









*Abstract*

“THE GIFT OF SILENCE:  
A RENEWED CALL TO CONTEMPORARY PENTECOSTALS TO THE  
SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF SILENCE”

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Project under the direction of Professor Robert Davis Hughes, III

Pentecostals are known for being vociferous and boisterous in worship, and generally eschew silence. The thesis of this project, *The Gift of Silence: a renewed call to contemporary Pentecostals to the spiritual discipline of silence*, however, is that the discipline of silence is not antithetical to Pentecostal spirituality. On the contrary, silence has been, and can continue to be an important and indispensable aspect of Pentecostal spirituality.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of Pentecostal spirituality, based on Russell P. Spittler’s “five implicit values governing Pentecostal spirituality.” These values are individual experience, oral tradition, otherworldliness, spontaneity, and biblical authority. Discussion focuses on ways in which these five values affect personal and communal life, worship, and prayer in the Pentecostal community. Documents from Pentecostal denominations are cited for authenticity.

Chapter 2 addresses the subjects of silence in prayer and worship, citing biblical examples (from both Testaments), Early Church Fathers, and Pentecostal writers from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter 3 issues a call to contemporary Pentecostals to reconsider the spiritual discipline of silence in prayer and worship. It explores the influences of popular contemporary Christian youth culture on contemporary Pentecostal prayer and worship. Then, contemporary Pentecostals are asked to reconsider the spiritual discipline of silence in prayer and worship as a viable and vital aspect of Pentecostal spirituality. Biblical foundations and precedence, practice among early Pentecostals, and deep roots in Early Church spirituality are given as reasons to reconsider the discipline of silence in prayer and worship. Then, encouragement is offered to direct interested Pentecostals toward a better understanding of the discipline of silence.

The conclusion gives a brief summary of the project, and restates the thesis. Then suggestions are given for Pentecostals who would like to explore further the spiritual discipline of silence: a suggested bibliography, and suggestions for the personal and corporate practice of silence.

A bibliography of sources cited is provided at the end of the project.

Approved: Robert Davis Hughes, III, Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor





The Gift of Silence: A Renewed Call to Contemporary Pentecostals  
to the Spiritual Discipline of Silence

by

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# Contents

Abstract.....	v
Preface.....	xiii
Acknowledgements.....	xv
Chapter 1: An Overview of Pentecostal Spirituality.....	1
Chapter 2: Prayer and Silence.....	19
Chapter 3: A Renewed Call to Silence .....	35
Conclusion .....	55
Bibliography .....	61



## Preface

Simon Chan, in his discussion on Pentecostal asceticism and the function of glossolalia in prayer, states that Pentecostal ascetics may sometimes deliberately speak in tongues “as a means of cultivating intimacy with God through the act of *anamnesis*” [*sic*].<sup>1</sup> As they continue in this manner of prayer, however, Pentecostal ascetics may become so drawn into God that they transition from active tongues-speech into a more passive state until glossolalia becomes, as it were, automatic. As the practitioner of charismatic prayer becomes more experienced and proficient, he or she may transition to a greater simplification of tongues, until “over time a monosyllabic sound or groan would suffice to communicate the depth of human-divine encounter, *until finally silence reigns as the soul loses itself in ‘wonder, love, and praise.’*”<sup>2</sup>

While in discussions of Pentecostal spirituality, words like “wonder, love, and praise,” may surface quite frequently, other words like “asceticism,” “silence,” and “*anamnesis*,” are decidedly less frequent. But Chan, a professor of systematic theology at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, and a sacramental Pentecostal opens a door to fellow Pentecostals to explore an area of spirituality that many have never considered—the gift of silence.

This project will address the absence of silence in Pentecostal spirituality—especially contemporary Pentecostal spirituality. It will explore the reasons that silence is avoided; and will discuss the ways in which Pentecostal spirituality and worship could

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<sup>1</sup> *Anamnesis* (transliterated from the Greek, ἀνάμνησις), means “something remembered.” (See Bauer, *BAGD*, s.v. ἀνάμνησις). In other words, some Pentecostals may deliberately begin to speak in tongues using speech patterns previously spoken.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Spirituality and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 81 (emphasis mine).

be deepened and enriched by a proper understanding and practice of the spiritual discipline of silence. This project will also examine biblical passages that call for reverent silence in the presence of God. It will also demonstrate that throughout the history of Christian spirituality, many “people of the Spirit” have practiced and taught the discipline of silence as an important component of prayer and communion with God.

The thesis of this project is that the discipline of silence is not antithetical to, but indeed an important and indispensable aspect of, Pentecostal spirituality. It also offers suggestions for the inclusion of the corporate and individual discipline of silence in Pentecostal churches and the personal devotional practices of Pentecostal Christians.

The exploration and discussion of the discipline of silence in Christian spirituality could possibly include an extensive, detailed exposé of the history of Christian spirituality, including all major movements and persons, along with discussions of spiritual theology. While some reference to these will be unavoidable, they lie beyond the scope of this project. The intent is rather to focus on the discipline of silence in particular movements and among selected practitioners in Christian spiritual history; to highlight pertinent principles of spiritual theology; and to demonstrate the ways that Pentecostal spirituality can be enhanced by the discipline of silence.

## Acknowledgments

Several years ago, in my search for a Doctor of Ministry program, I made a deliberate decision to study at The School of Theology at of The University of the South, although a competent program of study was offered at a seminary near my home in Birmingham, Alabama. I wanted to study in a seminary with roots in a different Christian tradition than my own Pentecostal tradition. Specifically, I wanted to study in a seminary with liturgical roots. Through formal study and personal investigation, I had learned to love the liturgy. I wanted to explore and evaluate my Pentecostal tradition from the broader context of the liturgical church. The Episcopal School of Theology at Sewanee seemed to be the perfect choice.

In my first summer session at Sewanee, I was fortunate to study “Pneumatology: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit,” with The Rev. Dr. Robert David Hughes, III, a self-proclaimed Spirit-filled Episcopalian. A couple of summers later, I was equally fortunate to study “Spiritual Direction” with Dr. Hughes. In that class, the Holy Spirit was portrayed as playing an important role as Spiritual Director in the life of the Christian. In both classes, my understanding was expanded and my appreciation was deepened concerning the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in both the liturgical and Pentecostal traditions—and by extension, all traditions of the Christian church. How very fortunate I was to learn that Dr. Hughes had been assigned as my faculty advisor for this D. Min. project.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Robert Hughes for his patience, encouragement, and counsel during the much-too-long process of writing this project. In times when I was

seized by writer's block, or paralyzed by the sheer terror and intimidation of (what I considered) a formidable task, his concise but rightly-timed, rightly-framed words encouraged me forward to the completion of this project. And now, it is done.

I have a profound admiration and appreciation for all my professors (including visiting professors) who taught me during summer terms at Sewanee. I am grateful to the Directors (past and present) of Advanced Degree Program for their counsel during my pursuit of the D. Min. degree: The Rev. Drs. Donald Armentrout, William F. Brosend, II, and Benjamin John King. Assistants to the Directors of ADP (present and past), Shawn Horton and Sandra Brock, and Registrar and Coordinator of Academic Affairs, Mary Stuart Turner, were extremely helpful and diligent in keeping me informed of my progress (or lack thereof), and patient in answering my many questions. My academic, spiritual, and social experience at Sewanee has been abundantly enriching.

Ross Carne and The Rev. James Wallace long ago planted the idea and desire to pursue formal theological education. The Rev. Dr. Fisher Humphreys, Professor Emeritus of Christian Theology at Beeson Divinity School, friend and mentor, has continued to be a source of encouragement in my academic pursuits. The Rev. Adrian L. Varlack, Sr. proved to be a formidable intellectual sparring partner in matters pertaining to our common Pentecostal heritage. The Rev. Drs. Sylvester Smith and Dan Thomas consistently urged me to continue writing. The Rev. Dr. H. E. Cardin provided invaluable assistance in formatting the final draft of this project. To these friends and colleagues I offer my deepest thanks and appreciation.

I am forever grateful to New Life Community Church, Bessemer, AL, and The Pinson Parkway Church, Pinson, AL for graciously allowing me the time to attend summer sessions at Sewanee, and to write the required various and sundry papers, including this project.

Last, but not least, mere words cannot express my heartfelt gratitude to my wife, Diana, for her moral, emotional, and spiritual support, and unending patience during the long and winding road that has led to this point in my education and ministry. When, under the burdens and pressures that accompany ministry, and when, in the absence of inspiration and motivation, I've been tempted to throw in the towel on this project, Diana has gently, but firmly, urged me on. I dedicate this project to her. Never mind that every available flat surface in the house has been converted into a bookshelf.



# Chapter 1

## An Overview of Pentecostal Spirituality

### An experiential, subjective spirituality

On the first Pentecost after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came suddenly with audible and visible manifestations upon about one hundred and twenty faithful followers of Jesus who had gathered in an upstairs room in Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father. The Spirit's entrance was anything but subtle. There was a sound of a rushing, violent wind. Flames of fire rested upon each one in the room. Then they experienced the phenomenon of spontaneously speaking in other languages that were unknown to them. The manifestations that spilled from the upstairs room into the streets of Jerusalem were bewildering to the local citizenry and expatriate Jews who had gone there to celebrate Pentecost. How could these unlearned Galileans possibly be speaking their languages? While some wondered about the meaning of the ecstatic language, others simply thought that these people must be drunk.<sup>3</sup>

At this point, the Apostle Peter offers an apologetic for the unusual manifestations to the bewildered onlookers:

. . . Ye men of Judaea, all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; . . .<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 2:1 – 13

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:14b – 16 KJV

Early Pentecostals<sup>5</sup> adopted Peter's model of reading spiritual experience back into the Scriptures. They embraced a hermeneutic of "this is that" (i.e. "this" [spiritual or charismatic manifestation] "is that" [manifestation of which we read in the Scriptures]). Although Peter's interpretation and application of Joel's prophecy carried the imprimatur of apostolic authority, Pentecostals' explanations and defense of charismatic manifestations have often been more eisegetical than exegetical. James K. A. Smith writes that "Pentecostals take the central point of the narrative of Acts 2 to be Peter's courage and willingness to recognize in strange phenomena the operation of the Spirit and declare it to be the work of God. To declare 'this is that' (Acts 2:16) was to be open to God working in unexpected ways and to make a theological claim about the phenomena."<sup>6</sup>

Pentecostalism emerged as a grassroots movement among worshipping communities of working class West Coast blacks, Appalachians, and Midwesterners. From its black, non-Western, and largely uneducated, working class roots, early Pentecostal theology was born of spiritual experience, rather than a critical reflection of the scriptures. It was a theology that was more implicit than explicit. The ethos that sprang from the influences of non-Western, African spirituality, and uneducated (and sometimes anti-intellectual) pietistic mountaineers and farmers steeped in Wesleyan-Holiness traditions "accented oral tradition, visions, dreams and dance as the primary

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<sup>5</sup> "Early Pentecostals" refers to those who, in the early 1900s and into the 1960s, were foundational in the Pentecostal movement, and instrumental in the development of its message, doctrine, and practices.

<sup>6</sup> James K. A. Smith, "Thinking in Tongues," *First Things* 182 (April 2008): 28.

means by which to interpret the gospel theologically.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, much of Pentecostal theological reflection was derived from experienced Pentecostal spirituality.

Russell P. Spittler states that there are five implicit values governing Pentecostal spirituality:

The most prominent and pervasive value in Pentecostal spirituality is *individual experience*. “Pentecostals consider personal experience the arena of true religion.”<sup>8</sup> These personal experiences range from the foundational Christian crisis experiences in the *ordo salutis* (salvation, sanctification, and baptism in the Holy Spirit),<sup>9</sup> to manifestations of spiritual gifts (speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, miracles, faith-healing, etc.), and charismatic or ecstatic demonstrations (visions, dreams, shouting, running, jumping, being “slain in the Spirit,” etc.). The emphasis on personal experience is articulated in such aphorisms as, “The person with an experience is never at the mercy of another person with a doctrine,” and “You have to experience this for yourself.”<sup>10</sup> Tom T. Hall’s country gospel hit, “Me and Jesus” would be an appropriate theme song for those who cling to such an individualized spirituality.

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<sup>7</sup> Frank D. Macchia, “Theology, Pentecostal,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1120.

<sup>8</sup> Russell P. Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 1097.

<sup>9</sup> Classical Pentecostals from different traditions do not agree exactly on the *ordo salutis*. Baptist Pentecostals (i.e. Assembly of God) teach that there are two works of grace in the life of the believer: salvation and Spirit baptism, sanctification being simultaneous with and growing from the salvation experience. Wesleyan Pentecostals (i.e. Church of God) teach that there are three works of grace: salvation, sanctification (a second definite work of grace), and Spirit baptism. Oneness (“Jesus Only”) Pentecostals (i.e. United Pentecostal Church, Intl.) teach that salvation includes sanctification and Spirit baptism. All Classical Pentecostals teach that speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) is the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>10</sup> Spittler, Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” 1097.

Me and Jesus, got our own thing goin'.  
Me and Jesus, got it all worked out.  
Me and Jesus, got our own thing goin'.  
We don't need anybody to tell us what it's all about.<sup>11</sup>

Gordon D. Fee, a Pentecostal theologian, addresses a similar situation in the Corinthian church in regards to excessive individualization in the exercise of spiritual gifts—especially speaking in tongues—in public worship: “The building up of the community is the basic reason for corporate settings of worship; they should probably not be turned into a corporate gathering for a thousand individual experiences of worship.”<sup>12</sup>

For the first seventy years or so of its relatively short history, Pentecostalism had no formal or systematic articulation of its theology. Early Pentecostals simply had no place at the table in regards to theological dialogue and substantial theological literature. Pentecostalism, however, has a robust *oral tradition*.<sup>13</sup> Historically, Pentecostal theology and spirituality have been “transferred within an oral subculture,” passing on to adherents its “liturgies, moral codes and taboos, and ‘histories.’”<sup>14</sup> An integral part of Pentecostal worship services—especially Sunday evening or midweek services—is the “testimony service,” during which individuals will informally and spontaneously relate personal spiritual experiences, healings, or other instances of divine intervention in their lives. Though the testimonies are subjective in nature, their purpose is to glorify God, to

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<sup>11</sup> Hall, Tom T. © 1972, “Me and Jesus.” Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 667.

<sup>13</sup> Spittler, ‘Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic, 1097.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel E. Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Ecumenical Potential and Challenge,” *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, 1996. <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj2/albrecht.html> (accessed February 3, 2012).

encourage other Christians, and to serve as evangelistic “teasers.” It is precisely the orality of Pentecostalism that has made it attractive to people who are more intuitive than rational. A theology that is transmitted in personal testimonies, singing, dancing and manifestations of the Holy Spirit is more accessible to a greater number of people. This is one of the reasons that Pentecostalism has usually spread most rapidly among uneducated, working class people.<sup>15</sup>

*Spontaneity* is a prominent trademark of Pentecostal spirituality. Pentecostals often emphasize the unfettered, unpredictable dynamic of the Holy Spirit. Favored proof texts are, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit;”<sup>16</sup> and “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”<sup>17</sup> It is within the same context that Pentecostals warn each other against quenching the Holy Spirit,<sup>18</sup> which is understood to mean to refrain from suppressing any impulse to speak or act when it is discerned or felt to be inspired by the Spirit. Therefore, it is not uncommon to witness multiple and simultaneous vocal and physical manifestations of the Spirit among worshipers in a local assembly.<sup>19</sup>

With such a strong predilection for spontaneity, it should not be surprising that printed orders of service are a rarity among most Pentecostal congregations. Orders of

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<sup>15</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, “Pentecostalism’s Global Language,” *Christian History* XVII 2 (1998): 43-44.

<sup>16</sup> John 3:8 NRSV

<sup>17</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:17 NRSV

<sup>18</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:19

<sup>19</sup> Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” 1097.

service are rather considered to be indicative of a dead, cold formality which restrains the activity of the Holy Spirit. In the increasing number of Pentecostal churches that utilize them, however, printed bulletins are most often filled with the week's announcements and prayer requests, but rarely offer a detailed order of service.<sup>20</sup>

The *otherworldliness* of Pentecostal spirituality is succinctly summarized in the first verse and chorus of an old gospel hymn, "I Can't Feel at Home In this World."

This world is not my home, I'm only passing by,  
My treasures and my hopes are all up in the sky;  
My friends and loved ones wait who trod this way before,  
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.

O Lord, you know I have no friend like you,  
If heav'n were not my home, dear Lord, what would I do?  
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door,  
And I can't feel at home in this world any more.<sup>21</sup>

While adherents of positive confession theology within Pentecostalism may argue about having to wait for treasures and hopes in the sky, Pentecostals have traditionally had something of an uneasy alliance with "the world." Their uneasiness, however, is not unfounded. The New Testament speaks to the fundamental incompatibility between the world and the presently earthbound citizens of heaven. Jesus identifies both himself and his kingdom as being otherworldly: ". . . I am not of this world";<sup>22</sup> ". . . My kingdom is not from this world . . ." <sup>23</sup> Jesus, furthermore, alerts his disciples to their otherworldly

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<sup>20</sup> Spittler, "Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic, 1097.

<sup>21</sup> Anonymous. Public Domain. "I Can't Feel at Home in This World."

<sup>22</sup> John 8:23 NRSV

<sup>23</sup> John 18:36 NRSV

status: “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you.”<sup>24</sup>

Jesus tells the disciples that their relationship to the world is not only incompatible—it is downright adversarial. If the world does not love them, they likewise are not to love the world, as the First Letter of John states: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride of riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.”<sup>25</sup> James asks his readers, “. . . Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”<sup>26</sup>

Pentecostals are keenly aware of the precarious and paradoxical situation in which they have been placed. In Jesus’ prayer for his followers, he asks the Father not “to take them out the world, but . . . to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong in the world, just as I do not belong to the world.”<sup>27</sup> Jesus asks that his followers not be taken out of the world because as the Father had sent him into the world, he now sends them into the world to be messengers of the gospel.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John 15:18 – 19 NRSV

<sup>25</sup> 1 John 2:15 – 16 NRSV

<sup>26</sup> James 4:4 NRSV

<sup>27</sup> John 17:15 – 16 NRSV

<sup>28</sup> John 17:20, 23; 20:21 – 23; also Matthew 28:18 – 20; Mark 16:15 – 16

So how do they keep themselves “unstained by the world”<sup>29</sup> who are called to be “salt” and “light,”<sup>30</sup> and messengers to all the world of the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Denominations in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition have answered that question, not only by both Baptist and Wesleyan interpretations of sanctification and holiness, but also by codes of conduct written and adopted for their respective denominations. These codes of conduct are characteristically rigorous and somewhat legalistic in nature; but their intent is to protect adherents from worldly influences, temptations, and practices, and to “[a]bstain from all appearance of evil.”<sup>31</sup> Although the codes of conduct are not usually included in official statements of faith and doctrine, they have been cited as criteria for discipline and even exclusion in some denominations. The following excerpt from “Advice to Members” for the Church of God of Prophecy<sup>32</sup> is an example of such a code of conduct.

You should not allow yourself to be trapped by worldly attractions. The Bible says, “Neither give place to the devil.” Dabbling with worldly amusements like professional ball games, horse races, stock car races, bowling alleys, and going swimming where men and women both use the same bathing area would give the devil a foothold or place in your life.<sup>33</sup>

The reader is assured that—

These kindly instructions and advice are given by those who are watching for your soul as they must give an account (Hebrews 13:17), and it is

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<sup>29</sup> James 1:27

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 5:14 – 16

<sup>31</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV (the preferred translation of most conservative Pentecostals). Many in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition have interpreted “appearance” as literally having to do with personal appearance, dress, and grooming, etc.

<sup>32</sup> The Church of God of Prophecy is one of the earliest Classical Pentecostal denominations to be formed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with international offices in Cleveland, TN.

<sup>33</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Minutes: 94<sup>th</sup> International General Assembly and Policy Manual* (Church of God of Prophecy, 2006), 255.

hoped they will be received with the same meek, gentle spirit in which they are given.<sup>34</sup>

Such advice, as implicated in the above statement, is also motivated to some extent by eschatological concerns:

These are the last days and perilous times have come, and it will require much watchfulness and humble prayer for you to so live and act that you will never bring reproach on the worthy name of Christ and His church that you so much love.<sup>35</sup>

The Church of God of Prophecy, in its 94<sup>th</sup> International Assembly in 2006, added the following statement, along with supporting scriptural references, in an attempt to mitigate excessive legalistic attitudes and manipulation of the “Advice to Members”:

In the Advice to Members, it is almost impossible to list everything that should be approved and/or disapproved for all people, in all cultures, under all conditions, for all time. Clearly, the New Testament principles of holiness are in every way superior to and more demanding than any list the General Assembly could possibly devise.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout its existence, the Advice to Members has undergone various versions and revisions—from a bare listing of ethical, moral, and spiritual exhortations, to inclusions of proof texts to support the well-intentioned advice. Incidentally, the above citation from 2006 is the last occurrence of the advice in any official publication of the Church of God of Prophecy. It has not been reproduced in subsequent assembly minutes or policy manuals.

Similar transitions can be cited among other denominations in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition. Codes of conduct that enforced former prohibitions, such as

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<sup>34</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Minutes*, 256.

<sup>35</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Minutes*, 256.

<sup>36</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Minutes*, 256.

women cutting their hair or wearing pants, wearing shorts (for both sexes), and attending sporting and cultural events are now rare.

In the last half century, however, many Pentecostals have ascended economic, educational, and cultural strata into mainstream society. Consequently, they have become more at ease in their surroundings. Furthermore, the advent of positive confession theology within significant sectors of the Pentecostal movement, as proclaimed in the prosperity gospel, has exposed an element of worldliness in Pentecostal theology. This theology makes room for the affirmation of the “goodness, necessity, and instrumentality of material elements: God’s Spirit is active through concrete and material phenomena.”<sup>37</sup> If the world is not their home, it is at least a comfortable and entertaining temporary dwelling place for Pentecostals while they await heaven.

A high regard for *biblical authority* is another important value that influences Pentecostal spirituality. A statement on the inerrancy of Scripture by the General Council of the Assemblies of God is representative of virtually all Pentecostal denominations: “We believe the Bible is the Word of God written; it is the revelation of the truths of God conveyed by inspiration through His servants to us. As such, it is infallible and without error.”<sup>38</sup>

The General Council of the Assemblies of God defines “inspiration” and “infallibility” in the following manner:

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<sup>37</sup> Smith, “Thinking in Tongues, 29.

<sup>38</sup> General Council of the Assemblies of God, “The Inerrancy of Scripture,” The Assemblies of God (USA), 1996, [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position\\_Papers/pp\\_downloads/pp\\_4175\\_inerrancy.pdf](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position_Papers/pp_downloads/pp_4175_inerrancy.pdf) (accessed August 17, 2012).

We understand inspiration to mean that special act of the Holy Spirit by which He guided the writers of the Scriptures. Such superintendency made full allowance for the divergent backgrounds, abilities, and personalities of the writers, and applies to all they wrote as it is found in the canon of Scripture.

We define inerrancy as meaning “exempt from error” and infallibility as a near synonym meaning “incapable of error, certain.” If there is any difference in the shade of meaning between the two terms, inerrancy emphasizes the truthfulness of Scripture, while infallibility emphasizes the trustworthiness of Scripture. Such inerrancy and infallibility apply to all of Scripture and include both revelational inerrancy and factual inerrancy. It is truth (2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 119:43,160; John 17:17,19; Colossians 1:5).<sup>39</sup>

In virtually all Pentecostal denominations, belief in the Scriptures as the divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God is an important criteria for membership.

Individuals who wish to become members of the Church of God of Prophecy, for example, must answer in the affirmative the following covenantal question:

Will you sincerely promise in the presence of God and these witnesses that you will accept the Bible as the Word of God, believe and practice its teachings rightly divided—the New Testament as your rule of faith and practice, government and discipline, and walk in the light to the best of your knowledge and ability?<sup>40</sup>

Pentecostalism’s high regard for biblical authority, however, has been paradoxically encumbered by its low theology. Gordon Anderson, a leader within the tradition, writes, “Pentecostals are not well known for good exegesis, hermeneutics, and theology....”<sup>41</sup> Pentecostal scholars, such as Gordon Fee and Russell Spittler, have

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<sup>39</sup> General Council of the Assemblies of God, “The Inerrancy of Scripture,” [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position\\_Papers/pp\\_downloads/pp\\_4175\\_inerrancy.pdf](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position_Papers/pp_downloads/pp_4175_inerrancy.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Church of God of Prophecy, *Ministry Policy Manual 2010* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God of Prophecy, 2010), 50.

<sup>41</sup> Rick M. Nañez, *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds: A Call to Use God’s Gift of the Intellect* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 61.

lamented the fact that Pentecostalism has largely been an anti-intellectual tradition.<sup>42</sup> Instead of being the fruit of disciplined study, Pentecostal theology was “forged at the pulpit and in prayer, in the heat of revival and the swelter of the camp meeting . . . .”<sup>43</sup> It sought to “explicate and understand the experience of the controlled chaos of charismatic worship . . . .”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, early Pentecostal theology was embedded in the Pentecostal experience. It was a theology that was experienced rather than exegeted. Pentecostals traditionally have taken a literal, plain sense approach to interpreting the Scriptures.

These are the five implicit values that govern Pentecostal spirituality: the pervasiveness of individual experience; a robust oral tradition; a strong predilection for spontaneity; a keen, albeit uneasy, identification with otherworldliness; and a high regard for biblical authority. How, then, do these values shape Pentecostal worship—and especially prayer?

### **An emphasis on oral prayer**

How does Pentecostal spirituality influence the practice of prayer among Pentecostals? Unlike Christian traditions in which silence is a cherished and integral part of their liturgy or worship (i.e. Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Quaker), Pentecostals—especially contemporary Pentecostals—generally do not consider silence to be a virtue. In fact, moments of silence are regarded with a sense of uneasy awkwardness. In many Pentecostal churches, transitions and pauses in the worship service are filled with instrumental music or with banter by the pastor or worship leader, who functions as a

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<sup>42</sup> Nañez, *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds*, 60 – 61.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, “Thinking in Tongues,” 28.

<sup>44</sup> Smith, “Thinking in Tongues,” 27.

kind of master of ceremonies. “Dead time” is avoided like a store-bought cake at a church social.

Silence is eschewed even in times of prayer.<sup>45</sup> Prayers are characteristically initiated abruptly, with no pause to collect thoughts, or to quiet or still the spirits of the worshipers in the presence God. Very common among Pentecostal gatherings is the practice of collective oral prayer, “concert prayer,” or unison prayer.<sup>46</sup> However, this is not common prayer, as practiced in liturgical churches with the use of prayer books. On the contrary, this is prayer that is often directed and initiated by a pastor or lay leader, who is then joined in prayer by those assembled. The people pray vocally, simultaneously, each spontaneously and extemporaneously composing his or her own prayer. Steven J. Land, a Pentecostal theologian, describes concert prayer as sounding “as if the congregation is an orchestra warming up for the concert rather than playing the same musical arrangement.”<sup>47</sup> While the prayers most often begin in the vernacular, it is not unusual for Pentecostals to transition to praying in tongues.<sup>48</sup> There are times “when the Spirit moves” that the volume of praying voices can rise to a deafening crescendo; however, this is seen as something good and desirable among many Pentecostals. For them, it is a sign of the fervency and efficaciousness of the prayers offered up to God. It

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<sup>45</sup> Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” 1097 – 1098.

<sup>46</sup> Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” 1099. The United Methodist Church recognizes this practice among its Korean congregations, calling it by its Korean name, *Tongsung Kido* (Pray Aloud) “Usually the congregation is given a specific time period, with a common theme of petition or supplication. Then all pray aloud at the same time. The voices of others will not bother them when they concentrate on their own earnest prayers, longing for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.” (The United Methodist Book of Worship 1992, 445.)

<sup>47</sup> Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 166.

<sup>48</sup> Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” 1099.

is a sign that the “spirit of prayer” has permeated the congregation. Pentecostals are sometimes exhorted to “pray until you have prayed,” which can be a code phrase meaning, “pray until you have prayed in tongues.” In some Pentecostal congregations, pastors indeed encourage the congregants to pray in their “prayer language”—another code phrase for tongues or *glossolalia*.

For the uninitiated visitor, witnessing such a meeting can be disconcerting, if not frightening. In a passage too often ignored by many Pentecostals, the Apostle Paul addresses a similar situation in the Corinthian church:

If therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? . . . Let all things be done for building up. If one speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God.<sup>49</sup>

While our concern is prayer, Paul implies that the Corinthian believers were not only praying in tongues, but also singing praises and giving thanks in tongues; and they were apparently doing so in a chaotic and disorderly manner. While Paul is not discouraging the Corinthians from exercising the gift of tongues *per se*, he is attempting to correct their abuse of tongues in public worship. One aspect of the abuse that Paul addresses is the simultaneous, vocal prayers or praises of the Corinthian worshipers, which in this case, happens to be in tongues. Gordon Fee comments:

The response of the unbeliever to the community’s collective speaking in tongues is to equate the Christian gathering with the mania that attended some of the mystery cults. “Madness,” they will say. For Paul such a response is totally unworthy of the gospel of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> 2 Corinthians 14:23, 26c – 28 NRSV

<sup>50</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 685.

Paul further instructs the Corinthians that no more than two or three should speak in tongues in public worship, one at a time. But if there is no interpreter of tongues to make the speech intelligible to the congregation for its edification, then the individuals should “be silent in the church and speak to themselves and to God.”<sup>51</sup> In other words, without interpretation, tongues speech should be reserved for personal prayer and devotion.<sup>52</sup>

At this point, it should be mentioned that it is also a common practice for Pentecostals to pray aloud even in their private, personal prayers.

### **“Tarrying” and “Waiting on the Lord”**

It was earlier stated that contemporary Pentecostals do not consider silence a virtue; however, a practice, perhaps more common among earlier Pentecostals, alternately called “tarrying,” or “waiting on the Lord” (although, there are sometimes slight differences in shades of meaning, depending upon the community or context in which the terms are used) allows for periods of silence in prayer.<sup>53</sup> In the Pentecostal mind, “tarrying” and “waiting on the Lord” are closely associated with prayer.

“Tarrying” at the altar “became a Pentecostal counterpart to the Baptist mourner’s bench,

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<sup>51</sup>1 Corinthians 14:28 NRSV

<sup>52</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 693.

<sup>53</sup>To “tarry” also refers to a practice among earlier, conservative Pentecostals derived from a literal interpretation of the King James Version of 1 Corinthians 11:33. In Paul’s teaching on the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, he exhorts the Corinthian Christians to “tarry for one another.” Paul’s concern is that the communal celebration of the Lord’s Supper (and *agapé* meal) is being lost; therefore he tells the Corinthians to wait for all to be served before indulging. Some Pentecostals interpret this to mean to both wait (tarry) and pray for each other. In practice, an individual will “tarry” (kneel and pray silently) for another who is seated at a table set for celebrating the Lord’s Supper. When the one has participated of the elements, the other who has tarried will take his or her place at the table.

both of which defined their experience of the Christian faith.”<sup>54</sup> “Tarrying” or “waiting on the Lord” is actually a form of contemplative prayer, although many Pentecostals would bristle at the idea of using the term or making the comparison.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, “[s]uch waiting is essential for focus and affective transformation. There is no patience, steadfastness, or meekness without ‘waiting on the Lord.’”<sup>56</sup> In practice, this involves prolonged periods of “reverent and prayerful silence spent in anticipation of imminent Spirit-baptisms, personal and corporate spiritual breakthroughs, and prophetic utterances.”<sup>57</sup>

While Pentecostals practice prayerful silence as they tarry or wait on the Lord, they would disagree with the Quakers, who believe that true worship means quietly waiting on the Spirit of God, and applying oneself “in silence directly to Jesus Christ to receive his grace and know his will.”<sup>58</sup> And Pentecostals emphatically do not employ silence with the precise methodology of the Orthodox hesychasts, such as “controlled breathing, listening to one’s heartbeat, perpetual and systematic breathing (like that of the Jesus prayer), and the recognition of the Kingdom of God within.”<sup>59</sup> Many Pentecostals

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<sup>54</sup> Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 280.

<sup>55</sup> Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 280.

<sup>56</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 166.

<sup>57</sup> Edmund J. Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation: Eastern Orthodoxy and Classical Pentecostalism on Becoming Like Christ* (Waynesboro: Paternoster Theological Monographs, 2004), 337-338.

<sup>58</sup> Ronald E. Selleck, “Friends, The Religious Society of (Quakers),” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, eds. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley and Harry S. Stout (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 454.

<sup>59</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 312-313.

would consider these practices too methodical, too ritualistic, smacking too much of Eastern spirituality and syncretism.

It is important to note that this prayerful silence is not necessarily considered or appreciated as a method of prayer in and of itself; nor is it a way to seek spiritual union with God. It is rather pragmatic in nature. It is a prayerful anticipation of some other experience or event—an expectation that “something is about to happen.” It is a means to an end; and that end might be “conversion, sanctification, and Spirit baptism by the sovereignty of God.”<sup>60</sup> Or, the desired end might be more charismatic in nature, such as the interpretation of a message in an unknown tongue, or some verbal or physical manifestation of the presence of God among those who have gathered for prayer or worship. One of earlier Pentecostals’ beloved hymns captures the sense of expectant waiting for divine favor and blessing:

Waiting on the Lord for the promise given,  
Waiting on the Lord to send from heaven;  
Waiting on the Lord, by our faith receiving,  
Waiting in the upper room.

Waiting on the Lord, giving all to Jesus,  
Waiting on the Lord till from sin He frees us;  
Waiting on the Lord for the heav’nly breezes,  
Waiting in the upper room.

Waiting on the Lord, longing to mount higher,  
Waiting on the Lord having great desire,  
Waiting on the Lord for the heav’nly fire,  
Waiting in the upper room.

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<sup>60</sup> Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 280.

The power! the power!  
Gives victory over sin and purity within;  
The power! the power! The pow'r they had at Pentecost.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Weigele, C. F. © 1931, "Waiting on the Lord," Nazarene Publishing House (verses 1, 2, 3 and chorus).

## Chapter 2

### Prayer and Silence

#### Pentecostal aversion to silent prayer

The dramatic entrance of the Holy Spirit among the believers gathered in prayer on the Day of Pentecost, and the signs and manifestations that accompanied their baptism in the Holy Spirit set a precedent for Pentecostal prayer and worship. Their preachers often make reference (in the language of the King James Version) to sounds “as of a rushing mighty wind . . . cloven tongues like as of fire,” and of course, speaking “with other tongues, as the Spirit [gives] the utterance.”<sup>62</sup>

Worshippers often take their cue for lively, exuberant worship from selected passages in the Psalms which they consider prescriptive, such as the following:

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing praises. . . .  
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.<sup>63</sup>

Clap your hands, all you peoples;  
shout to God with loud songs of joy.<sup>64</sup>

Pentecostals are also drawn to other accounts in Acts that tell of divine encounters in response to prayer that literally shook the earth. After Peter and John are threatened and forbidden by religious authorities to preach or teach in the name of Jesus,

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<sup>62</sup> Acts 2:2 – 4 KJV

<sup>63</sup> Psalm 98:4, 6b NRSV

<sup>64</sup> Psalm 47:1 NRSV

they meet with their friends to pray. Luke writes that, “When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.”<sup>65</sup>

A favorite story is that of Paul and Silas’ miraculous liberation from the Philippian jail. “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.”<sup>66</sup>

The apostles’ prayers to which God responded by effecting miracles in Acts are considered to be examples for establishing norms for prayer among Pentecostals, which they often interpret to be loudly vocalized prayers.

The impassioned prayers of the psalmists and prophets provide prototypes for Pentecostal prayer:

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!<sup>67</sup>

With my voice I cry to the LORD; with my voice I make supplication to the LORD.<sup>68</sup>

Then I fell down on my face, cried with a loud voice, and said, “Ah Lord GOD! Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Acts 4:31 NRSV

<sup>66</sup> Acts 16:25 – 26 NRSV

<sup>67</sup> Psalm 27:7 NRSV

<sup>68</sup> Psalm 142:1 NRSV

<sup>69</sup> Ezekiel 11:13 NRSV

## The effective prayer, or the effective pray-er?

James instructs his readers to pray for the suffering, the sick, and the sinner (James 5:13 – 16), with the encouragement that “[t]he prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”<sup>70</sup> The King James Version, preferred by most Pentecostals, translates the verse to read, “The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.” The differences in grammatical structure in English translations of this sentence are helpful in understanding why Pentecostals would find it to be exemplary of prayer. While the NRSV (and most modern translations) places emphasis on the moral and spiritual standing of the person who prays (“the prayer of the righteous”) as the key to effective prayer, the KJV places emphasis on the nature or quality of the prayer itself that is offered (“effectual fervent prayer”). Therefore, Pentecostals are inclined to believe that it is fervent prayer that is effective. The word “fervent” comes to us etymologically by way of Latin, Anglo-French, and Middle English. The original Latin word is the adjective form of the verb *fervēre*, which means “to boil.” *Webster’s College Dictionary* defines “fervent” as “having or showing very warm or intense spirit, feeling, enthusiasm, etc.; ardent; passionate . . . hot; burning; glowing . . . .”<sup>71</sup> This is how Pentecostals would describe effective prayer.

However, the Greek New Testament, properly translated, gives us another understanding of James’ sentence. The word in question, translated “fervent” in KJV is ἐνεργουμένη, a form of the verb ἐνεργέω, which means [*to be*] *effective*.<sup>72</sup> It has long

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<sup>70</sup> James 5:16b NRSV

<sup>71</sup> *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, s.v. “Fervent.”

<sup>72</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. ἐνεργουμένη.

been debated whether the verb is middle or passive. If the verb is passive, its meaning would support the KJV in asserting that it is the fervent, passionate, burning prayer of the righteous person that is effective. On the contrary, if ἐνεργουμένη is a middle verb, it would support the idea that it is the prayer of a righteous person that is “powerful and effective.” After a lengthy excursus dealing with the hermeneutical dispute, James Adamson writes the following conclusion:

Apart from everything else, ἐνεργουμένη in James 5:16 is better taken to mean “in operation” than taken as a passive: this prayer is mighty in what it is *able* to do, not in what it is *enabled* to do. This latter is not without any indication of the source from which the power is alleged to be derived. We know that all strength does come from God; but there is a natural feeling that a righteous man’s prayer, like Elijah’s prayer (it was a curse), carries a mighty punch. So we translate: “the prayer of a righteous man is very powerful in its operation”<sup>73</sup>

Adamson’s reference to the prophet Elijah’s prayer, is found in the following verses, James 4:17 – 18: “Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently [“literally, ‘prayed with prayer’”]<sup>74</sup> that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest” (NRSV). Interestingly, the Old Testament account records neither of Elijah’s prayers; so we have no way of knowing how “fervently” he prayed to withhold and restore rain to Israel.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, as Elijah contended on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal for the true God to manifest himself, Elijah’s short, two-

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<sup>73</sup> James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 210. “The prayer of a righteous man is very powerful in its operation,” is Adamson’s translation.

<sup>74</sup> Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, 201.

<sup>75</sup> See 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1, 41 – 45

sentence prayer that brought fire from heaven would probably not qualify as a “fervent” prayer in Pentecostal terms.<sup>76</sup>

### **A biblical example of effective, silent prayer**

The Bible, in fact, offers no support for the idea that it is only white-hot, clamorous prayers that are effective. The Old Testament records a beautiful yet poignant example of the effectiveness of silent prayer in the story of Hannah, the beloved wife of Elkanah, and the mother-to-be of the prophet Samuel. Distressed and despondent, childless Hannah wept bitterly outside the temple at Shiloh as she pleaded with God for a son. Yet, “Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; . . .”<sup>77</sup> Eli the priest, seated by the doorpost of the temple, levels a biting and unjust accusation of public drunkenness against Hannah, because he sees her lips moving but hears no words. Silent prayers were not the norm.<sup>78</sup> But Hannah defends herself: “No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.”<sup>79</sup> Hannah’s intense, inner turmoil did not manifest in vociferous prayer; nevertheless, Eli (perhaps sheepishly) declares that God has granted her petition. This is confirmed in the biblical record: “Elkanah knew his

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<sup>76</sup> See 1 Kings 18:17 - 40

<sup>77</sup> 1 Samuel 1:13 NRSV

<sup>78</sup> *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, ed. Michael Coogan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 402n13.

<sup>79</sup> 1 Samuel 1:15 – 16

wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. In due time, Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked him of the LORD.’”<sup>80</sup>

John R. Franke notes that Cyprian of Carthage comments that Hannah “prays to God...silently and modestly within the very recesses of her heart. She spoke with a hidden prayer but with manifest faith. She did not speak with the voice but with the heart, because she knew that so the Lord hears, and she effectually obtained what she sought, because she asked with faith.”<sup>81</sup> This analysis is instructive for Pentecostals, and indeed all who pray. The effectiveness of prayer is not dependent upon one’s vociferousness, but upon a faith that is deeply and firmly rooted in the heart.

Francesca Aran Murphy also offers a corrective for those who would judge the spiritual standing of others by observable means, as was the case with Eli (and apparently the Corinthian Christians)<sup>82</sup>: “The mistaken equation of the outer and the inner, the failure to appreciate that the outer and the inner can diverge, and that what really is and what seems to be can part company . . . . The Spirit is staking ground in the privacy of the hearts of men and women.”<sup>83</sup>

“Still water runs deep” is an aphorism that is frequently spoken among Pentecostals to refer to those within their ranks who may not manifest their spirituality outwardly and emotionally. Nevertheless, those who rarely or never speak in tongues, or do not otherwise manifest visible or audible evidences of the indwelling Holy Spirit in

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<sup>80</sup> 1 Samuel 1:19b – 20 NRSV

<sup>81</sup> John R. Franke, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 – 2 Samuel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 199.

<sup>82</sup> See Paul’s discussion on the value of the “less spectacular” spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:21 – 26.

<sup>83</sup> Francesca Aran Murphy, *1 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 15 – 16.

public worship, are sometimes viewed as suspect within some Pentecostal circles. But for Pentecostals who consider the prayers recorded in Acts that shook the earth and opened prison doors to be normative, desired and repeatable, Hannah’s silent prayer from her heart to the heart of God is instructive.

### **Silent prayer—the prayer of the heart**

In *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, Richard J. Foster makes reference to Ponticus Evagrius’ (346 – 399) systematization of prayer into three stages: the prayer of the lips, the prayer of the mind, and the prayer of the heart.<sup>84</sup> The prayer of the heart, Foster writes, “. . . is very simply, the Holy Spirit praying within us.”<sup>85</sup> He further elaborates:

Whatever we may think of this categorization, we can all agree with their assessment that when we come to the Prayer of the Heart, we have entered a realm where the Holy Spirit is the initiator. It is the Holy Spirit who creates this prayer, and it is the Holy Spirit who sustains it.<sup>86</sup>

The Apostle Paul indeed affirms that there are times when Christians find themselves with a sense of hopelessness, or perhaps they are confused, burdened or grieved to the point that words fail them in prayer. At such times, “. . . the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 136.

<sup>85</sup> Foster, *Prayer*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> Foster, *Prayer*, 136.

<sup>87</sup> Romans 8:26 NRSV

Fee, who does not disavow the importance of silent prayer, argues extensively that the Spirit's intercession through the Christian "with sighs too deep for words" does not mean that the prayer is wordless or silent, noting that ancient prayer, as well as reading, was spoken aloud.<sup>88</sup> Although Fee admits that his argument cannot be proven beyond a shadow of doubt, he believes that within the larger context of Pauline spirituality, the inarticulate groans and sighs are Paul's way of referring to praying in tongues.<sup>89</sup>

Rather than seeing praying in the Spirit ("tongues speech" if you will) as some sort of mindless activity, Paul sees it as a highly significant expression of prayer. In it the believer can take special encouragement even in the midst of present exigencies (weakness, suffering, endurance), for the Spirit is praying in keeping with God's will and with "inarticulate groanings" that God himself well understands, since he knows the mind of the Spirit.<sup>90</sup>

Fee further argues that much of the discussion surrounding this text has betrayed a Western cultural bias "in which the majority of people who, when praying privately, do so silently, without either speaking aloud or 'mouthing words.'"<sup>91</sup>

On the contrary, Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330 – c. 395), hardly a modern Western, when writing of Moses' distress as the people of Israel were being hemmed in between the advancing Egyptian army and the Red Sea, has this to say:

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<sup>88</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 581.

<sup>89</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 575 – 586.

<sup>90</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 586.

<sup>91</sup> Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 586.

... [A] voice came from God, addressing the prophet by name, “Wherefore criest out unto Me?” And yet before this the narrative makes no mention of any utterance on the part of Moses. But the thought which the Prophet had lifted up to God is called a cry, though uttered in silence in the hidden thought of his heart. If, then, Moses cries, though without speaking, as witnessed by Him Who hears, those “groanings which cannot be uttered,” is it strange that the Prophet, knowing the Divine will, so far as it was lawful for him to tell it and for us to hear it, revealed it by known and familiar words, describing God’s discourse after human fashion, not indeed expressed in words, but signified by the effects themselves? <sup>92</sup>

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – c. 215) writes of prayer that is formed in thought “in the secret chamber” of the soul, which “calls on the Father ‘with unspoken groanings.’”<sup>93</sup> Athanasius (c. 296 – 373), writes about “the unutterable sighings” of the Spirit’s intercession as the soul yearns to be freed from the “slavery of corruption and the curse of the Law”<sup>94</sup> It would therefore appear that, according to the Church Fathers, silent prayer was indeed known and practiced among Christians of the Early Church. And, as previously discussed, is there any doubt that in her deep anguish, Hannah mouthed the words to a silent prayer?

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<sup>92</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, tr. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson, vol. 5 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 277.

<sup>93</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Clement of Alexandria*, American Edition, eds. Alexander Roberts and Alexander Donaldson, tr. A. Cleveland Cox, vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 537.

<sup>94</sup> Athanasius, *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, American Edition, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, tr. Archibald Robertson, vol. 4 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 355.

## Early Pentecostal advocates of silent prayer

It might be surprising to contemporary Pentecostals that there were early advocates of silent prayer within their movement. Writing in the *Pentecostal Evangel: The Weekly Magazine of the Assemblies of God* in 1920, J. T. Boddy urges his readers to embrace the practice of seeking God in silence: “There is a profound stillness produced by the Spirit, which is freighted with life and power divine.”<sup>95</sup> Although Pentecostals were well known for their exuberant, lively worship and shouts of victory, joy, and praise, Boddy writes that “they ought to remember that God’s presence and direction can be discerned amid silence.”<sup>96</sup> He explains that this is not just “an external silence and quiet’ . . . but an internal quiet that should be maintained.”<sup>97</sup> Boddy supports his exhortation by referring to Elijah’s encounter with God on Mount Horeb, whose presence was not manifest in the great wind, the earthquake or fire, but in sheer silence.<sup>98</sup> He argues that the functions of the universe reveal that “all power . . . is distilled in silence.”<sup>99</sup> Boddy is affirmed by British writer, S. A. Pinchbeck, who in 1943 urges his readers to seek “a silence of the soul,” because by so doing, one may “cease from life’s turmoil, hear God whisper, and experience God’s glory.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> J. T. Boddy, quoted in Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276.

<sup>96</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276.

<sup>97</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276.

<sup>98</sup> 1Kings 19:11 – 18

<sup>99</sup> J. T. Boddy, quoted in Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276.

<sup>100</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 277.

In his article, “People Who Love Prayer” printed in 1934 in *Redemptive Times: A Weekly Publication of the Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland*, Howard Carter, a prominent early leader in British Pentecostalism instructs his readers concerning the importance of the role of inner silence for private and corporate prayer. He writes, “I often needed to ‘round up’ my straying thoughts, and bring my mind to a determined concentration on spiritual things.”<sup>101</sup>

In 1953 American writer, Walter H. Beuttler, writes about silently waiting on God in terminology that is interestingly similar to Orthodox spirituality. Referring to Isaiah 64:4 and 1 Corinthians 2:9, Beuttler states that God desires to reciprocate with love and blessings to those who love and bless him. However, one should not approach God for selfish motives—not even for the blessings that one knows are available for those who search, ask, and knock. But one is to seek God for himself, as a yearning lover would seek the beloved.

“One must be silent and still in God’s presence, but this does not mean one is to be mentally or emotionally inactive. Instead, one must silently wait for him like a yearning lover. God will . . . reveal himself in intimate and personal ways, just like a lover who kisses his lover’s mouth and shows his lover tender affection. But, one cannot hurry God and one cannot be impatient with him, even it takes days of silent waiting.”<sup>102</sup>

In later years, there have been other Pentecostal voices—although in the minority—who advocated for the discipline of silence in Pentecostal spirituality. Ernest S. Williams, in his article “Inner Calm,” published in the *Pentecostal Evangel* in 1968, chides Pentecostals who believe that God’s presence and power are only

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<sup>101</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 277.

<sup>102</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 277.

manifest in visible and vocally emotional expression. While Williams does not propose to totally silence Pentecostal expressions of worship, he challenges Pentecostals to consider that “an inner calm and a quiet soul are also the marks of an inwardly rich Christian. The Pentecostal believer needs to recognize that God can deal powerfully in ‘silence, quietness of spirit, and self-possession.’”<sup>103</sup>

Edmund J. Rybarczyk observes that “[what] was precious about the early Pentecostals, even if it did indeed manifest in odd practices or behaviors, was their willingness to seek God first. All else—even church growth—took a secondary role. Silence can be a virtue, even if it is not pragmatic.”<sup>104</sup>

Rybarczyk and Simon Chan, both Pentecostal theologians, and both members of the Assemblies of God, have made some interesting comparisons between Pentecostal and Eastern Orthodox spirituality. This may come as a surprise to many Pentecostals, given the vast disparities in history, theology, methodology, and aesthetics between the two traditions. Rybarczyk’s background, however, has particularly prepared him for such a viewpoint. His father is Pentecostal and a member of the Assemblies of God; his mother is Russian Orthodox.<sup>105</sup>

Standing within the context of his own denomination, Rybarczyk writes that Assemblies of God writers—especially earlier writers—“discussed transformation and spirituality in ways that were remarkably like the Orthodox’ own ascetic and

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<sup>103</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276-277.

<sup>104</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 313.

<sup>105</sup> Cecil Robeck in “Preface,” Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, xvii.

hesychastic ways.”<sup>106</sup> Perhaps most significantly, both Pentecostals and Orthodox are adamant in refusing to relegate their faith to the intellectual spheres of human existence and experience, sharing “an ardent hunger for God’s presence,” and exhibiting “an incredible desire to involve the entirety of their beings in communion with God.”<sup>107</sup>

For Orthodox Christians, union (*henōsis*) with God and deification (*theōsis*) are the objectives of life. “Deification,” which to the Western ear, sounds like the pantheistic identity of some Eastern religions, is to Eastern Orthodoxy, “sharing, through grace, of the divine life.”<sup>108</sup> A key scriptural reference for this concept is 2 Peter 1:3 – 4 (NRSV):

[God’s] divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.

This participation in the divine nature—

takes man within the life of the three Divine Persons themselves, in the incessant circulation and overflowing of love which courses between the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and which expresses the very nature of God . . . . The Holy Ghost operates and perfects this incorporation. St. Irenaeus writes, “Through the Spirit one ascends to the Son and through the Son to the Father.”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 310.

<sup>107</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 310 – 311.

<sup>108</sup> A Monk of the Eastern Church, “The Essentials of Orthodox Spirituality,” *Exploring Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Reader*, ed. Kenneth J Collins (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 108.

<sup>109</sup> A Monk of the Eastern Church, “The Essentials of Orthodox Spirituality, 108 – 109.

From the Pentecostal point of view, to experience and commune with God “in the entirety of their beings” is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. On the night of his betrayal, Jesus tells his disciples that after his departure, he will send “another Advocate” who would be with them forever. He identifies this Advocate as “the Spirit of truth, and tells the disciples that they know him, “because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”<sup>110</sup> So then, to Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit is “God with us,” or perhaps more precisely, “God in us.” Steven J. Land elaborates:

The God who was present among Israel and in Jesus Christ is now present as the Holy Spirit. The God who will one day be ‘all in all’ is at work now in all things, working there together for the good of those who love him. The Holy Spirit brings the Father and the Son who, together with the Spirit, abide with and in the believer.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, in spite of differences in theological articulation, both Orthodox and Pentecostals agree that the ultimate objective in the Christian life is to attain union with God, and that this is wrought through the Holy Spirit.

In regards to prayer, Chan makes some startling comparisons between Orthodox and Pentecostal prayer. He refers to a passage in *The Way of a Pilgrim*, which is considered to be a classic in Russian Orthodox spirituality. The book records the spiritual journey of a “pilgrim” who endeavors to understand and practice Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing.”<sup>112</sup> The pilgrim travels to a monastery, where he seeks guidance in prayer. An elder counsels him to begin praying the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!”), and to gradually

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<sup>110</sup> John 14:17 NRSV

<sup>111</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 32.

<sup>112</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:17

increase repetitions of the prayer until he can pray it 12,000 times a day. The pilgrim records the following unusual occurrence:

Early one morning I was, so to speak, aroused by the prayer. When I began to recite my morning prayers, my tongue refused to utter the familiar words with ease. My only desire was to go on with the Jesus Prayer, and no sooner had I started it than I felt joyfully relieved. My lips and tongue recited the words without any effort on my part.<sup>113</sup>

Chan sees a congruity in the pilgrim's prayer experience and the Pentecostal practice of praying in tongues (glossolalia). Pentecostals should take "no small comfort when they realize that what they had been practicing spontaneously in a rather unreflective manner is remarkably akin to something which has long history in the Christian tradition."<sup>114</sup> The effortless prayers that flow from the lips of Pentecostals as they pray in tongues function in much the same way as the Jesus Prayer did for the Russian Orthodox pilgrim.<sup>115</sup>

But Chan takes the idea of effortless prayer a step further than many contemporary Pentecostals would expect. He does not support the concept (as would Corinthians, old and new) that speaking in tongues is the objective to Pentecostal prayer. He writes that in prayer, Pentecostals—

may find themselves being drawn into God in such a manner that the will becomes less and less active until finally they cross the threshold and let the tongue speak, as it were, on its own accord. Pentecostal ascetics do not wait passively for God to move them before they speak; they simply pray and in the course of praying they will find themselves moving from activity to passivity. This repeatable pattern

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<sup>113</sup> Anonymous, *The Way of a Pilgrim and The Pilgrim Continues His Way*, tr. George P. Fedotov (1950) (Blanco, TX: New Sarov Press, 1997), 32 – 33.

<sup>114</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 82.

<sup>115</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 82.

of prayer intensifies as the ascetic increases in spiritual proficiency. It is possible that this process will move him or her towards greater simplification of tongues. Perhaps over time a monosyllabic sound or groan would suffice to communicate the depth of the human-divine encounter, *until finally silence reigns as the soul loses itself in 'wonder, love and praise.'*<sup>116</sup>

In Chapter 3, we will consider why contemporary Pentecostals should consider silence as a gift—from a previous generation in their own tradition, and from generations of Christians, past and present. We will also explore how silence can enhance the prayers of 21-Century Pentecostals.

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<sup>116</sup> Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 81 (emphasis mine).

## Chapter 3

### **A Renewed Call to Silence: Why contemporary Pentecostals should reconsider the discipline of silence in worship and prayer**

#### **The cultural shift among younger Pentecostals, and its effect on worship and prayer**

In his book, *The Juvenilization of American Christianity*, Thomas E. Bergler traces the influence of American youth culture on four major Christian traditions—African-American, Evangelical, Mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic. Bergler defines “juvenilization” as “the process by which the religious beliefs, practices, and developmental characteristics of adolescents become accepted as appropriate for adults.”<sup>117</sup> The “juvenilization” of American Christianity had its subtle beginnings in the 1930s and 40s, emerging from a soft revolution in American church life. Christian student movements, like Young Life, Youth for Christ, and Campus Crusade for Christ, drove the revolution further into the decades that followed. The cultural revolution that began in the ‘60s and the Jesus Movement of the ‘70s were especially effective in injecting American Christianity with a generous dose of modern culture, which has subsequently mutated into postmodernism. The effects have made an indelible impact on what it means to “do church” today.

Bergler states that youth ministry models pioneered in the 1960s by Young Life and Youth for Christ are still used today, although they are in a state of perpetual flux to reflect the ever-evolving contemporary youth culture. “Songs, games, skits, and other youth-culture entertainments are followed by talks or discussions that feature simple

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas E. Bergler. “When Are We Going to Grow Up?: The Juvenilization of American Christianity,” *Christianity Today* (June 2012): 19.

truths packaged with humor, stories, and personal testimonies.”<sup>118</sup> There are, however, unintended consequences.

As they listen to years of simplified messages that emphasize an emotional relationship with Jesus over intellectual content, teenagers learn that a well-articulated belief system is unimportant and might even become an obstacle to authentic faith. This feel-good faith works because it appeals to teenage desires for fun and belonging. It casts a wide net by dumbing down Christianity to the lowest common denominator of adolescent cognitive development and religious motivation.<sup>119</sup>

Pentecostal youth, as a subset within the larger Evangelical tradition, were gradually drawn into this milieu with hardly any resistance. A historical bias of emotion over intellect, and the lack of an articulated theology facilitated the confluence of Pentecostalism with the broader Christian youth culture. As the Christian youth revolution developed its own subculture, borrowing music styles from pop culture, and informality as its protocol, Pentecostal youth felt comfortably at home, if not vindicated, after years of feeling like spiritual stepchildren in the Christian community. They and their Charismatic siblings brought their own contributions to the revolution in gestures like uplifted hands, rhythmic movement to music, hand clapping, and verbal affirmations of preachers, singers and musicians. As part of a growing movement, Pentecostal youth were happy to gradually replace piano and organ with electronic keyboards, electric guitars and drums, hymnals for projected lyrics, choirs for “praise and worship teams.”<sup>120</sup> They were also glad to keep the volume turned up, and to fill every moment with sound.

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<sup>118</sup> Bergler, “When Are We Going to Grow Up?”, 24.

<sup>119</sup> Bergler, “When Are We Going to Grow Up?”, 24.

<sup>120</sup> Actually, these were not especially significant transitions for most Pentecostals, who have always tended to accompany their singing with popular musical instruments. In their earlier history, most Pentecostal musicians were not formally trained, so it was not unusual for them to play available, affordable instruments like guitars, mandolins, banjos, tambourines, and even musical saws, alongside upright pianos (if a congregation was fortunate enough to have one).

Some of the more drastic changes came to the chagrin of older generations of Pentecostals; but since worship leaders and musicians in most Pentecostal churches are now Busters and Millennials,<sup>121</sup> the changes are here to stay—at least until the next generational or cultural shift.

One of the losses that older Pentecostals lament is silence—“tarrying,” or “waiting on the Lord.” The younger Pentecostals could learn much by studying the Bible, and their own history. In doing so, they would understand that the Bible indeed has something to say about the discipline of silence, that it is not antithetical to Pentecostal spirituality, and that it has precedent in its own history. Pentecostals of all ages might also discover along the way that the discipline of silence extends far beyond the earlier Pentecostal traditions of “tarrying” or “waiting” on the Lord to include other ways of seeking intimacy with God.

### **Silence in worship and prayer has biblical foundations and precedence**

Pentecostals, young and old, have a high regard for the Bible. Therefore, the Bible is an excellent place to begin in proposing the discipline of silence. As previously stated, Pentecostals seek intimacy and unity with God through their baptism and life in the Holy Spirit. For many, that means an encounter with the Holy Spirit that is often manifested verbally (in glossolalia) and in physical demonstrations of celebration.

Indeed, the Psalmists often exhort worshipers to celebrate their praise to God with shouts

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<sup>121</sup> Barna Group. "How Different Generations View and Engage with Charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity." *Barna Group*. March 10, 2010. <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/360-how-different-generations-view-and-engage-with-charismatic-and-pentecostal-christianity?q=generational+differences> (accessed February 07, 2013). “Busters” are 26 to 44 years old, “Millenials” (also called “Mosaics”) are 18 to 25 years old.

of joy, singing, dancing and clapping their hands; but a close, intimate encounter with God can elicit a quite different response—a reverent and awestruck silence. This seems to be the most appropriate way to approach a holy God.

A fundamental problem in contemporary worship is the pressure to perform. Eryn Sun, writing for the *Christian Post*, observes, “Many churches today have become too obsessed with youth culture, idolizing whatever is new, fresh, and cutting edge, particularly in the area of worship . . . . Churches are stuck in a mentality that worship had to constantly be newer, fresher, and the next best thing, oftentimes losing focus on the message of the Gospel as a result.”<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, not only is a focus on the message of the Gospel being lost—so is a sense of reverence in the presence of God. Worship is defined as “reverent honor and homage paid to God or a sacred personage, or to any object regarded as sacred.”<sup>123</sup> True worship cannot be divorced from reverence. When there is pressure to perform (the title “worship artist” is telling), reverence is at risk. Performance leads to an entertainment model, which can turn the spotlight on the performers (praise and worship band) and away from God. Reverence and awe of God can be lost in the mix.

Younger Pentecostals have largely embraced the entertainment model for “doing worship.” With their historic lively, up-tempo, tweaked volume in worship, and an aversion to silence, it made a reasonable match. Now, the earlier Pentecostal practice which allowed periods of silence, “waiting on the Lord,” and “tarrying” in prayer, is rare. The present generation of Pentecostals would do well, then, to hear the writer of

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<sup>122</sup> Eryn Sun, “Church Called to Lay Down Youth Culture Idolatry in Worship,” *Christian Post*. March 2, 2012. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/churches-called-to-lay-down-youth-culture-idolatry-in-worship-70686/#CwOEDI0T15Y3tgH4.99>. (accessed February 4, 2013).

<sup>123</sup> *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, s.v. “worship.”

Hebrews: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.”<sup>124</sup>

A respectful, reverent silence is an appropriate way to approach God in worship and prayer. The prophet Habakkuk writes, “. . . the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!”<sup>125</sup> Prophets Zephaniah and Zechariah both echo Habakkuk’s exhortation to silence in the presence of God: “Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.”<sup>126</sup> “Be silent, all people, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.”<sup>127</sup> The Hebrew Temple sacrificial cult is the general context of these admonitions to silence. New Testament theology identifies Jesus Christ as the ultimate embodiment of the sacrificial victim. In some Christian traditions, the Eucharist is a celebration of the Christ’s once-and-for-all sacrifice, whose perpetual benefits are appropriated at each celebration. Pentecostal theology largely rejects any consideration of sacrifice at the Lord’s Table, choosing rather to interpret the Lord’s Supper as a memorial meal. However, the concept of sacrifice saturates the Pentecostal concept of Christian service and worship.

Often cited is Paul’s appeal to believers “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”<sup>128</sup> The writer of

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<sup>124</sup> Hebrews 12:28 – 29 NRSV

<sup>125</sup> Habakkuk 2:20 NRSV

<sup>126</sup> Zephaniah 1:7 NRSV

<sup>127</sup> Zechariah 2:13 NRSV

Hebrews also exhorts God's people, "Through [Jesus Christ], then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name."<sup>129</sup> This exhortation has become a popular introit to worship:

We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord;  
We bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.  
And we offer up to You the sacrifices of thanksgiving;  
And we offer up to You the sacrifices of joy.<sup>130</sup>

For many Pentecostals, and especially younger ones, worship is celebration, and celebration is "cranked". Sometimes it seems that their entrance into the presence of God at the onset of worship is not unlike Cosmo Kramer's entrance into Seinfeld's apartment—with sudden brashness, and a lack of respect, reverence and decorum. The intention, nonetheless, is good. Pentecostals want to worship with their whole hearts and beings. They want to celebrate the joy they have found in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of his Spirit. But they often seem focused on eschatological triumphalism to the neglect of confessing that the Church is yet a militant and suffering Church in this world, engaged in a battle "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."<sup>131</sup> Therefore, in recognition of the "present and not yet" character of the kingdom of God, younger Pentecostal should embrace a balanced understanding of the Christian life with its victories *and* its struggles. They should know that their battles are

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<sup>128</sup> Romans 12:1 NRSV

<sup>129</sup> Hebrews 13:15 NRSV

<sup>130</sup> Kirk Dearman, "We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise," copyright 1984 by John T. Benson Publishing Company.

<sup>131</sup> Ephesians 6:12 NRSV

not won with youthful power and might, but by God’s Spirit;<sup>132</sup> and sometimes the Spirit speaks in sheer silence, as with Elijah.<sup>133</sup> To those who seek refuge and strength, God says, “Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”<sup>134</sup> Jeremiah, the prophet, writes, “The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD”<sup>135</sup>

This project certainly does not advocate that Pentecostals should deny their history and tradition, nor abandon their distinctive style of joyful worship. While they take seriously biblical admonitions to praise God “and not be silent,”<sup>136</sup> Pentecostals should also know that biblical worship is of both kinds—sound and silence. There is indeed “a time to keep silence, and at time to speak.”<sup>137</sup> In Christian worship, there is a time when the Scriptures implore us to “[b]e silent before the Lord God.”<sup>138</sup>

### **Silence in worship and prayer is a characteristic of early Pentecostal tradition**

Without repeating previous arguments for the practice of silence in Pentecostal spirituality, it should be reiterated, especially for younger Pentecostals, that silence is not antithetical to the Pentecostal experience. Indeed, periods of silence in corporate and

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<sup>132</sup> Zechariah 4:6 NRSV

<sup>133</sup> 1 Kings 19:12 NRSV

<sup>134</sup> Psalm 46:10 NRSV

<sup>135</sup> Lamentations 3:25 – 26 NRSV

<sup>136</sup> Psalm 30:12 NRSV

<sup>137</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:7b NRSV

<sup>138</sup> Zephaniah 1:7a NRSV

private prayer—called “tarrying,” and “waiting on the Lord”—were an important part of the fabric of developing Pentecostal spirituality, as was the “holy hush,”<sup>139</sup> as worshipers waited in reverent silence, with an overwhelming sense of God’s presence, to “hear a word from the Lord .” This is an aspect of Pentecostal history and practice that is perhaps not as widely known, nor widely practiced today. Pentecostalism has most often been known for its informal, loud and lively—and too often, disorderly—worship. Contemporary Pentecostals (and many Evangelicals) are stricken with the fear of silence (which someone has dubbed “sedatephobia”<sup>140</sup>). For pragmatic Pentecostal Busters and Millennials (and many of their Evangelical counterparts), silence is not productive. Silence in corporate worship is awkward, uncomfortable, and even threatening. It is an indication that nothing is happening. Worse, it is an indication of God’s absence and inaction. But Pentecostals of previous generations, in spite of their affinity for vocal and physical manifestations of the Spirit in worship, understood “that amid the soul’s silence one [should] variously cease from life’s turmoil, hear God’s whisper, and experience God’s glory.”<sup>141</sup> This is a facet of historical Pentecostal spirituality that younger generations should rediscover and embrace.

### **Silence in worship and prayer has deep roots in the Early Church**

Pentecostals have almost always considered themselves to be separate and unique among other Christian traditions. Some, unfortunately, have gone so far as to reject other

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<sup>139</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 276.

<sup>140</sup> Unknow,. "Category talk: Phobias," *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*, March 11, 2012. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category\\_talk:Phobias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category_talk:Phobias) (accessed February 06, 2013).

<sup>141</sup> Rybarczyk, *Beyond Salvation*, 277.

expressions of Christianity as being defective. Just as unfortunately, some other Christian traditions have likewise considered Pentecostalism to be defective in many of its expressions. But Pentecostals have merited at least some of the less-than-favorable attitudes held by non-Pentecostal Christians.

Pentecostalism's roots in the Second Great Awakening, the Holiness movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the Azusa Street Revival, led to subsequent revival movements. The majority of the Christian community almost unanimously refused to accept the revival movements as genuine. One of the reasons for the rejection was an antagonism that was "engendered by the feeling that the Pentecostals saw themselves as a spiritual aristocracy. The Pentecostals acted as if they had received special insights regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and the correct method of worship."<sup>142</sup>

In truth, Pentecostalism, which began as a revivalist and restorationist movement, also became a reactionary movement against what it considered to be a cold, dead, formal Christianity. Symptomatic of the cold, dead, formal Christianity was cold, dead, formal worship. The liturgical tradition was viewed as "too Catholic"; the Reformed tradition was considered too somber; and some Evangelical traditions were considered too lacking in spirit/Spirit. Many within the Holiness and Pentecostal movements considered that much of what happened in Christianity between the First Nicene Council in 325 A.D. and the beginnings of their movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was suspect, at the least. Consequently, the study of Christian history (some dared not call it the history of the Christian Church) was neither an important nor a worthy pursuit. The Bible was all that

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<sup>142</sup> Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 61.

was needed for the conscientious Christian to find favor with God. However, increasing numbers of Pentecostals are now beginning to realize how much they have missed in failing to study and appreciate the history and traditions of the larger Christian Church in its catholicity, including its diverse worship traditions.

Early Pentecostals who took counsel from the Scriptures to “wait on the Lord”<sup>143</sup> in silent prayer stand firmly in the Christian spiritual tradition. Much of their waiting in prayer, however, was pragmatic in nature—waiting for the Spirit to manifest in some miraculous way. They did not necessarily understand silent prayer as a way of seeking intimacy and union with God. It is interesting that the connection was not generally made. Spirit baptism was sought as a way to attain intimacy and union with God; but the evidence of the attainment of that intimacy and union was glossolalia, or some other audible or physical manifestation. It might be spiritually enriching for Pentecostals, both old and young, to take another broader look at “waiting on the Lord” in silence.

Clement of Alexandria, an Ante-Nicene Church Father and theologian writes about the efficacy of silent prayer in turning toward God and communing with him:

But if voice and expression are given to us, for the sake of understanding, how can God not hear the soul itself, and the mind, since assuredly soul hears soul, and mind hears mind? Whence God does not wait for loquacious tongues, as interpreters among men, but knows absolutely the thoughts of all; and what the voice intimates to us, that our thought, which even before the creation he knew would come to our mind, speaks to God. Prayer, then, may be uttered without the voice, by concentrating the whole spiritual nature within on expression by the mind, in undistracted turning toward God.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Psalm 27:14; 37:7, 9, 34; 52:9; 59:9; 62:5; 104:27; 123:2; 130:5; 145:15. Proverbs 20:22. Isaiah 8:17; 30:18; 40:31. Hosea 12:6. Micah 7:7KJV.

Clement suggests the superfluity of words when one prays with the soul and the mind. Why would spoken words be absolutely necessary if God “knows absolutely the thoughts of all?” The Psalmist, marvels at God’s full and intimate knowledge of human beings: “. . . you discern my thoughts from far away. . . . Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.”<sup>145</sup> And Jesus, teaching on the subject of prayer, warns his listeners against the pagan idea that loquacious, repetitive prayer earns a hearing from God: “Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”<sup>146</sup>

Evagrius Ponticus, a fourth-century preacher and monk who wrote extensively on prayer, is a central figure in the history of Christian spirituality.<sup>147</sup> Evagrius believed that the highest form of prayer is “pure prayer” (also “true prayer”), and that it has three essential qualities.<sup>148</sup>

The first quality of “pure prayer” is that it is unceasing: “We have not been commanded to work, to keep vigil, and to fast at all times, but the law of unceasing prayer has been handed down to us.”<sup>149</sup> The “law of unceasing prayer” is Evagrius’ reference to Paul’s exhortation to “pray without ceasing.”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Clement of Alexandria*, American Edition. eds. Alexander and James Donaldson Roberts, trans. A. Cleveland Cox, Vol. 2. 10 vols. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 535.

<sup>145</sup> Psalm 139:2 – 3 NRSV

<sup>146</sup> Matthew 6:8 NRSV

<sup>147</sup> J. P. Migne et al., "Evagrius Ponticus." In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 578.

<sup>148</sup> William Harmless, *Mystics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150.

<sup>149</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, quoted in Harmless, *Mystics*, 150.

<sup>150</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:17 NRSV

The second quality of “pure prayer” is that it should be imageless prayer. Evagrius writes: “When you pray do not form images of the divine within yourself, nor allow your mind to be impressed with any form, but approach the immaterial immaterially and you will come to understanding.”<sup>151</sup> The transcendent God cannot be contained within the limits of human thought and expression. Line, shape, form and color, created in the studio of space and time, are only able to give finite expression of the infinite. In finitude those who believe in the infinite God bow in prayer seeking transcendence.<sup>152</sup> Evagrius comments:

“. . . Blessed is the mind which has acquired perfect freedom from impressions of forms during the time of prayer. Blessed is the mind which prays without distraction and acquires an ever greater longing for God. Blessed is the mind which becomes immaterial and free from all things during the time of prayer.”<sup>153</sup>

It should be stated that Evagrius was not apophatic to the extent that he opposed the practice of praying over the scriptures, especially the Psalms, which was the common practice among monks. The Psalms are vivid in their imagery. “For Evagrius, the praying monk springboards up, even if only briefly, from those scriptural images to the image-defying God that scripture itself teaches.”<sup>154</sup>

The first two qualities in Evagrius’ concept of “pure prayer”—prayer that is unceasing and imageless—are totally compatible with Pentecostal spirituality.

Pentecostal preachers and teachers, echoing Paul, often challenge their listeners to “pray

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<sup>151</sup> Evagrius Ponticus, quoted in Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

<sup>152</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

<sup>153</sup> Evagrius, quoted in Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

<sup>154</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

without ceasing.” Furthermore, many Pentecostals (along with some other Evangelical traditions that eschew rich visual Christian symbolism) would heartily say “Amen!” to Evagrius’ idea of “imageless prayer”—with the caveat that they, like the monks of Evagrius’ day, would be very comfortable praying over the scriptures.<sup>155</sup>

The third quality of Evagrius’ “pure prayer”—“wordless prayer”—bears some interesting similarities with the prayerful silence (“waiting on the Lord,” “tarrying”) practiced by Pentecostals in the earlier years of their movement’s developing spirituality. However, Evagrius advances the concept of wordless prayer much further than would most Pentecostals. “Pure prayer” transcends words into wordlessness; or, as Evagrius defines it “the conversation of the mind with God.”<sup>156</sup> His definition implies that Evagrius indeed thought of prayer in terms of conversation or communication with God—spoken or unspoken. That would obviously be the case as monks prayed over the scriptures. However, Evagrius encouraged the monks so to commune with God that their conversation would eventually transition into wordless contemplation. “Prayer in its higher forms meant not simply moving beyond words; it meant ‘laying aside mental representations.’”<sup>157</sup>

But Evagrius furthermore defines prayer as “the ascent of the mind to God.”<sup>158</sup> In this definition, the word “mind” is freighted with Eastern Orthodox (Greek), rather than

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<sup>155</sup> It somehow seems incongruous that, while there is often a dearth of Christian spiritual symbolism in many contemporary Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, there is apparently no contradiction in borrowing settings for the “stage” (not “platform,” much less “chancel”) from the secular entertainment industry!

<sup>156</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

<sup>157</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

Western, connotations. For Westerners, “mind” connotes logic, thought and rationality. However, in Greek theological tradition, the mind (*noûs*) connotes intuition. “For Evagrius, the way the mind knows God is through direct intuition, not logic: . . . .”<sup>159</sup>

The reason that Evagrius can say that the mind knows God through direct intuition is because, in Greek theological thought, “the mind is the highest dimension of the human person.”<sup>160</sup> For persons created in the image of God, the mind is the most Godlike part of their being; and therefore, it is the part of the human person that is most capable of knowing God. Consequently, conversing with God in prayer should be a normal human desire and pursuit. “Prayer,” Evagrius says, “is an activity befitting the dignity of the mind . . . . and undistracted prayer is the highest mindfulness of the mind (*katastasis*)”<sup>161</sup>

But Evagrius goes even further in stressing that “prayer is not just an activity of the mind; it is a state of the mind . . . not so much something one *does* as something one *is*.”<sup>162</sup>

Evagrius, however, denies that “this higher form of prayer is ecstatic,” since ecstasy (*ekstasis*) literally means to “stand outside” oneself.<sup>163</sup> On the contrary, “prayer is not *ekstasis*, not leaving oneself; it is *katastasis*, a coming to one’s true self.”<sup>164</sup>

Pentecostals would say that as they “wait on the Lord” in silent prayer, or as they silently pray over the scriptures, they are praying in their minds, in the Western sense of

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<sup>158</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 151.

<sup>159</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

<sup>160</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

<sup>161</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

<sup>162</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

<sup>163</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

<sup>164</sup> Harmless, *Mystics*, 152.

the word. (They might also say that they are praying in their hearts, meaning the same as praying in their minds.) What they are saying, of course, is that they are silently praying words of a prayer that they are forming in their thoughts. It is a silent, but logical and rational prayer. These prayers are wordless only in the sense that the words of the prayer are not spoken. And although many Pentecostals practice some form of silent prayer from the mind or heart, few would consider themselves contemplatives. Few would consider the practice of “wordless prayer,” in the sense that Evagrius uses the term. Nevertheless, some Pentecostals might think of the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer as something very similar, if not identical, to Evagrius’ “wordless prayer.” We are reminded of Paul’s comforting words concerning the intercession of the Holy Spirit in the believer:

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*<sup>165</sup>

Paul here seems to describe wordless prayer. It is prayer that arises in situations and circumstances in the life of the believer in which there is an inability to find the words to pray, audibly or inaudibly. It describes a conundrum in which the believer cannot even think through the situation in order to express a logical, reasoned petition before God. At such times, Paul encourages the believer by saying that the indwelling Holy Spirit intercedes for the believer when words won’t come. The Holy Spirit, therefore, prays in tandem, as it were, with the human spirit, since “. . . God, who searches the [human] heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints

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<sup>165</sup> Romans 8:26 – 27 NRSV (emphasis mine)

according to the will of God.”<sup>166</sup> This would seem to come very close to what Evagrius means in “laying aside mental representations” in wordless prayer.

John Cassian (c. 365 – after 430) a monk and spiritual writer, was greatly influenced by Evagrius Ponticus while studying monasticism in Egypt.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that he agreed with Evagrius that “the highest form of prayer was not just imageless and unceasing, but also wordless.”<sup>168</sup> However, Cassian, unlike Evagrius, did not shun the idea of ecstasy. Cassian writes concerning the achievement of perfection in prayer:

And so our mind will reach that incorruptible prayer . . . and this is merely not engaged in gazing on any image, but is actually distinguished by the use of no words or utterances; but with the purpose of the mind all on fire, is produced through ecstasy of the heart by some unaccountable keenness of spirit, and the mind being thus affected without the aid of the senses or any visible material pours it forth to God with groanings and sighs that cannot be uttered.<sup>169</sup>

With his references to fire and ecstasy, Pentecostals would find a kindred spirit in Cassian, although some might be perplexed that he speaks of fiery, ecstatic *wordless* prayer in the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, earlier Pentecostals who practiced the silent prayer of “waiting on the Lord” would be able to identify with Cassian’s description of wordless prayer. William Harmless observes:

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<sup>166</sup> Romans 8:27 NRSV

<sup>167</sup> Cassian et al., “Cassian, John,” In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 295.

<sup>168</sup> William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 396.

<sup>169</sup> John Cassian, “The Second Conference of Abbot Isaac: On Prayer,” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series Volume II, Sulpitius Severus, Vincent of Lerins, John Cassian*, American Edition, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Edgar C. S. Gibson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 408.

Cassian often links ecstasy and fire. He speaks of “fiery ecstasies of the heart” . . . of prayer “inflamed with spiritual ardor,” of “a higher stage of that fiery . . . wordless prayer.” It is in such moments, the mind is seized by the Holy Spirit, who does the actual praying, while the mind becomes “like a kind of ungraspable and devouring flame,” and “pours out to God wordless prayers of the purest vigor.”<sup>170</sup>

The prayer that Cassian describes is much more profound than the emotionally-charged, ecstatically-driven prayer that is stereotypical of Pentecostals. It is prayer in which the human spirit is united with, and ignited by, the fire of the Holy Spirit to the degree that words become utterly inadequate and useless to express “wonder, love, and praise,” and the desires and yearnings of the heart and soul. In those moments, when the believer does not know how or what to pray, “the mind is seized by the Holy Spirit, who does the actual praying” in wordless prayer.

### **Towards a better understanding of the discipline of silence**

A study of the history of Christian spirituality would reveal to Pentecostals that there are many other kindred spirits who have sought union with God through the Holy Spirit in prayer and Pentecostals who have found that union in silent prayer while “waiting on the Lord” are not alone. They may not agree with every point of doctrine and practice of other Christian traditions; but in their hearts they would sense a resonance with others who have sought for and experienced that blessed union in sacred silence. Such a study could serve to give Pentecostals a broader understanding of Christian spirituality; and in so doing it may also help to abolish erroneous presuppositions, biases and prejudices against traditions thought to be less spiritual. The writings of Ante-Nicene Church Father, Clement of Alexandria, and early Post-Nicene Desert Fathers, Evagrius

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<sup>170</sup> Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 397.

Ponticus and John Cassian would no doubt find resonance among Pentecostals interested in knowing more about their spiritual roots in silent prayer. (John Cassian’s Pentecostal fire would certainly capture their attention.)

Pentecostal spirituality indeed has roots in mysticism and pietism.<sup>171</sup> But Pentecostal theologian, Steven J. Land, is helpful in exposing its roots in other Christian spiritual traditions:

Pentecostalism flows in paradoxical continuity and discontinuity with other streams of Christianity. Insofar as it retains similarity to the first ten years of the movement, it is more Arminian than Calvinist in its approach to issues of human agency and perseverance. It is more Calvinist than Lutheran in its appreciation of the so-called ‘third use of the Law’ to guide Christian growth and conduct. It is more Eastern than Western in its understanding of spirituality as perfection and participation in the divine life (*theosis*). In this regard it has much to learn from persons like Gregory of Nyssa, Marcarius the Egyptian and St Symeon, the New Theologian. It is both ascetic and mystical. These treasures could naturally and fruitfully be mined as the line of Wesleyan continuity is traced backwards and forwards. Pentecostalism is more Catholic than Protestant in emphasizing sanctification-transformation more than forensic justification, but more Protestant than Catholic in the conviction that the Word is the authority over the church and tradition for matters of faith, practice, government and discipline. In its origins Pentecostalism was more Anabaptist than the magisterial Reformation in its concern for peace and a covenanted believer’s church where discipleship and discipline are essential features of congregational life. Pentecostalism has a more Holiness-evangelical hermeneutic than the fundamentalist-evangelical tradition in terms of its actual use of Scripture and understanding of the role of reason. Finally, it is more liberation-transformationist than scholastic-fundamentalist in its way of doing theology as a discerning reflection upon living reality. . . . Pentecostalism, therefore, exists in continuity but differentiating discontinuity with other Christian spiritualities.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Donald G. Bloesch, *Spirituality Old and New: Recovering Authentic Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 146.

<sup>172</sup> Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 29 – 30.

With an open mind and heart, and with an interest and desire to know more about the continuity that Pentecostals share with other Christian traditions, perhaps the polarizing effect of “differentiating discontinuity” would be weakened. Martin Laird writes:

The grace of salvation, the grace of Christian wholeness that flowers in silence, dispels this illusion of separation. For when the mind is brought to stillness, and all our strategies of acquisition have dropped, a deeper truth presents itself: we are and have always been one with God and we are all one in God (Jn 17:21).<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16.



## Conclusion

Among God's children, Pentecostals have the reputation of being the extroverted, vociferous, boisterous brothers and sisters. They largely eschew silence in prayer and worship as somehow being an indication of God's absence and inactivity. This is especially so among contemporary Pentecostals. This project has shown, however, that this has not always been the case, nor does it have to be now. In fact, early Pentecostals frequently spent extended time in silent prayer, which they called "waiting on the Lord," or "tarrying." Most often, these periods of silent prayer were more often pragmatic in nature, seeking God for a supernatural manifestation, or seeking direction in personal and corporate decision-making. Nevertheless, early Pentecostals have given this generation of Pentecostals the gift of silence.

The Bible also passes the gift of silence on to contemporary Pentecostals through the stories of Hannah and the prophet Elijah, and through the spiritual counsel of the Apostle Paul.

The gift of silence is also given to this generation of Pentecostals through the unexpected offerings of Clement of Alexandria, Evagrius Ponticus and John Cassian. And a study of the history of Christian spirituality would reveal the gift coming from such diverse movements and individuals as Catholic and Orthodox monastics, hesychasts, quietists, pietists, and Quakers, many who would find with Pentecostals a common desire for intimacy with God.

This project encourages Pentecostals not only to rediscover the spiritual discipline of silence, but also to expand the concept to include silence as a means of deepening one's intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit.

The discipline of silence is not antithetical to Pentecostal spirituality. On the contrary, it can and should become an important and indispensable enrichment of Pentecostal spirituality.

**Suggestions for Pentecostals who would like to further explore the spiritual discipline of silence in worship and prayer**

1. **Read!** The following is a selected bibliography on spiritual theology, spiritual disciplines, and the discipline of silence:

Ruth Haley Barton, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

Donald G. Bloesch, *Spirituality Old & New: Recovering Authentic Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

Barry L. Callen, *Authentic Spirituality: Moving Beyond Mere Religion* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2006).

Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into Meditative Prayer* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Robert Davis Hughes, III, *Beloved Dust: Tides of the Spirit in the Christian Life* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

Martin Laird, *A Sunlit Silence: Silence, Awareness, and Contemplation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 1961).

M. Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer: Renewing an Ancient Christian Prayer Form* (New York: Image Books, 1982).

Unknown, *The Cloud of Unknowing and Book of Privy Counseling*, ed. William Johnston (New York: Image Books, 1973).

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).

Ken Wilson, *Mystically Wired: Exploring New Realms in Prayer* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

## **2. Suggestions for individuals interested in learning more about the spiritual**

### **discipline of silence:**

- a. Visit a liturgical church. Follow the liturgy and notice how silence is incorporated in worship.

- b. Sign up for a contemplative prayer retreat, or take a personal, directed spiritual retreat at a monastic retreat center.
- c. Personally adopt the spiritual discipline of silence and contemplative prayer.

**3. Suggestions for corporate study and practice of the spiritual discipline of silence:**

- a. Directors of worship may insert moments of silent meditation or prayer at appropriate times, such as the beginning of the service before the invocation; before any public prayer; to establish the sacredness of the moment; after the reading of scripture; after the sermon.
- b. Start a small group to study and practice the spiritual disciplines of silence and contemplative prayer.



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