

# An attempt to define the constitutive elements of a pentecostal spirituality

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*Pentecostal spirituality* is defined as the integration of beliefs and practices into the affections that are themselves evoked and expressed by those practices and beliefs. This article investigates these practices and beliefs by examining pentecostal publications to define the most important constitutive elements of a pentecostal spirituality. The most important theological beliefs are justification by faith in Christ, sanctification as a second definite work of grace, healing as provided in the atonement, the premillennial second coming of Christ, and the baptism in the Spirit. However, when these theological beliefs are translated into pentecostal practice, it seems that their spirituality is essentially biblical, apocalyptic eschatological, missional, and affective. These elements are discussed in order to attempt to define the constitutive elements of a pentecostal spirituality.

*Pinksterspiritualiteit* kan gedefinieer word as die integrasie van oortuigings en praktyke in die gevoelens wat deur daardie praktyke en oortuigings uitgelok en uitgedruk word. Die artikel ondersoek die praktyke en oortuigings deur na publikasies vanuit Pinkstergeleedere te kyk ten einde die belangrikste samestellende elemente van 'n Pinksterspiritualiteit te definieer. Die belangrikste teologiese leerstellings is regverdiging deur die geloof in Christus, heiligmaking as 'n tweede besliste werk van genade, genesing as deel van die versoeningswerk, die verwagting van die premillennialistiese tweede koms van Christus, en die doop in die Heilige Gees. Wanneer die teologiese leerstellings in die Pinksterpraktyk vertaal word, blyk dit dat die spiritualiteit in wese bybels, apokalipties-eskatologies, missionaal en affektief is. Hierdie elemente word bespreek in 'n poging om die essensiële elemente van 'n Pinksterspiritualiteit te definieer.

## Introduction

Spittler (1988:804) defines *spirituality* as 'a cluster of acts and sentiments that are informed by the beliefs and values that characterize a specific religious community'. It is '*the lived religious experience of the Christian faith*' (Albrecht 1999:14; original emphasis). It is not the practice of articulating theological doctrines or partaking in rituals performed in a given worship setting, but the way the spiritual dimension of the human being is expressed or realised in and through everyday life and religious experience (Stewart 2012:106). It focuses on the habits of ordinary individuals who practice religion in their private lives and the communal life of the assembly. The word *spirituality* has an elastic quality that results from the wide variety of ways in which worshippers express themselves in different denominational traditions, but also even in a single faith community (Spittler 1988:804).

Pentecostalism to a certain extent exists both in continuity and differentiating discontinuity with other Christian spiritualities represented by, for instance the Roman Catholic, Reformed, or Orthodox traditions.<sup>1</sup> Land (1993:18–19) explains the continuities and discontinuities in terms of different opposites: Pentecostalism is more Arminian than Calvinism in its approach to human agency, free will, 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*). It is more Catholic than Protestant in emphasising sanctification-transformation more than forensic justification; it is more Protestant than Catholic in the conviction that the Word is the authority over the church and tradition, for matters pertaining to faith, practice, church government, and discipline. In its origins it is more Anabaptist than the magisterial Reformation

1. Pentecostalism started in the United States, but by now it is the strongest in the Third World, where more than 75% of non-white indigenous denominations are constituted by persons who bear all the phenomenological marks of Pentecostalism (Barrett 1988:811). The movement consists of three waves, viz. Classical Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement within traditional mainline churches that originated in the sixties of the previous century, and the Neo-Pentecostal Movement of independent groups, constituting 21% of organised global Christianity (Sullivan 1988:119).

in its concern for peace and a covenanted believer's church, where discipleship and a personal relationship with the Saviour are concerned, rather than being a church for the nation (*volkskerk*). Pentecostalism has a Wesleyan-holiness evangelical hermeneutic rather than a fundamentalist-evangelical basis in terms of its actual use of the Bible and understanding of the role that reason plays. And it is more liberation-transformationist than scholastic-fundamentalist in its way of doing theology as a discerning reflection on living reality.

The difficulty with describing a pentecostal spirituality is that Pentecostalism exists in diverse denominations and traditions as the result of a century of historical developments determined by political, cultural and racial factors. However, it shares a historical origin and the resultant emphasis on the experience of the baptism in the Spirit, allowing the researcher to identify common constituent elements of a pentecostal spirituality across the range of pentecostal churches. The most important theological beliefs are also shared, for instance, justification by faith in Christ, sanctification, healing as provided in the atonement, the premillennial second coming of Christ, and the baptism in the Spirit (Dayton 1987:21).

This article argues that a pentecostal spirituality can be defined from existing pentecostal publications in terms of various constituents, encompassing its emphasis on the Bible, the utilisation of an apocalyptic worldview, its core existence as a corporate community, its missional emphasis, and its affective predilection (Neumann 2012:196).

### Biblical constituents of pentecostal spirituality

Pentecostal spirituality emphasises the importance of the Holy Spirit as a starting point for a distinctive pentecostal approach to theology (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013:17). Does this mean that Pentecostals place the Spirit above the Word and in doing so elevate experience from the category of source of theology to that of norm? MacArthur (1992: 54–77; 1994:40–41) reasons that Pentecostals deny the Bible a proper place. His argument contains generalisations that weakens his viewpoint. Pentecostalism was born from the experience of the baptism with the Spirit, with its emphasis on a direct personal experience of God's presence resulting in the revelation of his character and direct will to the believer. This leaves room for revelation outside the boundaries of Scriptures and it is characteristic of fringe groups within the pentecostal tradition that so-called revelatory knowledge is utilised that is not measured against the Bible (MacArthur 1994):

The charismatic movement has supplanted doctrine with experience. Psychology has elevated 'felt' needs over *real* needs and behavioural theory over revealed truth. All this has accelerated the move away from doctrine and focused the pulpit message on everything *but* the objective truth of Scripture. Preachers have become comedians, storytellers, therapists, showmen, and entertainers rather than powerful envoys of divine truth. (pp. 40–41)

The observation is correct in terms of certain elements within the movement although there exists a self-regulatory mechanism within the movement to criticise such extravagances and excesses. In this article main streams within Pentecostalism will be consulted in attempting to define a pentecostal spirituality.

Pentecostals confess that the Spirit, prior to the written Word of God, inspired the human authors of the Word, and illumines contemporary readers when they interpret the Word within the community of those who are formed, corrected, nurtured and equipped by the Word (Land 1993:28). The Spirit does not exist merely to illuminate Scripture and apply it to the life of the believer. The Spirit endows and guides the believer and the community as a whole. The signs and power of the Spirit are for Pentecostals not optional additions, but prerequisites for a church wrestling 'not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph 6:12; ASV).

The Word is the living Jesus, and the Spirit works in continuity with the person of Christ, but is not exhausted therein (Möller 1997:143). It may be argued that protestant spirituality has subjugated the Spirit to Scriptures to such an extent that the only significant function of the Spirit is to be a witness to the Bible, which is interpreted primarily by human reason.<sup>2</sup> Other traditions like the Latter Day Saints Movement of Restorationist Christianity (Mormons) may place the Spirit above the Word and develop 'private revelations' beyond the Bible. Or the Spirit may be domesticated to serve only to provide zest for ecclesial work, such as the sacraments, the light of reason or common human experience, as may happen in liberal theology (Land 1993:29). Pentecostals agree with Calvin and Luther that the Bible is of little value without the sovereign work of the Spirit; it has no significance apart from the context of the experience of the Spirit (Jones 1975:99). The Spirit, however, does not merely repeat what the Bible states; the Spirit directs the church in those areas not covered by Jesus' teachings. In this way Pentecostals interpret John 14:26 to mean that the Holy Spirit shall teach believers all things and bring to remembrance all that Jesus said. This corresponds with Acts 15:28, that the Spirit and church decide on issues that confront the church in new contexts (McClung 1986:48). The inherent risk in claiming that the Spirit reveals insight into contemporary issues is that it may easily lead to heresy and for this reason Pentecostals are careful in formulating what they perceive to be a *fresh* or *new* revelation (Robeck 2006:40).<sup>3</sup> However, the danger inherent in any revelation outside the norm of Scriptures remains. The Spirit without

2. Not all agree with this view: A rational thrust can be discerned in Protestant orthodoxy from the very beginning, but very few of its luminaries ever became full-blown rationalists. Even those defenders of Reformation faith in the late 17th and 18th centuries were still prone to make a place for mystery in faith, though they were not immune to the spell of the Enlightenment (Bloesch 2000:34).

3. This is not unique to the Pentecostals. Bloesch (2000) contends that there is today a movement away from propositional theology to narrational theology, from logos to mythos: A christocentric theology is being overshadowed by a pneumatocentric theology in which the living voice of the Spirit is viewed as a higher authority than the written Word of God. The appeal is no longer to what Scripture says but to the sanctified imagination of the reader. The new light that breaks forth from God's holy Word supersedes the old light contained in sacred Scripture of the past (p. 59).

the Bible and a community of believers inevitably leads to subjectivism and fanaticism. These three partial authorities complement each other in the pentecostal view (Jones 1975):

The Spirit inspires the Word and builds up the community; the Word enables us to understand our experience of the Spirit and teaches us the form of our common life; the community forms the context in which the Word is understood and the Spirit encountered. (p. 106)

The Bible is of little value without the sovereign work of the Spirit because the Bible has no significance when ripped from the context of the experience of the Spirit (Jones 1975:99). The community plays an important role as the audience listening to and interpreting the Word.<sup>4</sup>

The contention is that the pentecostal understanding of the mode of God's presence amongst his people in conjunction with their use of Scripture results in a pentecostal hermeneutic and spirituality that differs from the hermeneutic and spirituality found in other traditions (McLean 1984:50).

Pentecostal spirituality demands the ongoing integration of beliefs, affections and actions lest spirituality fragments into intellectualism, sentimentalism, or activism (Land 1993:30), overcoming the dichotomisation between theology and spirituality. Experience of the Spirit drives and requires this integration of belief, affections, and practice that forms the definition of theology as well as spirituality. Orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy are closely related in a pentecostal spirituality, because God, who is Spirit, creates a spirituality that is cognitive, affective, and behavioural at once, driving towards a unified epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics (Land 1993:31).

To abide by the Word is simultaneously to abide by Christ as well as the written Word. Pentecostals perceive the Bible not so much as a textbook of theological and dogmatic propositions as a narrative of redemption in Christ by the Spirit and people's journey to the Father through the Spirit of Christ. The doctrines of verbal inspiration and infallibility are part of a spirituality that practices a much fuller doctrine of the Word of God (Duffield & Van Cleave 1983:19–25), where the Word is used as the norm for evaluating beliefs and practices (Seymour 1907:2). The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ who speaks scripturally, but also has more to say than the Scriptures. The Spirit-Word directs the everyday life and witnessing of believers and the church, and leads them in all truth. Scripture provides the means to test and direct the daily specific guidance that the church and individuals purport to experience from the Spirit, and provides boundaries. New experiences become the occasion for finding new insights from Scripture and familiar Scriptures would take on new meaning. However, it is imperative that all beliefs, affections, and practices should be tested to the Word continuously. All the elements of corporate worship – singing, preaching,

4. Lategan (2007:457) refers to the relationship between text and receiver or reader as one of three main areas hermeneutical theory must address in order to be successful. The other two are the relationship between the sender or author and the message or text, and the internal relationships between the different components of the text itself.

testifying, altar calls, prayer meetings, and practice of the gifts of the Spirit – are mediated by remembering and applying the biblical Word. Biblical realities also form the basis for pentecostal sacramentality (Ranaghan 1974:688–694). And the force and power with which this occurs indicate that transformation and not mere information is the goal of the process (Moore 1992:90). 'The Church needs the energizing capacity to see these texts as transformational' (Brueggemann & Sharp 2012:17).

## Apocalyptic constituents of pentecostal spirituality

In the pentecostal tradition, the promise-fulfilment, *already-not-yet*, is a tensed dynamic that characterises its eschatological passion. The faith, worldview, experience and practice of Pentecostals are thoroughly eschatological. It perceives itself as a revivalist, restorationist, and primitivistic<sup>5</sup> movement of awakening to remind the church that it is the 'eschatological mother' and that its task is to teach its sons and daughters to prophesy (Käsemann 1969:100). Its spirituality originated from the 19th century's evangelical awakenings, the holiness movement and the healing movement (Nel 1992:46–90) and embodies the eschatological turmoil and tensions of the premillennial revivalism that swept Europe and the United States during the second part of that century (Hammonds 2009:4–8).

One of the important venues for the outpouring of the Spirit at the beginning of the 20th century, Azusa street 312 in Los Angeles, was seen as 'a humble stable' (Bartleman 1980:43) where social barriers were overcome and 'the color line was washed away in the blood' (Bartleman 1980:54; Seymour 1906:1). Its adherents interpret the baptism in the Spirit as the latter rain restoration of apostolic faith and power for the last days' evangelisation of the world (Faupel 1996:32–36). The outpouring of the Spirit is perceived as an eschatological event, as a sign of the imminence of the Day of YHWH that is interpreted in apocalyptic terms as the end of the known order (Jl 2:28–32, and applied by Peter in Ac 2:16–21). In the same way, the latter rain is interpreted as follows (Taylor 1907):

After the latter rain there was a dry spell, during which the grain matured and mellowed, and then came the harvest, and then the winter. After this great outpouring of Pentecost, there will come another dry spell, in which severe trials will mellow the saints and mature them for the harvest, and then will set in the wintry storms of the Great Tribulation, to be ended only

5. *Primitivistic* is used in the sense of a belief that modern civilisation would benefit by a return to or consideration of primitive culture, customs, or ideas that are superior to those of modern days (Sykes 1976:880). In assuming an apocalyptic worldview Pentecostals claim that they follow in the footsteps of the Master. At the turn of the 20th century, J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer overturned the consensus amongst researchers that the historical Jesus was not thoroughly apocalyptic in his worldview and prospects (Keener 2009:4–13 provides a short overview; Neville 2008:361; Tabor 2007:8). They opined that he was even more apocalyptic than the Gospels that were written about his life and teaching, although it contains both temporal and vertical-spatial viewpoints, implying that it displays both cosmic conflict and an apocalyptic eschatology. Shively is quoting Greg Carey's (2005) definition of apocalyptic discourse: ... the constellation of apocalyptic topics as they function in larger early Jewish and Christian literary and social contexts. Thus, apocalyptic discourse should be treated as a flexible set of resources that early Jews and Christians could employ for a variety of persuasive tasks (p. 5). Jesus believed in and waited for a divine intervention that will inaugurate a new order and a new age, and he expected it to happen during his ministry (Aune et al. 2000:51–52; Grant 1977:135).



by the millennial spring morning, when Christ and his glorified saints shall 'return from the wedding to take charge of the world'. (p. 96)

Macchia (2006:112) emphasises that the eschatological element is decisive for Pentecostals because the *latter rain* of the Spirit is mainly meant to restore the gifts and power of Pentecost to the church. This will empower global mission before Christ's imminent return. For these reasons, every believer is equipped to be both a priest and a prophet. At the beginning of the movement Pentecostals believed that the equipment with other tongues would allow them to preach in the languages of different nations (Robeck 2006:21).

The Pentecostal Movement has an aversion to creeds that divide churches and perceives that in many instances they hinder the mission of the church (Burger 1987:181). It does not want to become a church because *church* necessitates mechanisms and politics that negate the direct influence of the Spirit (Hayford 2006:44; Macchia 2010:249). Any organisation that does not have direct biblical precedent or hinder the free working of the sovereign Spirit should be avoided (Land 1993:7). Pentecostals ascribe to three forms of primitivism, namely an ecclesiastical primitivism that results in suspicion of *man-made* creeds and institutions (Durham 2006:88); an ethical primitivism that provides them with an all-consuming passion for holiness (Hayford 2006:39); and an experiential primitivism that catalyses the other two and directs everything toward the imminent second coming of Jesus (Land 1993:51–52).

The movement exists in members testifying in worship services and amongst friends, worshipping and singing in worship and other settings, and partaking in worship services by ministering diverse gifts of the Spirit to the communion, creating an ethos of revivalistic, participatory, and populist-oriented spirituality. Those baptised in the Spirit witness the good news, leading to an oral spirituality formed by worship, witness, and work (Land 1993:42).<sup>6</sup> All believers are called and empowered to be witnesses.

The movement has an urgency to evangelise the world, expecting that it would hasten the second coming of Christ, as Mark 13:10 promises (Taylor 2006:70). The Spirit empowers the church (Ac 2:17–21) to preach the 'gospel of the kingdom' (Mt 24:14). The Spirit prepares the bride for the Bridegroom (Rv 21:9). The church lives from an apocalyptic expectation of the end of the known order (Seymour 2006:49).

When Pentecostals experience the eschatological power of the working of the Spirit, the restoration of the apostolic age, they look differently at the Scriptures, at themselves and at the world (Trask 1997:18). Whilst outsiders may focus on speaking in tongues as indicative of a whole movement of

6.Land (1993:42) reminds that black spirituality provided the context for the origins of Pentecostalism and lists its characteristics as orality of liturgy; narrativity of theology and witness; maximum participation at the levels of reflection, prayer and decision making and therefore a form of community that is reconciliatory; inclusion of dreams and visions into spirituality; and an understanding of mind and body relationship informed by experiences of correspondence between mind and body, with the resultant ministry of healing by prayer (Lovett 1975:145–158).

irrational, hysterical protest by the illiterate and disinherited (Anderson 1979:59), if not evidence of demonisation (Johns 2007:212; Ward 1975:99–111), the participants view their experience in apocalyptic revelatory terms. This becomes for them the driving force, rationale and galvanising vision of the entire movement (Faupel 1989:243). Speaking in tongues becomes the means to express the inexpressible in the eschatological language of the human heart and heaven (Land 1993:106). The Spirit has empowered them to share fully the life of the church of the apostles, the 'church of Pentecost'.<sup>7</sup> And the charismatic manifestations of tongues, healing, exorcism, and prophecy, are interpreted as signs that they are bringing in the *last days*.

The theological centre of pentecostal spirituality is for this reason not Spirit baptism or speaking in tongues, but the *Gestalt* of apocalyptic narrative of which Pentecostals saw themselves as being a significant part.<sup>8</sup> It is the eschatological shift within the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement toward premillennialism that signals what is decisive (Lederle 1988:16). Now everything is considered from the viewpoint of the imminent second coming of Christ. Everyday life and events become charged with cosmic significance because God is at work in everything.

One cannot understand pentecostal spirituality apart from exposure to the liturgical practices of worship and witness under the influence of the end times.

### Missional constituent of pentecostal spirituality

The church does not exist for its own sake, but only as a missional structure for the spreading of the gospel (Bosch 1991:368). For this reason, Pentecostals refer to themselves as a *movement* rather than a *church*. The first church that originated from the revival in Los Angeles was the Apostolic Faith Mission, with an emphasis on the primitivist desire to return to the apostolic message and power, faith as the means to receive salvation and the power of the Spirit and missionary work as the reason for the existence of the movement (McClung 1986:50). For this reason, Pentecostals focus neither exclusively on the right structure as Catholics do, nor the right message as Protestants do. The Christian life

7.At first Pentecostals were sure that speaking in tongues would allow them to take the gospel to different nations speaking these different tongues, as happened in the early Church's experience of Pentecost: ... how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians – we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God (Ac 2:8–11; ESV).

Believers need not learn the languages of the nations, the Spirit has already given them the ability to speak these languages. '... xenoglossolic tongues enabled missionaries to proclaim the gospel in foreign languages never learned' (Hayford 2006:67). The idea was soon proved wrong (Land 1993:115).

8.Some Pentecostal researchers disagree and reason that the experience of the baptism of the Spirit and what followed it as the work or revelation of the Spirit was the starting and central points of pentecostal spirituality, and that this forms the source or basis of the understanding of pentecostal spirituality. This article disagrees with this viewpoint for historical and phenomenological reasons. Underlying the Pentecostal Movement are several revivalistic movements with strong theological traditions that were taken over and modified by the Pentecostals. And in studying pentecostal theology and practice it becomes clear that pentecostal spirituality cannot be reduced to one element, the baptism with the Spirit. Other elements played a role even before the 1906 Azusa street revival, like holiness and a lively expectation of the second coming interpreted in apocalyptic terms, and still influence the church alongside the emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and the importance of witnessing as a prerequisite for being a disciple of Christ.

is rather interpreted in terms of 'the experienced power and presence of the Holy Spirit today' and neither orthodoxy, nor impeccability of succession can displace it (Newbigin 1953:87).

Pentecostals have fundamental beliefs, as reflected in the respective creeds and statements of faith of the different denominations, but it is subordinate to their primitivist concern that the blessing of the Spirit will be restored in the church and their desire for apostolic faith, power, and manifestations of the Spirit amongst ordinary believers (Neumann 2012:200). The presence of the Spirit constitutes the church and the reason for the existence of the church is to be the Spirit-empowered agent of power to proclaim the gospel to all nations (Wacker 2001:9–14).

The Spirit baptism is interpreted as the sign of the dawn of the last of the last days (McDonnell 1973:45). The church is a living organism of charisms and signs living to fulfil the urgent missional task associated with the last days. Confidence in the Spirit's power and the expectation of visible results of the Spirit's work have the benefit of often leading Pentecostals to adopt a bold entrepreneurial attitude and a willingness to initiate new missional endeavours in creative ways (Albrecht 1999:250).

Pentecostals do not set dates for the second coming, though they expect it to be soon. What the imminent second coming calls for is the preaching of the gospel to all nations and getting the bride ready for her wedding with the heavenly Bridegroom. This implies that the church becomes a missionary fellowship where members testify constantly in order to develop in hearers the virtues, expectancy, attitudes, and experiences of those testifying (Land 1993:73). Listening to and partaking in the testimonies involve all participants in a praxis of theological reflection that is relevant for the existence of the church in the world.<sup>9</sup>

### Affective constituent of pentecostal spirituality

'Experience of God' forms an important part of pentecostal-speak, implying that Pentecostals believe that the Spirit is intimately involved in creation and the lives of believers in a way that can be palpably experienced or *felt* (Neumann 2012:196–197). This is the reason why Land (1993:13) argues that pentecostal experience of God should be interpreted as located primarily in the affective dimension of human beings. For Pentecostals, their experience of God through the Spirit is the point of departure for spirituality (Neumann 2012:196). Spirituality requires not only discursive reasoning, but the engagement of the whole person within the communion where each individual is equipped with unique charisms 'for the common good' (1 Cor 12:7). The community of Spirit and Word functions as a worshipping, witnessing whole with the liturgical life at its heart. Everybody is encouraged

to partake directly in the liturgical life by singing heartily along, witnessing, prophesying, speaking in tongues and interpreting it, et cetera. Worship becomes the 'vehicle for the theology' whilst theology serves as a commentary on the worship that is the central reality (Ranaghan 1974:201).

Pentecostals find an 'arid, rationalistic, formalistic, unemotional, non-experiential and non-charismatic approach to religious life' unacceptable (Wheelock 1983:334), in contrast to what they perceive reformed spirituality to be comprised of (Hayford 2006:33). The early Pentecostal Movement derived its vitality from the African-American culture's emphasis on the non-conceptual aspects of life in religion and believed that the whole person should be involved in the process of religious devotion (Robeck 2006:12). The experiential component is perceived as a natural element and enthusiastic involvement as a fitting modality of religious expression (Wheelock 1983:336). Theology is not practiced in the traditional way; the media of theology becomes sermons, pamphlets, hymns, testimonies, conferences, revival campaigns, and spirituals. Theology begins in people's prayerful response to God; the first and basic act of theological work is prayer (Barth 1963:160–164). The object of theological reflection is a relationship, humans encountering God through his Spirit, making theology a dialectical endeavour.

For Pentecostals to do theology is not to make experience the norm, but to recognise the epistemological priority of the Spirit in prayerful receptivity (Land 1993:27). By encountering the Spirit in the same apostolic experience as that which is described in Scripture, one stands in *pneumatic* continuity with the faith community that birthed the Scriptures (Erwin 1981:22).

It is not unusual to find emotional reactions as a part of pentecostal worship experiences, whether in the communion or privately, where believers laugh and cry, dance and wait in stillness, weep in remorse or joy.<sup>10</sup> Corporate, interactive worship is deeply felt and easily observable, and encouraged in the typical pentecostal worship service. The gifts of the Spirit – especially prophecy, speaking in tongues and its interpretation, a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge, gifts of healing, and powers – form an integral part of this spirituality.

People respond to the preaching of the Word in an affective way. If a pentecostal congregation is not responsive to a preacher, it means that they perceive him or her as not anointed with the Spirit or not preaching the true Word. The pentecostal communion expects to possess corporate discernment, sensitivity and receptivity to the work of the Spirit in their midst (Clark & Lederle 1989:100). The participation of

<sup>9</sup> Even after 100 years, the imminent return of Christ remains a motivating force for Pentecostals. In addition, Pentecostalism's unquestioned success in cross-cultural missions is tied to their unequivocal commitment to signs, wonders, and spiritual gifts as central to the proclamation of the gospel (Hayford 2006:84).

<sup>10</sup> A by-product of the allowance of emotional elements is that persons with emotional problems are attracted to pentecostal worship services where their emotional outbursts are sometimes appreciated as signs of a special anointing of the Spirit. The long term effect of their contributions to the worship service and life of the pentecostal assembly proves the risk of allowing any person to contribute to the edification of the body of Christ as an important element of the priesthood of all believers.

the assembly in evaluating the proclamation is an important and vital element in pentecostal spirituality and presupposes spiritual maturity in members participating in the evaluation.

In practice, the distinction between *laity* and professional clergy is not clear, with all members participating in the liturgy, including males and females, and all races, classes and age groups. Each is called upon to worship, witness, manifest the graces and gifts of the Spirit, and preach the Word; *prophecy* is perceived as a timely Word given by God to an individual for another person or the communion (Robeck 1988:738). Women also pray and preach, lead in worship and anoint the ill, speak in tongues and help in all phases of the ministry in the pentecostal spirituality. This has been the case since the inception of the Pentecostal Movement.<sup>11</sup>

Corporate participation through worship and witness and the practice of the gifts of the Spirit create room for an oral liturgy that forms an essential part of pentecostal spirituality (Hollenweger 1986:553). Music plays an important role in the celebration by expressing, directing, and deepening the joy experienced in the presence of the Lord. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of much of the singing reflects the joyful celebration and enables believers to further utilise the songs in their daily walk in order to practice the presence of God. The sentimental value of some songs allows participants to express deeply felt emotions for God and their fellow believers. The movement also uses hymns of revivalism, inherited from the Holiness Movement and the Wesleyan Renewal. These songs are still used to wake up fervour for lost souls (Spittler 1988:807). Many songs contain a testimony, an exhortation or chronicle of the journey to heaven.

The body is also incorporated in the act of worship, with believers dancing, lifting their hands, clapping their hands for joy, clasping and clenching hands with fellow believers, and bodies swaying in the wind of the Spirit.

Again, the goal of the experience is not in the experience itself, but in the life-transformation experienced because of the religious encounter with God. Pentecostals expect and emphasise frequent encounters with the Spirit that radically transform their broader Christian experience and spirituality (cf., for example Johns 2007:211–214 for a discussion). These encounters are described in terms of Spirit baptism, implying being immersed in or overwhelmed by the Spirit. Even though charismatics and Neo-Pentecostals would not necessarily articulate the experience of Spirit baptism in the same way as do Classical Pentecostals (Lederle 1988:37), their encounters are also experienced as radically transformational and personal (Stewart 2012:107).

These encounters explain why Pentecostals emphasise prayer as central to their spirituality, where God is close

to them and responds to their requests. It accounts also for corporate worship that is participatory and celebrative, inviting spontaneous and tangible expressions incorporating the human being in a holistic way. Spirituality involves the entire human person in all its dimensions – physical, emotional, mental, and social, as exemplified in the corporate pentecostal worship setting (Albrecht 1999:237–251). Worshipers respond to the Spirit's presence and activity in their midst by exhibiting the whole range of manifestations of spiritual gifts, with exuberant celebratory praise, upraised hands, singing, shouting, clapping, dancing, laying on of hands in prayer for healing or Spirit baptism (Neumann 2012:199). In this way, experience enjoys priority within pentecostal spirituality and only by understanding this priority can the other features of pentecostal spirituality be understood (Hocken 1988:147).

## Synthesis

*Spirituality* is defined as the acts and sentiments that are informed by the values and beliefs of a religious community. The four major constitutive elements of these beliefs and values in terms of a pentecostal spirituality described in the article are the following:

- The Bible is constitutive of their spirituality and it is utilised in conjunction with and within the context of the sovereign work of the Spirit.
- Secondly, as a revivalist, restorationist, and primitivist movement of awakening, the Pentecostal Movement perceives itself in apocalyptic terms as it embodies the eschatological turmoil and tensions of premillennial revivalism.
- Thirdly, Pentecostals view the reason for the existence of the movement not for its own sake, but as a missional structure existing for the sole purpose of spreading the gospel.
- And lastly, Pentecostals believe that the Spirit is intimately involved in creation and the lives of believers in a way that can be palpably experienced or *felt*, and for this reason pentecostal experience of God should be interpreted as being located primarily in the affective dimension of the human being. Experience of God through the Spirit and constituted by the Bible, is the point of departure for spirituality, requiring the engagement of the whole person within the communion.

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11. The Pentecostal Movement since 1906 'recognizes the ministry of women as legitimate and as equal with that of men. This was an important witness over claims by fundamentalists, evangelicals, historic Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox alike, that women are simply to be "silent in the church"' (Robeck 2006:25).



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