I do is a kind of mutually critical correlation in which each discipline is given its own voice (Parker, 1996). Thus, in an article on shame, one of the questions asked was how the Christian tradition can illumine this psychological concept (Thomas & Parker, 2004); similarly, I have explored how the creation narratives in Genesis might inform a theory of personality (Parker, 2000). However, other articles I have written explore how psychological theory informs religious experience (Parker, 2008; Parker & Davis, 2009).

This discussion of authority also brings up the question of the role of discernment and suspicion in my integrative work. I am aware that my attraction to psychodynamic psychologies with their hermeneutic of suspicion fit well with my Pentecostal sensibilities. Similarly, the use of methodological skepticism also fits well with the need to question and discern.

Pentecostal belief and practice also influence the way I engage psychological theory on a more practical level. First, Pentecostal belief and practice influence my integrative work in a reverse way through my deep desire for good theory. This is perhaps compensation for the absence of "systematic" theology in early Pentecostalism. Although helpful in some ways, the practical nature of Pentecostal theology left some questions unanswered when I engaged in more systematic reflection upon my experiences and I think this absence sent me searching for more comprehensive explanations.

Second, the experiential nature of Pentecostal belief and practice has played a key role in my personal interaction with the field of psychology. One of the main attractions of psychology was as a way to understand my Pentecostal experience. This began early on with readings on psychological explanations of speaking in tongues. I read authors like Kildahl (1972), and Stagg, Hinson, & Oates (1967). Although I wondered at times whether psychology might undermine my faith (e.g., explanations of speaking in tongues as signs of pathology), I also was intrigued by articles that saw something positive and creative in these behaviors since I had observed both sides of this phenomenon (cf. Lapsley & Simpson, 1964a, b; Malony & Lovekin, 1985). Similarly, I remember my first encounter with the levels of analysis approach (Myers, 1978). In granting varying authority to different levels without trying to reduce religious experience to "nothing but" a

particular level of analysis, this approach allowed me to see how certain aspects of Holy Spirit baptism might participate in resolving conflicts with authority figures or light up certain neural pathways without feeling the meaning of these experiences was exhausted by a given level of explanation. More recently, the literature on God images has helped me toward further understandings of my religious experience and its connections to my developmental history (Parker, 1999; 2008; cf. Rizutto, 1979).

In the Ways I Think About Therapy

In turning to the question of how these deep metaphors of Pentecostal belief and practice influence how I do therapy I note that the above section engages important macro level questions (e.g., one's anthropology/personality theory and the meta-goals of therapy, e.g., what is the good life, what does God desire for humans). By contrast this section explores these influences at a more practical or clinical level.

One might remember that the deep metaphor of Holy Spirit baptism authorizes an emphasis on an active, present God in Pentecostal belief and practice. This deep metaphor informs the way I do therapy at several junctures. This belief means that God is actively present in the therapy room and actively involved in the client's life and movement; Pentecostals expect that God will show up and that God will do things; actual transformation is expected. (cf. Dobbins, 2000; Serrano, 2003; Williamson & Hood, 2012). These metaphors give me a basic hopefulness about the work of therapy and of people's potential for change and transformation. However, my Pentecostal roots also conveyed realism with such hope; i.e., not everyone prayed for was healed, something also borne out by my clinical work. I would add that this notion that the Holy Spirit is actively present in the therapy is a manifestation of "common grace" and not some special grace present only for the Pentecostal clinician.

The belief in a God who is active and present raises the question of how Pentecostal belief and practice informs how one attends to this active presence. I note that the only description given to the Holy Spirit in the early creeds is that the Spirit is the "giver of life" (Parker, 2008). Thus, one way I discern the Spirit to be at work during therapy is those times when new life comes into being. Although this can take a variety of forms depending on the person and the problem (e.g., forgiveness displaces bitterness, hope replaces

despair, good boundaries are set, or conversely impenetrable walls are let down), where life replaces deadness, there the Holy Spirit is at work. That the Holy Spirit is present and active at such times contributes to the feeling that in therapy one is often on sacred ground as one observes the transformation to new life arising to replace the pain and suffering or recalcitrance that previously characterized the person. Again, such experiences of the Spirit's work are not unique to the Pentecostal clinician.

What might be unique to Pentecostal clinicians is use of the *charismata* in therapy. Several Pentecostal clinicians report this as one way they attend to the work of the Spirit in therapy (Belcher & Benda, 2003; Brock, 1995; Decker, 2002; Horton, 1985). For instance, the spiritual gift of "word of knowledge" is one of the more common practices reported by Pentecostal clinicians. What is meant by this is that God through the Holy Spirit reveals to the clinician something about the person or their problem that could not have been known by natural means. Although several Pentecostal clinicians identify charismatic manifestations as a way to attend to the work of the Holy Spirit in therapy, emphasis on use of the *charismata* is not universal among clinicians who identify as Pentecostal. It may be that some of these things have happened in the therapy these (and even non-Pentecostal) clinicians do, but such times of deep insight are not necessarily attributed to charismatic gifts. I note here the related practice of "inner healing" prayer (MacNutt, 1988). For Pentecostals, such practice is related both to the use of the *charismata* and the emphasis on divine healing. However, inner healing prayer is not unique to Pentecostals (cf. Garzon & Burkett, 2002).

Another aspect of the deep metaphor of Holy Spirit baptism concerns how discernment informs therapy. In discernment, one asks of something: "Is it the Spirit or not?" This type of discernment is sometimes exercised as a gift of the Spirit in therapy (Brock, 1995; Decker, 2002); at other times it simply points to raising questions and being appropriately guarded. In therapy this latter use of discernment has its corollary in differential diagnosis and in making assessments that recognize that all things are not to be taken at face value.

Holy Spirit baptism as a deep metaphor in Pentecostal belief and practice also authorizes an experiential focus in therapy. Thus, the client's experience is given a central role in the therapy

I do. Therapies that give priority to the affective impact of those events, rather than simply to the content of what happened, resonate well with Pentecostal beliefs and practice.

The social-relational focus in Pentecostal belief and practice influences my valuing those therapies that stress the importance of the relationship for therapeutic growth. In a related process, the Pentecostal emphasis on testimonies taught me the power of stories that are shared. The dynamics that attend testimonies are not unlike the dynamics articulated in both narrative and group therapies (cf. Belcher & Vining, 2000; Dobbins, 2000), the first of which attends to the narrative structuring of experience and the second of which attends to the social-relational nature of experience. My appreciation for what transpires in these therapies found its beginnings in the Pentecostal beliefs and practices to which I was exposed.

The deep metaphor of a Pentecostal anthropology informs my belief in human choice and freedom (and thus autonomy) in therapy, a focus which also draws from the Wesleyan roots of Pentecostalism. Thus, for me another aspect of Holy Spirit empowerment is an increased sense of autonomy manifest as an increased acceptance of responsibility for one's life and actions. Lest this focus be interpreted too individualistically, the deep metaphor of the social-relational nature of Pentecostal belief and practice provides a moderating influence.

Finally, I note that growing up Pentecostal has made me sensitive to the kinds of issues with which Pentecostals might struggle. For instance, some Pentecostals struggle with perfectionism (out of the focus on holiness); others struggle with passivity (out of the focus on Jesus coming soon). Other Pentecostals struggle with disappointments connected to prayers for healing and deliverance. Furthermore, those who were not healed were often accused of lacking faith. These experiences have implications for how Pentecostals might approach (or distance themselves from) therapy. Though this is not an article on working with Pentecostals in therapy, I note that in listening to the Pentecostal client, I attend to expectations and how these affect people's thoughts, feelings, visions of self and other, and a host of similar issues. Those Sunday night services taught me that disappointments are always connected to expectations and so there is always grieving that takes place when these are not met. Pentecostal belief and practice taught me not only the importance of attending to and grieving

such losses, but how to recognize them as times when God also is present. Even if you cannot rejoice tonight, you keep praying together.

References

- Anderson, A. (2004). *An introduction to Pentecostalism*. Cambridge, England: University of Cambridge Press.
- Belcher, J.R. & Vining, J.K. (2000). Counseling Pentecostals: The process of change. *Marriage & Family: A Christian Journal*, 3, 383-392.
- Belcher, J.R. & Benda, B.B. (2003). Counseling charismatic couples: Working through the charismata. *Marriage & Family: A Christian Journal*, 6, 497-503.
- Brock, R.T. (1995). The Holy Spirit and counseling. In J.K. Vining (Ed.) *Pentecostal caregivers: Anointed to heal* (pp. 25-37). East Rockaway, NY: Cummings & Hathaway.
- Browning, D.S. (1987). *Religious thought and the modern psychologies*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Cartledge, D.F. (2014). A Pentecostal approach to pastoral counseling: Applying gifts of the Spirit and revelation knowledge. *Australasian Pentecostals Studies*. Retrieved from <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/aps/issue-4/a-pentecostal-approach-to-pastoral-counselling-app/> on July 14, 2014.
- Chan, S.K.H. (2000). *Pentecostal theology and the Christian spiritual tradition*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Chappell, P.G. (1988). Healing movements. In S. Burgess, G. McGee, & P. Alexander (Eds.) *Dictionary of Pentecostal and charismatic movements* (pp. 353-374). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Clapper, G.S. (1989). *John Wesley on religious affections: His views of experience and emotion and their role in the Christian life and theology*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Conn, C.W. (1994). *Like a mighty army: A history of the Church of God, 1886-1995*. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press.
- Dayton, D.W. (1987). *Theological roots of Pentecostalism*. Peabody, MA: Hendricksen Publishers.
- Decker, E.E. (1996). A theology of Holy Spirit empowerment. In J.K. Vining (Ed.) *Soul care: A Pentecostal-charismatic perspective* (pp. 59-79). East Rockaway, NY: Cummings and Hathaway.
- Decker, E.E. (2002). What do you do with what you know? The ethics of Holy Spirit empowerment in counseling. Paper presented at the 31st annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. Available in the collected papers, pp. 623-636.
- Dobbins, R.D. (2000). Psychotherapy with Pentecostal protestants. In P. Richards & A. Bergin (Eds.) *Handbook of psychotherapy and religious diversity* (pp. 155-184). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Fowler, J.W. (1983). Practical theology and the shaping of Christian lives. In D.S. Browning, (Ed.). *Practical theology: The emerging field in theology, church, and world* (pp. 148-166). San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Garzon, F. & Burkett, L. (2002). Healing of memories: Models, research, future directions. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 21, 42-49.
- Gilkey, L. (1990). *Gilkey on Tillich*. New York, NY: Crossroad.
- Grenz, S.J. (2001). *The social God and the relational self: A Trinitarian theology of the imago Dei*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.
- Hoffman, M.T. (2011). *Toward mutual recognition: Relational psychoanalysis and the Christian narrative*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Horton, S.M. (1985). The gifts of the Holy Spirit. In M.G. Gilbert & R.T. Brock (Eds.). *The Holy Spirit and counseling: Theology and theory*, (pp. 39-54). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Johnson, T.M. (2009). The global demographics of the Pentecostal and charismatic renewal. *Society*, 46, 479-483. doi: 10.1007/s12115-009-9255-0
- Jones, S.L. & Butman, R.E. (2011). *Modern psychotherapies: A comprehensive Christian appraisal* (2nd ed.). Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity.
- Kildahl, J.P. (1972) *The psychology of speaking in tongues*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
- Kilian, M.K. & Parker, S. (2001). A Wesleyan spirituality: Implications for clinical practice. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 29, 72-80.
- Land, S.J. (1993). *Pentecostal spirituality: A passion for the kingdom*. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press.
- Lapsley, J.N. & Simpson, J.H. (1964a). Speaking in tongues: Token of group acceptance and divine approval. *Pastoral Psychology*, 15, 48-55.
- Lapsley, J.N. & Simpson, J.H. (1964b). Speaking in tongues: Infantile babble or song of the self? *Pastoral Psychology*, 15, 16-24.
- Lindbeck, G.A. (1984). *The nature of doctrine: Religion and theology in a postliberal age*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.
- Macchia, F.D. (2006). *Baptized in the spirit: A global Pentecostal theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- McMahan, O. (2004). Spiritual direction in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition. In G.Moon & D. Benner (Eds.). *Spiritual direction and care of souls* (pp.152-168). Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.
- MacNutt, F. (1988). *Healing*. Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House.
- Malony, H.N. & Lovekin, A.A. (1985). *Glossolalia: Behavioral science perspectives on speaking in tongues*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Mathew, T.K. (1996). Ministering between miracles: A Pentecostal perspective of pastoral care. In J. Vining and E. Decker (Eds.) *Soul care: A Pentecostal-charismatic perspective* (pp. 129-139). East Rockaway, NY: Cummings and Hathaway.
- Menzies, W.W. (1985). The Holy Spirit as the paraclete: Model for counselors. In M.G. Gilbert & R.T. Brock (Eds.). *The Holy Spirit and counseling: Theology and theory*, (pp. 25-38). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Moltmann, J. (1981). *The Trinity and the kingdom*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Myers, D.G. (1978). *The human puzzle: Psychological research and Christian belief*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Neuman, P.D. (2012). Wither Pentecostal experience? Mediated experience of God in Pentecostal theology. *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity*, 3, 1-40.
- Onyiah, O. (2013). Healing: A Pentecostal perspective. *One in Christ*, 47 (2), 311-339.
- Parker, S.E. (1996). *Led by the Spirit: Toward a practical theology of Pentecostal discernment and decision making*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Parker, S. (1999). Hearing God's Spirit: Impacts of developmental history on adult religious experience. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 18, 154-164.
- Parker, S. (2000, November). Toward a biblical theory of personality: Dimensions of personality in the Genesis creation narratives. Presentation at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies East Conference, Ladore Lodge, PA.
- Parker, S. (2008). Winnicott's object relations theory and the work of the Holy Spirit. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 36, 285-293.
- Parker, S. & Davis, E. (2009). The false self in Christian contexts: A Winnicottian perspective. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 28, 315-325.
- Reed, D. A. (1988). Oneness Pentecostalism. In S.M. Burgess, G.B. McGee, & P.H. Alexander (Eds.), *Dictionary of Pentecostal and charismatic movements*, pp. 644-651. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Rizzuto, A. (1979). *The birth of the living god*. Chicago, IL: University Press.
- Robeck, C.M. (2006). *The Azusa street mission and revival*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Serrano, N. (2003). Pentecostal spirituality: Implications for an approach to clinical psychology. In M. McMinn & T. Hall (Eds.), *Spiritual formation, counseling and psychotherapy* (pp. 215-231). NY: Nova Science.
- Smith, J.K.A. (2009). *Desiring the kingdom: Worship, worldview and cultural formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Smith, J.K.A. (2010). *Thinking in tongues: Pentecostal contributions to Christian philosophy*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Stagg, F., Hinson, E.G., & Oates, W.E. (1967). *Glossolalia: Tongue speaking in biblical, historical, and psychological perspectives*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Studebaker, S.M. (2012). *From Pentecost to the triune God: A Pentecostal Trinitarian theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.

- Synan, V. (1997) *The holiness-Pentecostal tradition: Charismatic movements in the 20th century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Synan, V. (2000). A healer in the house? A historical perspective on healing in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 3, 189-201.
- Thomas, R. & Parker, S. (2004). Toward a theological understanding of shame. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 23, 176-182).
- Vondey, W. (2013). *Pentecostalism: A guide for the perplexed*. London, England: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark.
- Willamson, H.P. & Hood, R.W. (2012). The Lazarus project: A longitudinal study of spiritual transformation among substance abusers. *Mental Health, Religion, and Culture*, 15, 611-635. doi: 10.1007/s11089-012-0502-8
- Yong, A. (2002). Spirit-word-community: Theological hermeneutics in Trinitarian perspective. Burlington, England: Ashgate.
- Yong, A. (2005). *The spirit poured out upon all flesh: Pentecostalism and the possibility of global theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Authors

Stephen Parker (Ph.D. in Theology and Personality Studies, Emory University) is Professor in the School of Psychology and Counseling, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. His research interests include models of spiritual/religious development and the interface of theology and personality theory.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.