



Some Thoughts on Pentecost



Pentecost As a Compass

- Pentecost orients us biblically to the inner logic of God's revelation of Himself in the world through Jesus Christ and experientially to the eschatological vision of redemption of the world.
- Pentecost is the pivotal point from which we can look back to the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth and look forward into our contemporary life and witness to Jesus Christ in our world. Pentecost is more than a historical and instrumental link between a theology of the incarnation and a theology of the church. Pentecost is more than the birth of the church, it is the indwelling power of the Spirit of Christ as the source of the church's life and ministry."

Ray Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry*, 111.



Pentecost— The Mission of God

The mission of God seen most clearly in Jesus continues uninterrupted to this very day.

Acts 1:6-8

Mission is...

- Redemptive
- Global
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit.



- Jesus' ministry happens in real time & space.
- God's purposes are therefore realized in the ministries we offer in His name and the organizations we create to facilitate those ministries.
- Structures and programs are theological statements.



- The pragmatic demands of day to day ministry often tend to overwhelm our vision (the capacity to see what God has done in Jesus Christ II Cor. 5:17-20) and dull our discernment (the capacity to see the congruence between the Christ of Scripture and the Christ as work in current ministry John 5:17).



- A Pentecostal theology for ministry affirms the context and activity of ministry is not merely the place for the application of abstract principles or professional skills. Ministry is the habitat of Jesus' continuing ministry that requires a spirituality nurturing both vision and discernment as necessary for ministry effectiveness.



Pentecostalism is not an aberration. . .

“What began as a despised and ridiculed sect is quickly becoming both the preferred religion of the urban poor and the powerful bearer of a radically alternative vision of what the human world might one day become.”

Harvey Cox



- Will the past be a true indicator of our future?
- This is no time for triumphalism.
- It is a time for humility and the recapturing of our central core.



An attempt at finding the core of Pentecostalism

- Every human being struggles to find a sense of destiny and significance.
- Pentecostalism represents a spiritual restoration of significance and purpose to masses of people.



Restoration of basic (primal) speech

- In a world that can make people think as if their “voice” does not matter or where contrived rhetoric has emptied language of any meaning.
- Pentecostals participate in a language of the heart that is understood in heaven, and no particular tragedy can restrain.
(Rom.12:1-2)




Restoration of basic (primal) piety

- Our relationship with God cannot be contained in left-brained activity alone, but is to be encountered face to face.
- We believe and expect God to act in immanent and concrete ways.
(Mark 16:15-18)



Restoration of a basic (primal) hope

- An affirmation that the world we see is not all there is and can be.
- An orientation toward the future that persists despite the failure of certain events to occur.
- A sense of destiny that affirms in concrete action that we are connected in history to the God who is the Alpha & Omega (Mt. 24:14 and II Thes. 4:13-18).



To make a long story short

- **Our words** – “deepest attempts at communication” are heard by Someone who understands.
- **Our address** is known by God.
- **Our destiny** is linked to the Creator-Redeemer God



The bottom line is still

- The Baptism of the Spirit connected to empowerment for world evangelization.
- A sense of destiny as part of the effort that plants signposts of God's redemptive purposes.
- Obedience to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations



- The Church becomes what it is (nature) by virtue of its existence as a witness to Christ's continued ministry of reconciliation in global mission.



- We grasp the meaning of the Church and its mission by participation ourselves.
- Action in which the truth is discovered through action, not merely applied or practiced (praxis).



- The church is really Jesus at work.
- The nature of the Church is revealed through its existence in the world as the mission of the people of God who receive the Spirit.



- Pentecost, not the Great Commission, is the central part of mission thinking in the early Church.



- It's the Spirit that pushes us to recognize Christ in the here and now; the Spirit forces us to deal with Jesus in a particularly historical way.



- Mission of God determined the mission of His Son. Thus, the mission of God determines the nature of the Church.



- If the mission of Christ through the presence and power of the Spirit determines the nature and ministry of the Church, then we should expect a mission theology perspective of the Church to be the source of renewed vision and life.



- The mission of the Church is to embody in its corporate life and ministry the continuing mission and incarnational nature of the Son through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- The nature of the Church is determined in its existence as the mission of God to the world.



- Pentecostalism is a protest against modernity. Its resources for the formulation of religious ideology are not merely conceptualizations of God, but participation with God.



- Pentecostalism yields a priority and belief that a person has been called and empowered to participate in the final chapter of God's reconciliatory mission.



Kingdom of God

“The kingdom of God represents the dynamic reign of God in the world. The Kingdom in its biblical sense designates God’s supernatural breaking into history in the person of Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is synonymous with the activity of God; it is a more pregnant expression of God himself.....



Age of the Spirit

...In the new age of the Spirit, Scripture shows God's power and activity among people to involve the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. The coming of the new age is characterized by a new full dimension of the Spirit of God....



Age of the Spirit

...That work of the Spirit among believers involves both an inward life-source dimension and an outward charismatic dimension. The outward dimension of the Holy Spirit's ministry is identified in Scripture with the concept of the Kingdom. It is God's redemptive, mediated activity in and through the church."

The Third Force in Missions by Paul A. Pomerville, 134.



Epochal Meaning

“Pentecost had epochal meaning; it marked an end of the age of national particularism and the return of God’s redemptive purpose to the nations. The ethnic diversity brought about by the confusion of languages was reversed at Pentecost. Through the miracle of languages God began to restore the unity of the race which was lost at Babel....



Symbol of Unification

...Pentecost was both a symbol of that unifying work of God and the actual beginning of the unification of the race. The Spirit was the agent of this restoration of unity. The role of the Spirit in His mission, breaking through the barriers which separate people, points to the importance of pneumatology for ecumenism. A full-blown trinitarian view of mission is an ecumenical touchstone....



Trinitarian View

...A trinitarian view of mission in biblical an salvation history perspective gives the Holy Spirit a primary role in contemporary mission. As executive of the Godhead He is Lord of the Harvest. This perspective focuses on the centrality of the church as the agent of mission. But the church is not to be characterized primarily by its instrumentality....



Missionary Role

- It is the new creation of the Holy Spirit, a called-out people who belong to God and who also carry out His mission in the world. The missionary role of the Spirit, in biblical perspective, is related inseparably with the sending and empowering of the church in Great Commission mission. This sending, God's special mission, is characterized by the preaching of the gospel in the power of the Spirit with signs following.

The Third Force in Missions by Paul A. Pomerville, 163.