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EVEN THOUGH I WALK: TOWARDS A PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP

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EVEN THOUGH I WALK: TOWARDS A PENTECOSTAL
THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of this thesis is to develop a theological foundation for a Pentecostal theology of discipleship. I begin with an analysis of the early Pentecostal movement and its implications on Pentecostal theology. This is to develop a framework within which my proposed theology can be developed. Next, I assess discipleship from a broader perspective, identifying crucial aspects of it that are not specific to Pentecostalism. I appeal to the Anabaptist tradition's understanding of discipleship specifically, recognizing key components which allowed their theology to be so effective. In light of this I summarize and assess existing Pentecostal literature on discipleship in order to give an overview of its current landscape and need for future development. I then put forward hermeneutical strategy that will allow me to develop my theology through an interpretation of Psalm 23 as a paradigm for discipleship. This strategy is developed primarily by placing Ken Archer in conversation with Chris Green so that a contemporary strategy can be developed that also reflects the interpretive methods of early Pentecostals. I then interpret Psalm 23 as a paradigm for the life of an individual-in-community following the path of discipleship. From this interpretation I emphasize four dimensions of the discipleship process that can function as a theological foundation for further work on the subject. These dimensions are: the soteriological nature of the discipling process, its eschatological orientation, its pneumatological affection, and the ecclesiological context within which it must occur.

Keywords: Pentecostal, discipleship, hermeneutics, constructive Pentecostal theology, *via salutis*, Fivefold Gospel

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INTRODUCTION

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
 He leads me beside quiet waters.
 He restores my soul;
 He guides me in the paths of righteousness
 For His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I fear no evil, for You are with me;
 Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
 You have anointed my head with oil;
 My cup overflows.
 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
 - Psalm 23¹

Before Jesus ever walked on the Earth, humanity desired to know what it meant to follow Yahweh, the Shepherd of Creation. The psalmist describes a life committed to following the ebb and flow of the Shepherd's presence wherever it led. This radical commitment to God and the surrender of the self to His will should serve as a humbling example to Christians as to what it means to be a disciple of Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Unfortunately, few Christians today fully understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ despite the countless paradigms we find in the Bible. Why is this so? Dallas Willard contends that this is due to the shape evangelicalism has taken in a post-WWII era world.² He writes that modern evangelicalism "does not naturally conduct its converts and adherents into a life of discipleship, nor into pervasive Christlikeness of

¹ All bible references will be from the NASB unless otherwise noted.

² I was first made aware of Willard's assessment in Brian Brock, "Discipleship as Living with God, or Wayfinding and Scripture," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 7, no. 1 (2014): 22–34, accessed February 14, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001982847&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

character.”³ Instead, “it was strictly a gospel of forgiveness of sins and assurance of heaven after death upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ.”⁴ This unbalanced emphasis on one aspect of the Gospel, albeit a vitally important part, has resulted in a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be a Christ-*follower*.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer considered this Gospel of Salvation to rely on a ‘cheap grace’. Cheap grace allowed for the sinner to be saved without changing their lifestyle.

To put it in Bonhoeffer’s words:

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.⁵

The truth is that faith is ‘costly’ – one cannot be a follower of Christ and yet sacrifice nothing. For Bonhoeffer, this meant returning to Germany after studying in America at the height of Hitler’s power so that he could challenge Hitler’s political regime, ultimately at the cost of his own life.

As a Pentecostal, I can’t help but sense that the “evangelical” tendency towards a Gospel of Salvation rather than a Gospel of Discipleship is similarly present within my own tradition. This is not to say that pentecostal theology ignores the necessary and inevitable processes that occur in the life of a believer post-regeneration. Quite the opposite, Pentecostals have been written a great deal about the Spirit’s work in the lives of believers, with particular emphasis on sanctification and the baptism in the Holy Spirit,

³ Dallas Willard, “Discipleship,” in *Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Gerald McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d.), accessed September 6, 2017, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=134>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 44–45.

two “events” which are inextricably linked in pentecostal soteriology.⁶ However, a *theology of discipleship*, as is suggested by Willard as the remedy to post-WWII era evangelicalism, has not been articulated clearly in pentecostal circles. While not entirely neglected, a distinctly pentecostal theology of discipleship has yet to be fully realized.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to develop a pentecostal theology of discipleship and identify a viable methodological approach that reflects the spirit of the Pentecostal movement. In order to do justice to the heart of discipleship whilst maintaining a theological lens shaped by my Pentecostal tradition my research has followed the following framework, as will be reflected in the structure of my chapters. Chapter 2 will identify several defining characteristics of early Pentecostalism and their implications for today. This chapter will pay particular attention to the centrality of Azusa to pentecostal theology. Chapter 3 will provide an overview of discipleship, focusing initially on a broader Evangelical understanding of the topic. I will then address existing pentecostal literature pertaining to discipleship. Chapter 4 will contain a brief history of early pentecostal hermeneutics and a comparative analysis of contemporary hermeneutical strategies within the Pentecostal tradition. In this chapter, I will assess the hermeneutical method I will employ later in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 will then describe a Pentecostal theology of discipleship by way of a narrative interpretation of Psalm 23 as a metaphor for discipleship.

In order to develop this Pentecostal theology of discipleship, the following questions will be addressed:

⁶ Some Pentecostal scholars would view Spirit Baptism as a vocational calling, thus it becomes ecclesiological rather than soteriological. See William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 189–208.

- What are the necessary characteristics for a distinctly pentecostal theology?
- What is discipleship and how has it been understood by pentecostal scholars to date?
- What is a way of reading Scripture for formation that stays faithful to the text and to the heart of the pentecostal ethos?
- How does Psalm 23 function as metaphor for the life of a disciple?

CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostalism is not as easily defined as most other movements within Christianity. This is largely due to its origins and rapid expansion over the last century. Thus, to claim something as distinctly Pentecostal is difficult because so much of the movement has been shaped by the differing contexts within which it has developed. Nevertheless, while the context of this study is North American Pentecostalism, I hope to develop an understanding of Pentecostalism that reflects the central concerns and motivations that are common to the global Pentecostal movement.

American Pentecostalism found its primary theological roots in the American Holiness tradition.⁷ Building upon Wesley's understanding of sanctification, Holiness theology described sanctification as being an experience distinct from and occurring after conversion.⁸ However, the criterion for such an experience was difficult to define until the early Pentecostals began to make their voice known.

The official start of the Pentecostal movement in America was the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles during April 1906, but even before Azusa, the first sparks of the Pentecostal movement were felt around the world in various revivals throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹ An important characteristic of this revival was the primacy of African-American spirituality in the events that unfolded. The church under whose

⁷ For a more comprehensive study of Pentecostalism's theological roots see Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987).

⁸ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 21.

⁹ Michael McClymond, "I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh," *Pneuma* 37, no. 3 (January 1, 2015): 356–374, accessed October 5, 2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15700747-03703001>. Studies of these proto-Pentecostal revivals in recent years have led to polygenetic understandings of the origins of Pentecostalism. As McClymond suggests, this polygenesis does not diminish the importance of Azusa but rather enhances it, fortifying the understanding that its message of inclusion truly does reflect the heart of Pentecost. See also William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2009), Chapter 3.

leadership William J. Seymour, the key instigator of the movement, was first invited to come to Los Angeles was an African-American Holiness Church.¹⁰ Their spirituality was largely an evolution of African-American slave religion that persisted into the Holiness church, the evidences of which can still be seen in Pentecostalism today.¹¹ Walter Hollenweger emphasized this notion when he described Azusa as

an outburst of enthusiastic religion of a kind well-known and frequent in the history of Negro [*sic*] churches in America which derived its specifically Pentecostal features from Parham's theory that speaking with tongues is a necessary concomitant of the baptism of the Spirit.¹²

More specifically, Hollenweger identified five characteristics of Pentecostal theology that emerged out of Azusa's black roots, namely its oral liturgy, narrative manner of doing theology, emphasis on the maximum participation of the community, dreams and visions as personal and public expressions of worship, and a praxis epistemology.¹³

¹⁰ Rufus Gene William Sanders, "The Life of William Joseph Seymour: Black Father of the Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movement" (Ph.D., Bowling Green State University, 2000), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304585099/abstract/B35E86F3ED48461APQ/1>. This biography of Seymour's life and ministry seeks to frame Seymour as the key instigator of the Pentecostal movement. This is largely a response to historians of the movement who have misattributed or undervalued the contributions of Seymour to early Pentecostalism.

¹¹ Wolfgang Vondey, "The Making of a Black Liturgy: Pentecostal Worship and Spirituality from African Slave Narratives to American Cityscapes," *Black Theology* 10, no. 2 (August 2012): 147–168, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001930907&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹² Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches*, 24. For a brief analysis of Parham's doctrine of Spirit Baptism see Aaron Friesen, "The Called out of the Called out: Charles Parham's Doctrine of the Spirit Baptism," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 29, no. 1 (2009): 43–55, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001711019&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹³ Walter J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years' Research on Pentecostalism," *Theology* 87, no. 720 (November 1, 1984): 403–412, quoted in Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 1 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 52.

Despite the initial majority of blacks and other ethnic minorities, whites comprised the majority of the attendees during Azusa's peak.¹⁴ Black attendees did resume the majority after 1906, but this was due to the formation of predominantly white Pentecostal fellowships in Los Angeles around this time.¹⁵ Thus, while Azusa initially "produced an unprecedented level of equality and inclusion, cutting across lines of race, gender, class, and nationality," these sentiments soon fell to "cultural pressures of racism, sexism, classism, and nationalism [that] impinged on the community from both secular sources and (unfortunately) from their fellow Pentecostals."¹⁶ This "resegregation" of Pentecostalism resulted in rifts which persisted throughout the rest of its early development.¹⁷

In spite of these racial tensions, Azusa still carried on as the heart of the Pentecostal movement for the first decade of its existence. The works that were produced out of the revival are of paramount importance for understanding early Pentecostal theology.¹⁸ Furthermore, it functioned as one of the main centers for sending out Pentecostal missionaries during this first decade, contributing to the establishment of

¹⁴ Vinson Synan, "Introduction," in Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: An Eyewitness Account* (Gainesville, FL: Bridges-Logos, 1980), xxvii.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Robby Waddell and Peter Althouse, "The Promises and Perils of the Azusa Street Myth," *Pneuma* 38, no. 4 (January 1, 2016): 367–371, accessed October 6, 2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15700747-03804017>.

¹⁷ While attempts at racial reconciliation were made on a denominational level during the "Memphis Miracle" in 1994, the newly formed Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) failed to properly address the underlying causes and motivations behind the issues at hand. See Frank D Macchia, "From Azusa to Memphis: Where Do We Go From Here? Roundtable Discussions on the Memphis Colloquy," *Pneuma* 18, no. 1 (1996): 113–140, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATL A0001011003&site=ehost-live&scope=site>; Waddell and Althouse, "The Promises and Perils of the Azusa Street Myth," 368.

¹⁸ The main publication of the Azusa revival, *The Apostolic Faith*, along with many other related publications, can all be found in the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives website: <https://pentecostalarchives.org>

Pentecostal movements in at least 40 countries worldwide.¹⁹ Today, the majority of Pentecostals live in the Global South.

Implications of Azusa on Contemporary Pentecostal Theology

The early days of the Pentecostal movement did not produce a univocal vision for the future of Pentecostal theology. Early Pentecostals debated over a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, the trinitarian nature of God,²⁰ and whether or not Spirit Baptism was a second or third distinct act of grace.²¹ In spite of this, Pentecostalism, even in its earliest stages, was emerging as a movement with a unique theological perspective that could not be reconciled in its entirety with turn of the century American Evangelicalism. Therefore, in order for a Pentecostal theology to be truly Pentecostal, it must be connected to the distinctive spirituality and theological perspectives of these early Pentecostals.

The most obvious of these uniquely Pentecostal perspectives would be the belief that Spirit Baptism is an additional act of grace subsequent to regeneration. Even more distinctive is the belief that this Baptism is evidenced by *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues. This belief was derived out of a literal reading of Acts 2, 10, and 19.²² Pentecostals utilized the Latter Rain motif to further articulate their theological identity.²³ Thus, Spirit Baptism as a subsequent experience which manifests in a prominent biblical

¹⁹ McClymond, "I Will Pour Out of My Spirit Upon All Flesh," 361.

²⁰ David A Reed, "In Jesus' Name:" *The History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 31 (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008).

²¹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 94–108.

²² Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 45.

²³ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 88.

sign such as tongues and the Latter Rain are important defining characteristics of Early Pentecostal theology. In fact, it is primarily these beliefs which separate Pentecostals from their Holiness ancestors.²⁴ This is clearly evidenced in the two movement's differing definitions of the Full Gospel.

Around 1890, A.B. Simpson, founder of a Holiness group known as the Christian Missionary Alliance, began preaching the Gospel message in a fourfold format which taught that Jesus was Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Soon-Coming King. When the Pentecostals came around in 1906, they adopted this Full Gospel, adding to it the role of Jesus as Spirit Baptizer.²⁵ As the definitive summation of early Pentecostal beliefs, the Fivefold Gospel persists as the most succinct description of Pentecostal theology to this day. For Ken Archer, the Fivefold Gospel functions as the narrative center of Pentecostal theology and should take a more prominent role in future theological excursions.²⁶

Another implication of the early Pentecostal movement is the dynamic spirituality which emerged. Steven J. Land identified the spirituality of the early Pentecostals as embodying the theological core of the movement. As such, he developed an understanding of Pentecostal spirituality *as* Pentecostal theology.²⁷ While he does not limit the theological depth of the movement to its earliest spiritual expressions, he successfully frames it as a theological, and methodological, starting point from which future expressions of Pentecostal theology can develop. Noting the pneumatological and eschatological orientation of early Pentecostal spirituality, Land suggests a re-visioning

²⁴ Ibid., chap. 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 179. Dayton embraces the fourfold expression of the Full Gospel in his book. Instead of saying that early Pentecostals added the role of Spirit Baptism, he says they "transmuted" sanctification into Spirit Baptism, thus resulting with Savior, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Soon-Coming King.

²⁶ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 15.

²⁷ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, chap. 1.

of Pentecostal spirituality – and in turn theology – that emphasizes the perichoretic nature of the social trinity.²⁸

The dynamic liturgy of the early movement is especially important as a result of its impact on Pentecostal ecclesiology.²⁹ When early Pentecostals gathered for communal worship services, they expected to encounter the Spirit of the Living God.³⁰ In terms of communal dynamics within the church, the Azusa revival set the standard for what the typical – or perhaps atypical – gathering of Pentecostals should consist of. Pentecostal communities, if they follow the Azusa paradigm, should emphasize the priesthood of all believers, the prophethood of all believers, the exercising of spiritual gifts, and fluid liturgical structures. These dynamics, and more, should be reflected in Pentecostal approaches to ecclesiology.

Engaging in a retrospective analysis of the academic Pentecostal theological tradition, John Christopher Thomas suggests five characteristics that should be considered for 21st-century Pentecostal theologians.³¹ First, Pentecostal theology can only be done by someone who is a part of a Pentecostal community. Second, it must be integrative both internally and externally. Internally, it should seek to integrate the head (orthodoxy) with the heart (orthopathy) to bring about action (orthopraxis). Externally, it should be both ecumenical and interdisciplinary. Thirdly, Thomas suggests accountability

²⁸ Ibid., 182–219; Christopher A Stephenson, *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit*, The American Academy of Religion Academy Series (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37–38.

²⁹ Vondey, “The Making of a Black Liturgy.” Vondey articulates that Black liturgy functions as a unifying practice among North American Pentecostals as it has entrenched itself within non-Black congregations as well.

³⁰ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2008), 20–27. Warrington constructs his systematic Pentecostal theology around this notion.

³¹ John Christopher Thomas, “Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century,” *Pneuma* 20, no. 1 (1998): 3–19, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0000916876&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

for Pentecostal scholars when it comes to innovation and inevitable disagreement.

Pentecostal theology should also be contextual, taking into account both the context from which it is being done and the diverse contexts of global Pentecostalism. Lastly, Pentecostal theology should be confessional, staying true to its Pentecostal roots and common ethos.

Conclusion

The Azusa Street Revival and the subsequent spread of Pentecostalism around the world now represents the majority of Christians living today. Evolving out of African-American spirituality and Wesleyan-Holiness theology, the Pentecostal movement is a dynamic, Christ-centered, and theologically egalitarian movement that emerged from and advocates for the poor and marginalized of society. It is not so much defined by a set of universal doctrinal statements, save for the Full Gospel, as it is for its charismatic, experiential worship that prioritizes the proleptic activity of the Spirit over the rigid liturgy of the traditional church. Pentecostal theology, if it truly wishes to be Pentecostal, must reflect this common ethos. As the 21st century is continually shaped by postmodernism, Pentecostals in the academy must develop theologies that both hold true to the essence of Pentecostalism and creatively address the issues that plague the church and secular world today.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF DISCIPLESHIP

As quoted above, Dallas Willard rightly observes that modern Evangelicalism has failed to articulate a theology of discipleship, resulting in a community of nominal Christians who are able to claim such a label as a result of “the routine, easy obedience that it entails.”³² Willard has observed this within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement as well. Despite originating from the Holiness movements which came about as a result of 18th and 19th century Evangelicalism’s poor understanding of discipleship, the post-WWII Pentecostal-Charismatic movements have failed to maintain a healthy understanding of discipleship as a result of their deemphasis on holiness. He states:

...the focus upon spiritual gifts that characterizes the charismatic groups and teachers still does not include a realistic and theologically coherent teaching and practice of discipleship. It is still true of them that to be a Christian – even a “Spirit-filled” Christian—does not require that you be a disciple of Jesus Christ, or that you, through the course of discipleship, take on the character of Jesus Christ in your life as a whole.³³

While Willard is writing this from an outsider perspective, as a Pentecostal I cannot help but share these sentiments. Popular expressions of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism have both emphasized initial salvation without adequately developing the discipleship process.

Perspectives on Discipleship

The concept of discipleship would not have been foreign to those living in Israel during Jesus’ ministry. Traditionally understood, disciples were students who, upon proving their capability to function as a religious leader, were chosen by rabbis to learn

³² Willard, “Discipleship.”

³³ Ibid.

from them directly, following them for several years in order to learn and develop as a rabbi themselves.³⁴ Jesus' disciples functioned very much the same. While Jesus was not part of the Pharisaic rabbinic tradition, the relationship between him and his disciples mirrored that of the typical rabbi/disciple relationship.³⁵

However, to be a disciple of Jesus transcends the boundaries of the traditional discipling relationship when understood through the lens of the cross. Bonhoeffer, recognizing these implications, writes:

Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship means adherence to the person of Jesus, and therefore submission to the law of Christ which is the law of the cross.³⁶

To be a disciple of Christ entails much more than just learning the teachings of Christ.

True discipleship requires that we experience what Christ experienced, participating in his journey in its entirety. This notion is evidenced in the Great Commission:

^{18b} "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In this passage, Jesus calls his disciples to: (1) call people from among the nations; (2) baptize them; and (3) teach them to observe his commandments. Discipleship is the focus and the content is the teachings of Jesus. Furthermore, neither sex nor ethnicity are prerequisites to becoming a disciple.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ This is most evident in the Gospel of John which makes use of rabbinic language in relationship to Jesus and his disciples. See Andreas J Köstenberger, "Jesus as Rabbi in the Fourth Gospel," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 8 (1998): 97–128.

³⁶ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 87.

One of Jesus' most important commandments was the call for his disciples to take up their cross and follow him (Mk. 16:24). To be a follower or disciple of Christ, one must not only be baptized as Christ was baptized, but crucified as Christ was crucified. This crucifixion first occurs during baptism – which symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ – and persists continually through our ongoing decision to share in Christ's burden for the world. This notion of continually taking on Christ's burden is expanded in the Gospel of Mark's portrayal of discipleship in that, "discipleship is wider than imitation of Jesus' way of the cross and is grounded in the quest to seek and do the will of God."³⁷

Implications as to the character of a disciple are revealed throughout Matthew's Gospel. The Sermon on the Mount is without a doubt the most notable passage in the entire canon for understanding what a true disciple should emulate in their walks.³⁸ Perhaps a bit more subtle are three underlying themes of Matthean discipleship which are first brought to light in the genealogy of Jesus and are represented by individuals who characterize those themes. The inclusion of Tamar (righteousness), Rahab (faith and loyalty), and Ruth (loyalty) in the genealogy anticipates the prominence of these themes as key virtues for disciples.³⁹ Furthermore, the fact that Matthew uses women as the virtuous ideals, rather than Jewish patriarchs, speaks to the preferential nature of the

³⁷ John R Donahue, "A Neglected Factor in the Theology of Mark," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101, no. 4 (December 1982): 594, accessed April 5, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATL A0000921361&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

³⁸ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 106–228. This entire section is a commentary on the Sermon of the Mount and its implications for the life of a disciple.

³⁹ For a more comprehensive analysis of these themes see E. Anne Clements, ed., "Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth: Aspects of Matthean Discipleship," in *Mothers on the Margin?*, The Significance of the Women in Matthew's Genealogy (James Clarke & Co Ltd, 2014), 179, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org.seu.idm.oclc.org/stable/j.ctt1cgf6wd.12>.

Gospel for the marginalized of society.⁴⁰ The Gospel of Luke reveals a similarly preferential orientation of the Gospel, with themes of liberation dominating throughout.⁴¹ For the life of a disciple, this means identifying with the undesired of society as Jesus did when he ate with sinners and tax collectors.⁴² This self-identification signifies a changed life, shifting our perspective to recognize the *imago dei* in all people and reminding us to put the other before ourselves. Discipleship goes beyond adhering to sets of rules; it requires a renunciation of our old lives and stepping into the sandals of Jesus so that the devalued can be lifted up.

For Paul, the implications of following Christ and seeking to do God's will should be directly evident in how we live our lives. This relationship is best demonstrated in his exhortation to the Colossians in Col. 3:1-17 in which he outlines the characteristics and virtues which identify the Christian life. These characteristics go beyond ideals towards which the disciples can strive, but are "indications of *what life becomes* for those who are devoted disciples of Jesus Christ."⁴³ Galatians 5 also refers to a number of essential characteristics of the Spirit-filled believer. These 'fruits of the Spirit' are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Anabaptist Approach to Discipleship

It's evident that the New Testament precedent for Christian discipleship is one of taking on the very character of Christ. However, such an understanding of discipleship

⁴⁰ Ibid., 193.

⁴¹ Dario Lopez Rodriguez, *The Liberating Mission of Jesus: The Message of the Gospel of Luke* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

⁴² Ibid., 56.

⁴³ Willard, "Discipleship."

has clearly failed to yield the desired results. Thus, in order to develop an understanding of a more effective theology of discipleship, I will look to the Anabaptist tradition.⁴⁴

Developing out of the Protestant Reformation and often referred to as the Radical Reformation, the Anabaptist movement was staunchly criticized by a majority of its contemporaries.⁴⁵ The primary theological distinction that led to the formation of the Anabaptist movement was their emphasis on believer's baptism. "Indeed, understanding the place of baptism in Anabaptist life may well be the key to interpreting the Anabaptist views of discipleship and the church."⁴⁶ As noted above, baptism was not only a component of Christ's command to make disciples, but an event through which Christians can identify themselves with Christ. Anabaptists built upon this notion, insisting that baptism was an "indispensable act of obedient discipleship without which the church as a visible fellowship cannot exist."⁴⁷

As discipleship was inextricably linked to the movement's distinctive understanding of baptism, the Anabaptist theology of discipleship received considerable emphasis. For Anabaptists, the life of a disciple was "not one of moral self-endeavor and legalism, but one in which grace, faith, and the Spirit's power unite with the human to produce a life of holiness before God and man."⁴⁸ Initiated by baptism, it indicated both

⁴⁴ For an analysis of Pentecostalism's Anabaptist roots and shared ethos see Matthew S. Clark's "Pentecostalism's Anabaptist Roots: Hermeneutical Implications" in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies, eds., *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Russell P. Spittler*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 24 (London, UK: T&T Clark International, 2004).

⁴⁵ For a detailed history of the social and theological development of Anabaptism see William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴⁸ Harold Stauffer Bender, "'Walking in the Resurrection': the Anabaptist Doctrine of Regeneration and Discipleship," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 35, no. 2 (April 1961): 97, accessed November 10, 2016, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0000683194&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

the individual's external commitment to living a life modeled after Christ, and the internal transformation of the believer through regeneration and subsequent sanctification. In fact, baptism functioned as a testimony to regeneration and a sacramental sign to a "salvation already received."⁴⁹ In other words, baptism was the heralding event in the life of a believer, marking their commitment to follow Christ in all aspects of their life.

What is notable about the Anabaptists is how explicit they were about their theology of discipleship.⁵⁰ Writings on discipleship by early Anabaptists leaders were common, although this is likely due to the relationship it had with baptism. Nevertheless, as a result of this emphasis Anabaptists were characterized by an inexplicable holiness, wrought by committed, radical devotion to the sermon on the mount and brotherly love, two "commandments" of particular importance to discipleship.⁵¹ This begs the question, if possessing an explicit theology of discipleship yielded such results among the Anabaptists, perhaps the same could be accomplished for any Christian tradition?

Unfortunately, this is unlikely as Bender suggests there were in fact a variety of factors which contributed to the success of the Anabaptists' theology of discipleship:

- (1) They insisted upon personal conviction, conversion, and commitment as adults, based upon prior teaching.
- (2) They made the above a requirement for admission to church membership.
- (3) They worshiped mostly in small

⁴⁹ Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 168. Estep does not use sacramental in the traditional sense. He recognizes baptism as a sacrament but uses the term symbolically rather than identifying the sacrament as a means of grace.

⁵⁰ Bender, "Walking in the Resurrection." Early Anabaptist leaders are quoted no fewer than twenty times throughout this particular essay.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 107. I use the term 'inexplicable' in relation to their holiness because for many of their Protestant contemporaries, Anabaptist holiness was too good to be true. They either wrote it off as them teaching a doctrine of sinlessness (perfection), or that their perceived holiness was in fact a ruse in order to mask more sinister behaviors. See also Harold Stauffer Bender, "The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 24, no. 1 (January 1950): 25–32, accessed April 5, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0000661607&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

groups with intimacy of personal acquaintance, testimony, observation, and admonition. (4) They practiced church discipline. (5) They had high standards for the Christian life, which were so much higher than the average of the society of the time that only really committed persons would accept them and seek to fulfill them. (6) They practiced separation from the world and so were delivered from the constant influence of the low-living multitude.⁵²

While it may seem as if these requirements are feasible for Pentecostals, whose Wesleyan-Holiness ancestors were very similar to Anabaptists, the final contributing factor necessitates a critical reevaluation. The first five characteristics could easily be appropriated by Pentecostals for the purpose of discipleship. However, the Pentecostal movement necessarily exists as a counter-cultural movement and thus cannot be isolated from the world lest it lose its prophetic appeal.

Existing Pentecostal Approaches to Discipleship

How, then, do we as Pentecostals develop a similarly effective theology of discipleship? I believe that the first step is recognizing and understanding Pentecostalism's role within communities. The Pentecostal movement emerged within a society plagued with social and systemic evils against which Pentecostalism functioned antithetically. In order for a community to be pentecostal, then, it must exist within a larger community against which it can function as a counter-cultural paradigm.

Cheryl Bridges-Johns develops her understanding of pentecostal spiritual formation upon an educational theory that holds a similar view of counter-cultural sub-communities to Pentecostals.⁵³ Johns' *Pentecostal Formation* seeks to develop this model

⁵² Ibid., 108–109.

⁵³ Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 128. "What Freire

for Pentecostal formation around Paulo Freire's educational paradigm which she considers to be, at least in part, consistent with the overarching Pentecostal ethos. Johns' distinctly Pentecostal approach to catechesis can function, then, as the first step towards a fuller understanding of discipleship theologically. Furthermore, Johns' monograph puts forward a viable methodology for communal spiritual formation that can be modified to address the larger concept of discipleship. As such, I will provide a detailed summary and analysis of the entire text in order to bring to light key components of Johns' theology and methodology.

Paulo Freire developed his theory of education within the context of the Global South.⁵⁴ His philosophy, inspired by Marxism, identifies individuals as subjects of history with the ability to transform reality. However, there are levels of consciousness, largely delineated by class lines, that prevent individuals from fully understanding their position within reality.⁵⁵ According to Freire, this 'hierarchy of consciousness' can only be combatted through a process known as conscientization by which the oppressed (those at the bottom of the hierarchy of consciousness) "learn to problematize reality and see themselves as agents of change."⁵⁶ This process involves each individual interpreter

contributes to Pentecostal catechesis is an awareness that the community does not exist in isolation from society and that it has the role of critiquing the dominant order."

⁵⁴ Ibid., 24–28. Freire was born in Brazil in 1921 into a middle-class family living within a poor community. Despite earning degrees in Law, Freire dedicated his life's pursuit to the field of education. His peasant-centered literacy campaigns elevated the status of Brazilian society because of its widespread impact upon the poor. After a military coup in 1964, Freire was exiled from Brazil and spent the next 16 years travelling throughout North and South America as well as Europe. During a brief tenure as a lecturer at Harvard University, Freire's *A Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published, summarizing his core educational beliefs. Freire returned to his native Brazil in 1980 to teach at the Catholic University of Sao Paulo. His life experiences clearly shaped his pedagogical framework in that he sought to liberate people from the same oppressive systems that shaped his childhood and forced him to leave his home. Through it all, his work has revealed his passion for all people to achieve their full potential as human beings.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 31. To Freire, this hierarchy was purposefully maintained by the elite so that they could preserve their power and maintain control over those below them.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 43.

coming to an awareness of and engaging with their present reality. Freire's pedagogical system sought to equip the oppressed with the skills necessary to understand the world around them.⁵⁷ As they were better equipped to understand their realities, they could begin to transform their reality in meaningful ways. The process of transforming reality was not a one-time event, but an ongoing dialectic between the individual and their environment; a notion greatly influenced by Marx's understanding of praxis as human critical reflection and action, devoid of any transcendent inspiration or interaction.

Johns critiques Freire's praxis epistemology, proposing instead that Christians should possess a *yada* (Hebrew for "to know") epistemology.⁵⁸ *Yada* is defined by T. Groome as "a knowing more by the heart than by the mind, a knowing that arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active and intentional engagement in lived experience." Johns suggests that a knowledge of reality based around the idea of *yada* is both more biblical than a Greek-Marxist praxis epistemology and more conducive to conscientization:

The dynamic, experiential, relational knowledge found in the meaning of the Hebrew word *yada* stands in stark contrast to the Greek approach to knowledge. Therefore, a knowledge of reality which is first grounded in a covenantal knowledge of God, demanding lasting obedience and reflection, will be transformational not only of an individual but also of the world as well.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid., 32–33. The process of equipping involves 'coding and decoding reality.' Johns summarizes these ideas:

"Coding is the investigating of themes by means of abstraction. It is representing a situation in order to show its constituent elements while maintaining the concrete and the abstract in dialectical tension. Decoding involves movement back to the concrete as one would move from the part to the whole and then return to the part." (33)

⁵⁸T. Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 141, quoted in Ibid., 35.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

Johns' approach to conscientization, in light of this new epistemology, engages more of the "affective-spiritual dimensions of human interaction."⁶⁰

Johns then addresses the theological framework of Freire's writings, revealing the theological dynamics which make Freire's pedagogy specifically conducive to Pentecostal catechesis. Much like his pedagogy, Freire's theology favors the oppressed and so can be understood as a type of liberation theology. Freire is consistent with the liberationist emphasis on praxis, its understanding of the human vocation as that of humanization, and its understanding of Scripture as actively inviting people to 're-create the world for liberation'.⁶¹ His theology clearly maintains the Marxist emphasis on the centrality of humanity in the historical process. Freire's understandings of Easter and Jesus are also liberationist in their orientation, understanding the former as an event which only the oppressed can experience through rebirth, and the latter as the embodiment of the Word – a Word which makes available the Truth to humanity through the teaching and living of the Gospels. Freire was also markedly critical of both the traditional and modernizing churches but was more affirming of prophetic churches due to the potential for conscientization inherent within its teachings.⁶² However, he does discredit the validity of religious experience within the prophetic churches, which tended to appeal to the oppressed, on account of the incomplete understanding of reality possessed by the majority of its population.

Johns' primary critiques of Freire, in light of her own Pentecostal theology, are in response to the centrality of humanity and God's role in history within his theological

⁶⁰ Ibid., 45.

⁶¹ Ibid., 51.

⁶² Ibid., 52–56.

framework. In his failure to completely move past Marxist interpretations of religion's role in history and by discrediting religious experiences of oppressed people, Freire, 'while affirming a God "for the oppressed," fails to affirm a "God of the oppressed".'⁶³ God is reduced to a passive, unimposing motivational force, visible only in 'human history-making'. Thus, in order for a Pentecostal appropriation of Freire's pedagogy, there must be a reworking of the theological framework upon which it was built that affirms a God who is active historically and presently, and that affirms the validity of religious experience among the oppressed.

Because the crux of Freire's pedagogy is conscientization, Johns' theological reframing of Freire's model is accomplished through proposing Pentecostalism as a movement of conscientization.⁶⁴ The transformative and liberationist emphases of Pentecostalism's Wesleyan and Black roots, respectively, set a historical precedent for Pentecostalism as a movement of conscientization.

The Wesleyan-Holiness understanding of sanctification that was adopted by early Pentecostals was one that saw societal transformation as participation in the divine life. The black spirituality that helped shaped the movement emphasized the equality of all people, as demonstrated through "an oral, ongoing liturgy, maximum participation of the body, and the freedom to include such things as visions and dreams."⁶⁵ Of particular importance is the oral-narrative hermeneutic that developed in the early days of Azusa. Truth ceases to be something which can be abstracted from reality and instead is

⁶³ Ibid., 57–59. Freire's denial of the religious experiences of oppressed peoples causes him to view the end goal of conscientization as not just the liberation of humankind, but 'the liberation or the "demythologizing" of God,' as well. (p. 9)

⁶⁴ Ibid., chap. 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 69.

grounded in the individual's relationship with and experience of God. This allows for a dynamic liturgy in which pentecostal worship becomes the context for the conscientization of the community. The Holy Spirit is the agent which allows individuals to ascend the hierarchy of consciousness and empowers them "for service which is grounded in and should respond to concrete human suffering."⁶⁶ Integral to these processes is sanctification and Spirit Baptism, respectively. Furthermore, Pentecostalism fosters personal transformation in that it operates and believes in contrast to the 'established order of society,' offering 'a critique by actualizing an alternative'.⁶⁷ Thus, the threefold character of the Pentecostal community as 'a worshipping community, a learning community and a serving community,' allows Pentecostalism to function as a movement of conscientization.⁶⁸

Within the context of Pentecostalism, conscientization, therefore, involves making known 'true stories' which give courage, unveiling the lies of the established order and empowering people to know themselves in a transformative way. The method of conscientization, consequently, includes dialogue and reflection on a cognitive-critical level but goes beyond this to the telling of God's actions and purposes and the testifying of how humans can join in these actions for the transformation of the world.⁶⁹

Hence, when all three characteristics are present, a community of character is formed.

In light of Freire's theory of conscientization, and Pentecostalism's embodiment of it, Johns' puts forward a method of catechesis which should 'challenge people within their own context to consider critically their reality in the light of the kingdom of God.'⁷⁰

This paradigm is presented first in terms of the six traditional categories utilized in

⁶⁶ Ibid., 109.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 109–110.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 111.

pedagogical systems, followed by a proposed approach to group bible study that actualizes the potential for conscientization inherent within Pentecostalism. This paradigm is contingent upon Johns' redefinition of catechesis as 'the means whereby the Pentecostal community becomes aware of God's revelation and responds to this revelation in faithful obedience.'⁷¹

The goal of Pentecostal catechesis is the promotion of a lived Christian faith, actualized both locally and globally, of which "Scripture is the standard for [both] the process and the outcome of the catechetical process."⁷² Similarly, the content of Pentecostal catechesis is both experience and Scripture, which exist together in a dialectical tension mediated by the Spirit.⁷³ The role of the student within this framework is to be an active participant in the ongoing actualization of the kingdom of God. This is contingent upon the student seeing themselves as not just a subject of the historical process, as Freire would suggest, but as an "[object] of God's divine initiative upon the world."⁷⁴ The teacher, then, assists in the conscientization of the student by facilitating a divine-human encounter through which the Holy Spirit can function as the real teacher. Vital to this process is the teaching community. The community of faith functions as the teaching community in Pentecostal catechesis and, thus, corporate worship is the primary context through which the affective and cognitive dimensions of the faith are conjoined. As such, the community becomes the "primary agent of conscientization."⁷⁵ Johns lists the means for conscientization that are most common amongst Pentecostals as:

⁷¹ Ibid., 121.

⁷² Ibid., 122.

⁷³ This concept will be further developed in my chapter on Pentecostal hermeneutics below.

⁷⁴ Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, 123.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 125.

communion, footwashing, testimony, healing rituals, Spirit baptism, and songs and dances.⁷⁶

In light of the above, Johns' proposed method for group bible study is as follows.⁷⁷ The first step is the sharing of testimonies wherein the individuals give a personal account of their lives and "ongoing confrontation of the uncertainties of life in Christ."⁷⁸ This is more than just a time for sharing stories as it requires critical reflection on reality and lived past, both near and distant. These confessional reflections are then brought to the Scriptures during a time of searching through the text for relevant passages. This searching is not aimless nor shallow, but intentional and thorough. Johns suggests an inductive approach to the text as a possible hermeneutic. The next step is to yield to the Spirit in light of the testimonies that have been shared and the passages that were read. The group should ask, "what is the Spirit saying to the church through this passage about our lives and the world in which we live?"⁷⁹ This should ultimately lead to the final step which is to respond to the call. As the Spirit transforms our view of reality through the text, new testimonies should emerge that speak to what the Lord is compelling us to do. Within this stage a sense of individual and corporate accountability should develop that inspires the group to respond and transform the world around them.

Since Johns' work came out in 1993, only two other significant scholarly publications by Pentecostals have dealt specifically with discipleship.⁸⁰ First, James P.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 125–129. Johns explains in short how each practice functions as a means of conscientization.

⁷⁷ This method first appeared in Jackie and Cheryl Johns' "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study" which can now be accessed in Lee Roy Martin, ed., *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 33–56.

⁷⁸ Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, 131.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 136.

⁸⁰ Mark J. Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 4–9. When conducting my initial research, I was not aware of this book. Coincidentally, Cartledge engages Johns, Bowers, and

Bowers put forth a Wesleyan-Pentecostal, soteriological understanding of discipleship that extends beyond just group Bible study.⁸¹ His model emphasized the relationship between the individual and the community in the salvific process, identifying this relationship as essential to bringing about redemption and holiness. Thus, communal elements such as “educational programs, parenting initiatives, the church community, pastors and the eldership, small discipleship groups, church structures and decision-making processes, membership and church discipline, and the ministry of believers” can all be revisioned for the sake of discipleship.⁸² Second, R. Jerome Boone further expanded upon the role of worship in the discipleship process in his “Community and Worship: The Key Components of Pentecostal Christian Formation”.⁸³ Boone emphasizes the ritualistic nature of pentecostal worship and communal life, suggesting that these rituals function as transformational events in the life of the community. Worship, then, becomes almost sacramental in nature by facilitating an encounter with the divine thus bringing about communal and individual transformation.⁸⁴

Boone in his initial assessment of Pentecostal Formation as well. The fact that these sources, all published between 1993 and 1996, were independently recognized by both Cartledge and I as the leading sources on the subject speaks to the need for further engagement with discipleship by Pentecostals.

⁸¹ James Philemon Bowers, “A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Approach to Christian Formation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3, no. 6 (1995): 55–86, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001246818&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁸² Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 7.

⁸³ R Jerome Boone, “Community and Worship: The Key Components of Pentecostal Christian Formation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 8 (April 1996): 129–142, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001246836&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* This transformation is internal and external for both the community and the individual. The community experiences internal change through the transformation of the individual members. As the overall community experiences this transformation, they can become a prophetic witness to the world around them. The individual change described by Bower is very similar to Johns’ understanding of conscientization amongst Pentecostals.

Cartledge identifies several strengths and weaknesses with the above works. He praises them for their thoroughly Pentecostal treatments of discipleship, specifically in terms of their relational epistemology, usage of Scripture, and understanding of conflict as leading to greater prophetic witness.⁸⁵ However, he does draw attention to three potential problems that can arise from these understandings of discipleship. Relational epistemologies, in the context of communities, can lead to a “sociopragmatic hermeneutic” that has the potential to both domesticate problematic voices within the community and ignore critiques from outside sources.⁸⁶ Pneumatology could also be made subordinate to ecclesiology, which has both liturgical and hermeneutical ramifications. Liturgically, a particular style of worship or communal life may take precedence and eliminate the diversity of expression that is inspired by the Spirit. Hermeneutically, the Spirit’s role in interpretation may ultimately become subordinate to the community.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to develop a theological understanding of discipleship and expose the need that exists for a more explicitly Pentecostal treatment of the topic. The engagement of Bonhoeffer and the biblical text served to emphasize the intensity of Christ’s call to discipleship while the brief analysis of the Anabaptist tradition bore witness to the plausibility of successful discipleship within communities. The thorough engagement of Johns’ *Pentecostal Formation* was to develop an understanding of Pentecostal discipleship from an academic, theological perspective. Of

⁸⁵ Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

particular importance is the role Johns identifies for Pentecostal communities within society. The works of Boone, Bowers, and Cartledge were engaged to bring further insight into existing understandings of Pentecostal discipleship. Cartledge's work has both affirmed and broadened my own critiques of Pentecostal discipleship. In retrospect, while there has been some treatment of the topic, a robust theology of discipleship has yet to be developed in Pentecostal circles.

CHAPTER 3: A PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTIC

In order to revision existing Pentecostal understandings of discipleship in relation to our contemporary context by interpreting Psalm 23 as a paradigm for discipleship, I will employ a hermeneutic that reflects the interpretive philosophies of the 21st century. To develop this hermeneutic I will put Ken Archer in conversation with Chris Green. Both scholars do their theology within a Pentecostal context and have written monographs dealing specifically with how Pentecostals have and should interpret Scripture in light of our post-modern society. The primary texts I will be using are Archer's *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, and Green's *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*. I will begin this chapter by summarizing Archer and Green's evaluations of early Pentecostal hermeneutics in light of each other. I will then present Archer's hermeneutical strategy, utilizing his understanding of the role of the Spirit in the interpretive process as the dialogical starting point for Green's hermeneutical approach.⁸⁷

*A Critical History of Pentecostal Hermeneutics*⁸⁸

The interpretation of Scripture by Pentecostals has been anything but consistent over the movement's brief history. The hermeneutical method of early Pentecostal leaders greatly reflected their Holiness roots. Known as the Bible Reading Method, it was:

⁸⁷ I purposefully make the distinction between Archer's 'hermeneutical strategy' and Green's 'hermeneutical approach'. While Archer proposes a Pentecostal hermeneutical method, Green outlines a Pentecostal approach to Scripture grounded in the movement's Holiness roots.

⁸⁸ For a more comprehensive look at early and contemporary Pentecostal interpretation see: L. William Oliviero Jr., *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition*, 2nd ed., Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 12 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015).

...a commonsensical method that relied upon inductive and deductive interpretative reading skills. Once the biblical data was analyzed, it was then synthesized into a biblical doctrine. Harmonization was the acceptable and necessary way to synthesis all the biblical data on a particular subject.⁸⁹

Essentially, early Pentecostals read through Scripture in order to find seemingly related passages and infer from these passages some consistent truth which they could then appropriate as doctrine. It was inherently text-centered, relying little on external analysis as was often required of more formal, academic methods of exegesis.

Their pre-critical methods also allowed them to be radically Christocentric in their readings of Scripture. They did not seek to simply harmonize New Testament texts in order to reach doctrinal truths, as a defining characteristic of early Pentecostal publications was their extensive readings of Christ into the Old Testament.⁹⁰ This arose out of their understanding that all Scripture pointed to Christ.⁹¹ Thus, they approached the text “expecting to encounter *Christ* and, second, they came to the Scriptures expecting to *encounter* Christ.”⁹² Early Pentecostal interpreters postured themselves in such a way before they read the Bible that reflected how they worshipped in that they expected to experience God.

Eventually, Pentecostals began to drift away from their early hermeneutical methods in favor of the preferred historical-critical method of the Evangelical world. This shift began during the 1920’s when Pentecostals adopted the modernistic methods of the

⁸⁹ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009), 101.

⁹⁰ Chris E. W. Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 114–118.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 115. Green draws parallels between early Pentecostal views of Scripture and those of Medieval Christians, both of which saw the Bible as being a unified whole, best embodied in the life and message of Christ. Green quotes the Dec 9, 1916 edition of the *Weekly Evangel* (an early Pentecostal publication) in describing this dynamic: “The New Testament lies concealed in the Old, and the OT is revealed in the NT.”

⁹² *Ibid.* Green’s own emphasis.

Fundamentalists, a group which, ironically, never truly accepted Pentecostals among their ranks.⁹³ Nevertheless, the shift towards Fundamentalism allowed certain Pentecostal groups to be accepted among the wider Evangelical world in the 1940's when Fundamentalism became the primary theological voice within Evangelical circles.⁹⁴

Looking back on Pentecostalism's development since these first steps towards acceptance within the Evangelical world were made brings to light the positives and negatives of such a drastic shift. By appealing to and adopting the modernistic philosophies that dominated the academy during most of the 20th century, early Pentecostal scholars made it possible for future generations to be accepted – or at least tolerated – in academia. Without them, we would not be where we are today as a movement both academically and popularly. Furthermore, joining with the National Association of Evangelicals in 1943 allowed for unity both within and without the movement. As Stephen Hunt puts it:

This newly emerging organization allowed the opportunity for Pentecostals to redefine their movement. It also meant that the acceptance of the Pentecostal bodies throughout America into the evangelical mainstream. Thus Pentecostalism was well on its way to social and ecclesiastical respectability before the first stirrings of Charismatic Renewal in the mainline churches. In addition, the creation by Pentecostals of umbrella organizations among themselves, such as the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, brought a greater ecumenical depth, while international cooperative ventures began to unite various streams of global Pentecostalism to which the activities of the American bodies were central.⁹⁵

⁹³ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, 87.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Stephen Hunt, *A History of the Charismatic Movement in Britain and the United States of America: The Pentecostal Transformation of Christianity*, vol. 1 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 135.

Pentecostalism as a global movement would likely not be as widespread as it is today being it not for their joining of the NAE, a venture which was largely made possible by their adoption of a modern hermeneutic.

However, we must also count the cost of such a shift. As was noted above, early Pentecostal theology (primarily that done within the first decade after Azusa) was pre-critical in its approach and commonsensical in its understanding. These methods, while a result of the Wesleyan-Holiness influence on Azusa and also as a result of the uneducated majority within the early Pentecostal movement, reflect the very ethos of Pentecostalism. They emphasized the notion of the “priesthood of all believers” that was central to the Azusa revival. Ignoring, in a sense, more formal types of exegesis allowed them to engage the text in ways which were not possible using more “academic” methods of interpretation. That’s why early Pentecostals were so adept at seeing Christ in the Old Testament; they read it as a story with Christ as its main character. The more difficult it was to reconcile a passage with the person and work of Christ, the greater the truth that emerged.⁹⁶ Their hermeneutic emerged not from the scientific method, as did that of both the liberals and the Fundamentalists,⁹⁷ but from their intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ Thus, embracing the hermeneutical methods of modernity hindered the full cooperation of the Spirit that early Pentecostals relied on when reading Scripture.

⁹⁶ Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 118.

⁹⁷ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, 86–88.

⁹⁸ Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 122.

A 21st-Century Pentecostal Hermeneutical Strategy

Recent trends in Pentecostal hermeneutics have sought to remedy the damage to Pentecostal readings of Scripture that have resulted from their embracement of modernity.⁹⁹ By reclaiming the epistemological and soteriological concerns of early Pentecostal hermeneutics, Ken Archer and Chris Green, respectively, have paved the way for a Pentecostal approach to Scripture which I believe can be used to read it in a way that is faithful to the heart of the Pentecostal movement whilst engaging the text in a (post-)critical academic manner.

Archer's interpretive strategy is predicated upon the tridactic relationship between the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the interpreting community. He draws this dynamic from John Christopher Thomas' argument that the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 demonstrates the early church's hermeneutical strategy as reflecting this tridactic negotiation stated above.¹⁰⁰ Archer's strategy emphasizes the importance of Pentecostalism's Central Narrative Convictions, namely the 'Latter Rain' motif by which they identified themselves, and their Full Gospel understanding of Christ's role in God's redemptive plan for creation.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Grieving, Brooding, and Transforming," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 23, no. 2 (October 2014): 141–153, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=99181125&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. This particularly striking and powerful example of contemporary rejections of modern Evangelical interpretations of Scripture frames the interpretive process through the lens of feminism.

¹⁰⁰ John C. Thomas, "Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2, no. 5 (October 1, 1994): 41–56, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1177/096673699400200504>.

¹⁰¹ See Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Story: The Hermeneutical Filter for the Making of Meaning," *Pneuma* 26, no. 1 (March 1, 2004): 36–59, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/157007404776111090>.

Because of the centrality of the Pentecostal story to the early Pentecostals, Archer develops a narrative critical approach to biblical interpretation in order to stay faithful to the Pentecostal ethos. This approach posits the reader as an active participant with(in) the biblical narrative(s), allowing for an experiential relationship between the reader and the word.¹⁰² Thus, Scripture becomes a dialogical partner within the ongoing dialectic of interpretation because the text is able to speak uniquely in different contexts.¹⁰³

Understanding the importance of the reader in determining meaning, Archer then develops the position of the community within his hermeneutical framework.¹⁰⁴ The contribution of the community is twofold: 1) the community determines the context from which the text is read and engaged, and 2) the community determines the method, which, as stated above, is a narrative critical method of interpretation. The context of the community is integral to the interpretive process because our context's shape who we are as individuals and communities. This dynamic becomes apparent when comparing the context of early Pentecostals with that of contemporary American Pentecostals. However, understanding the initial context of the Pentecostal movement is necessary even when developing and employing a contemporary 'Pentecostal hermeneutic.' The diversity that was present at Azusa shaped the movement's message of inclusion, as shown above. This meant that Pentecostalism *as a movement* is an advocate for those ostracized from

¹⁰² Melissa L. Archer, *"I Was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day": A Pentecostal Engagement with Worship in the Apocalypse* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 47.

¹⁰³ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, 215–223. Archer utilizes semiotic theory to explain the relationship between the text and the reader. The social-cultural background of the text as well as its final linguistic form are contributing voices in the conversation, but do not in and of themselves determine the meaning of the text. "Semiotics also views the text as an underdeterminate yet stable entity that affirms the reader as a necessary component in the communicative event and the making of meaning." (p. 223)

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 223–247.

society. Zachary Tackett would argue that Early Pentecostals were essentially liberationist in their theology.¹⁰⁵ Therefore:

A contemporary Pentecostal missional hermeneutic must embrace the same starting position as the Liberationist – the present context of the community. Both share a basic understanding that Scripture is to be read and heard in an ecclesiastical context. The ecclesiastical context is the local base community. The interpretive process is a grass roots communal activity. The Pentecostal hermeneut must be entrenched within a Pentecostal community and in tune with the concrete realities of suffering, poverty and marginalization. This incarnational approach of being the people of God in solidarity with the suffering of humanity creates com-passion.¹⁰⁶

Even if the present context of the interpreter is not one of suffering, poverty, and marginalization, the experience of the Spirit allows us as a community to identify with and advocate for the oppressed in our readings of Scripture.¹⁰⁷ Thus, in order to interpret the bible as Pentecostals, we must engage the text in a manner faithful to our historic and global communities in addition to our present contexts, whatever they may be.

This now leads us to the role of the Spirit in Archer's hermeneutical strategy. Archer identifies the Holy Spirit as dependent upon both Scripture and the community to be heard but states that "the Spirit's voice is not reduced to or simply equated with the Biblical text or the community, but is connected to and dependent upon these as a necessary means for expressing the concern(s) of the God-head (Trinity)."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Zachary Michael Tackett, "As a Prophetic Voice: Liberationism as a Matrix for Interpreting American Pentecostal Thought and Praxis," *JEPTA: Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 33, no. 1 (March 2013): 42–57, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=86872068&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth J Archer and Richard E Waldrop, "Liberating Hermeneutics: Toward a Holistic Pentecostal Mission of Peace and Justice," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 31, no. 1 (2011): 75, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATL A0001833487&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁰⁷ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, 250.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 247–248.

It is the concerns of the God-head that are of particular importance to us as Christians and I believe Chris Green brings these concerns to light in *Sanctifying Interpretation*. If, as Archer states, “the goal is to understand the text as the Spirit inspires the community to discern the meaning for today,”¹⁰⁹ then Green would contend that the Spirit is using the text to sanctify and transform the community through its readings of Scripture. To put it in Green’s own words:

By the Spirit’s grace, the Scripture *works* salvation, renewing our vision of the world by transforming us at the depths of our being. So transformed, we begin to discover our place in the mission of God entrusted to the church, and to bring his goodness and justice to bear in the lives of our neighbors and enemies.¹¹⁰

For Green, the transformational working of the Spirit through Scripture is grounded in the Christian’s call to vocation and holiness. However, if we are to properly interpret Scripture for the purpose of transforming those two attributes of the Christian life, we must first properly understand those two attributes.¹¹¹ In short, Green says that:

... we are called to share in Christ’s vocation, joining him in bringing to bear God’s holiness for the good of all creation, and... that we cannot live out our vocation unless and until we dramatically reimagine the character of holiness and the sanctified life, seeing our set-apart-ness not as an end in itself, but as a call to live together with Christ in his radical openness to and intercession for our neighbors.¹¹²

Thus, “our readings of Scripture work to draw us into that holiness, (trans)forming us for our vocation as Christ’s co-sanctified co-sanctifiers.”¹¹³ More specifically, the Spirit, by helping the reader see Christ in the Old and New Testaments, ultimately uses Scripture to

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth J. Archer, “Hermeneutics,” in Adam Stewart, ed., *Handbook of Pentecostal Christianity* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2012), 108-116 [p. 116].

¹¹⁰ Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 111.

¹¹¹ For his full revisioning of vocation and holiness see Chapters 1 and 2 in *Sanctifying Interpretation*.

¹¹² Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 109.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

sanctify the reader. These intertextual echoes allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, adding to the depth of meaning without compromising the semiotic integrity of the text.¹¹⁴ Properly understanding intertextuality, as it relates to the relationship of the OT to the NT, allows us to assess and further extrapolate the usage of OT texts in the NT into the present day. This mindset was clearly present among early Pentecostals who began to understand themselves as part of the Latter Rain. When guided by the Spirit, discovering the intertextual echoes of the biblical text can be a prophetic experience that allows the reader to step into the text and be transformed.

Conclusion

I believe that I have shown that the two interpretive approaches detailed above are complementary. Archer's attention to the vital role of community within the tridactic negotiation for meaning emphasizes the importance of Azusa's message of inclusion. Furthermore, by employing a narrative-critical approach to the text, Pentecostals can read Scripture in light of their central narrative convictions. As the Full Gospel, prophetic community of the Latter Rain, Pentecostals understand themselves to be active participants in the ongoing work of Christ.

By taking a soteriological, rather than an epistemological, approach to Scripture, Green avoids the often-harmful language of modernity that is used to describe the nature and inspiration of Scripture.¹¹⁵ This approach allows for the Spirit to be understood as

¹¹⁴ See Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, vol. 30, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, n.d.), chap. 2.

¹¹⁵ Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture*, 2. This apprehension to embrace conventional Evangelical epistemological concerns about Scripture is shared by Archer. See Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic*, 200-208.

that which transforms the reader through their reading of Scripture, a relationship which builds upon the Spirit's role as it is described by Archer. This is accomplished, in part, by the function of intertextual echoes as narrative starting points through which readers can enter the text. When read in this way, the Biblical text allows for a more dynamic reading of discipleship both within the New Testament and, as the following chapter will demonstrate, in the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 4: REVISIONING PENTECOSTAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The above chapters have served to bring light to need for a more robust and distinctly Pentecostal theology of discipleship. Many aspects of the existing theology of discipleship are indispensable, but so far, the movement has failed to produce a theology reflective of the diverse implications of Pentecostalism. The purpose of the following is to lay the foundation upon which a more robust theology of discipleship can be developed. First, I will identify the intertextual echoes that allow Psalm 23 to be read Christologically. Then I will interpret Psalm 23 as a metaphor for the life of a disciple, bringing to light key aspects and events that accompany such a journey.

A Pentecostal Approach to Psalm 23

Psalm 23 occupies a special position within the Christian tradition on account of its widespread popularity both within and without the Church.¹¹⁶ John Goldingay puts it best when he writes:

Its preciousness derives in part from its lyricism and metaphor. One cannot tie down any aspect of some concrete situation that its author had in mind. Everything is imagery. The consequence is that readers can directly access the psalm through their own experience of (e.g.) lack, provision, darkness, fear, and trouble. This may be especially easy for people who (e.g.) have experience of shepherding or dark canyons, but it is also quite possible for people who have no such experience, because the metaphors themselves have a capacity to transcend cultural and experiential gaps. Interpreting a psalm such as this cannot focus on seeking to establish the specific experience out of which it came. It focuses on the metaphors the psalm uses, so as to enter as deeply as possible into their content and resonances.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ David Gambrell, "Following the Shepherd Psalm through the Ages," *Liturgy* 27, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 29–36, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2012.666460>; David Jasper, "The Twenty-Third Psalm in English Literature," *Religion & Literature* 30, no. 1 (1998): 1–11, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40059798>.

¹¹⁷ John Goldingay, *Psalms*, vol. 1, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 43.

Hence, the great depth of meaning that can be found within this psalm does not arise out of a historical-critical approach to the text, but rather a more nuanced analysis of the metaphors that are presented.

The narrative of this particular poem follows the journey of the psalmist as they follow the leading of Yahweh. The structure of this poem depends on the interpretation of the predominant metaphors in the text. The most natural reading of Psalm 23 presents one overarching metaphor for the Lord as Shepherd.¹¹⁸ Sam Terrien identifies four strophes within this larger metaphor that each correspond with a particular role of the Shepherd: Pastor, Guide, Healer, and Host.¹¹⁹ These five related metaphors will guide my reading of the text.

Jesus refers to himself as “the good shepherd” in John 10:11, and the book of Hebrews builds upon this theme further, referring to Jesus as “the great shepherd” (Heb. 13:20).¹²⁰ This notion, coupled with the familiarity of referring to Jesus as Lord, allows for a Christological re-reading of Psalm 23 in light of the gospel. Therefore, reading the psalm as that of a faithful follower of Yahweh becomes reading the psalm as that of a committed disciple of Christ.

A necessary part of the life of a disciple is the ongoing relationship one has with Christ. This dynamic is often represented through the metaphor of a journey. For

¹¹⁸ Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 239.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹²⁰ Steven W Smith, “Jesus Christ, the Good to Great Shepherd,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 56, no. 1 (September 2013): 53, accessed October 24, 2016, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATL A0001991826&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Pentecostals, this journey is known as the *via salutis*, or “way of salvation.”¹²¹ It is through our ongoing relationship with Christ that we are continually being saved. For Archer, this *via salutis* is embodied in the Fivefold Gospel.¹²² Archer integrates the two by identifying five sacramental ordinances that correlate to a doxological confession within the Fivefold Gospel and that serve as significant crisis experiences along the *via salutis*.

Read with the above theological framework in mind, Psalm 23 can be understood as a paradigmatic text for the life of a disciple. The journey that the psalmist describes draws parallels to the *via salutis* as understood within the framework of the Fivefold Gospel. This particular reading will not take the form of a traditional exegesis. Rather, it will be a more narrative reading of the text with the purpose of developing a theological metaphor for the life of a disciple from which a more robust theology of discipleship can be developed.¹²³

Interpretation of Psalm 23

“*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*”

The psalmist begins with a powerful declaration of faith in and dependency on Yahweh. The life of a disciple begins with a similar declaration, expressed in Rom. 10:9 as a confession that “Jesus is Lord.” Such a statement marked the beginning of our lives

¹²¹ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 65–82.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 68–73.

¹²³ There already exists, within Pentecostal scholarship, a precedent for creative interpretations of the Psalms. See Lee Roy Martin, “Longing for God: Psalm 63 and Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 1 (April 2013): 54–76, accessed March 30, 2017, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=87602487&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

as disciples and our recognition of Jesus as Savior symbolized our embarking upon the *via salutis*.

When we begin our journey with Christ, we begin to realize that in Him all our desires are fulfilled. The Shepherd will provide for us in all areas of our life, nurturing us and bringing true peace into our hearts. No longer will the temporary pleasures of the flesh bring us satisfaction, for in Him we find true fulfillment.

“² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.”

As disciples are pastored into the body of Christ, represented by the psalmist joining the Shepherd’s flock,¹²⁴ we find ourselves surrounded by an abundance of life that was previously unavailable. Just as the sheep in the psalmist’s day would have been travelling through a landscape largely devoid of life, so too do we find ourselves living amidst a culture that operates antithetically to the sustainment of both physical and spiritual life. But, the pastoring Savior made a way and revealed to us the green pastures and quiet waters that can truly sustain us.

The waters also remind us of Jesus’ call to baptism. Once we begin to drink from the life-giving stream, we should feel compelled to immerse ourselves totally in it. In baptism we identify ourselves fully with Christ, reenacting His atoning death and resurrection on the Cross.¹²⁵ We emerge from the cleansing waters washed anew as an outward testimony to the internal transformation experienced in our initial salvific experience, and one step further into a lifelong journey with Christ.

“³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

¹²⁴ Goldingay, *Psalms*, 1:348–349.

¹²⁵ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 75–76.

If we continue to be fed by the same grass or drink from the same stream, we'll ultimately face the reality that every pasture will cease to grow, and every stream will one day run dry. We cannot grow complacent in our initial salvation because in doing so we miss the point of why Christ brought us to that point of salvation to begin with. When we experience initial salvation, we are justified and regenerated through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This same Spirit continually restores our soul so that we can learn to follow the Shepherd's call. When we journey along the paths of righteousness that bring glory to His name, the Spirit sanctifies us from within, allowing us to better understand how to love Christ every day.

Inevitably as we walk along these paths our feet will get dirty from the distractions that cause us to misstep. However, if we wash each other's feet, acknowledging that the journey isn't over but that the dirt that clings to us is simply a reminder of paths already tread, we can embody on the outside the internal sanctification that Christ is accomplishing within us through the Holy Spirit.¹²⁶ In doing so, we honor the work that Christ has done, and continues to do, as he guides us towards the greener pastures of eternity.

"⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

There may be moments along the journey where, even as disciples, we face hardship. Walking through the shadow of death is an inevitable consequence of living in a world that prefers the way of sin to the way of salvation. We are not precluded from suffering on account of our following Christ because we are a part of the suffering world which Christ was sent to redeem. However, we do not need to fear evil as Christ has

¹²⁶ Ibid., 76-77.

empowered us with the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ The rod and staff, which once belonged only to the Shepherd, now belongs to us as well. In Christ, and through the Spirit, we have been made “more than conquerors” in the face of any evil or suffering we may experience (Rom. 8:37-39). The Lord will protect us because the Lord dwells within us. This power is made a reality when we exercise the gift of glossolalic tongues. It is a reminder to our communities of the self-giving love of Jesus our Spirit Baptizer, and a witness to the world of the indescribable power of the Spirit which comforts us and gives us strength.¹²⁸

“^{5a} You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;”

As we read of the table that is prepared before us we are reminded of Jesus at the Last Supper, hosting his disciples at what would be his last meal with them. At this final meal Jesus willingly ate with Judas, whom he knew would soon betray him. And yet, Jesus promised his disciples that his body would be broken, and his blood would be shed for all that sat at the table. In Christ we may no longer be of the world, but like Christ we are called to live among the enemies of the Gospel. Therefore, when we celebrate the Eucharist together as disciples, we challenge the established order of society. At this table we “dine in the fully-realized identity and dignity of being God’s people, saved and sustained through the mission of the Son and Spirit!”¹²⁹ It is a reminder of Jesus’ unconditional love and, “by the Spirit’s intimately effective presence, the simple acts of eating Christ’s bread and drinking his cup become by faith and in hope an anticipatory share in the delights of the beatific vision, a foretaste of the eschatological banquet.”¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Ibid., 43–64.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 77–78.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 80.

¹³⁰ Chris E. W. Green, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of The Lord’s Supper: Foretasting the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012), 325.

“^{5b}You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.”

This anointing of oil is familiar to many whom take seriously the words of James 5:14-15 and believe in their hearts that Jesus came not just to save them, but to heal them. When we anoint others with oil and pray for God to heal them, we do so with the belief that Jesus has already healed us, is healing us, and will continue to heal us. This healing goes beyond just our physical bodies, but encompasses the whole of our very being.¹³¹ Whenever we do experience a physical healing within our community, we know that we have experienced an inbreaking of the eschatological Kingdom of God into the present.¹³²

The overflowing cup speaks to the abundant, sustaining grace given to us through the Spirit to which our healing serves as a testimony. This abundance of grace invites us to share it with those around us both within and without our immediate group of disciples. Just as Christ compassionately pours out his Spirit to us, so too should we demonstrate the same level of compassion to those within our larger communities that need to experience the healing power of Christ.

“^{6a}Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,”

When we live our lives as a journey with Christ and allow the Spirit to renew us along the way, we can look back and see the evidence of a disciplined life. As disciples, our lives should be marked by the same goodness and lovingkindness which Christ embodied when he walked upon the earth. The fruits of the Spirit should be evident in the way we interacted with those around us and in how we worshiped God. This journey is a lifelong commitment, but it is one which inspires joy and peace in the hearts of those who truly commit themselves to following Christ every step of the way.

¹³¹ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 79.

¹³² *Ibid.*

“6b And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Eventually our journeys will bring us to the end of our days on earth, but, as disciples we must recognize that death is not the end. Through Christ we have been made eligible for eternal life in the Kingdom of God. While death is tragic and is a cause for mourning within the community of disciples, it is also a reminder of the great hope we have in Christ. Christ came so that we “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10), and there is no greater hope in life than to dwell in the house of the Lord, surrounded by the abundance of his presence.

Everything preceding us on this journey ultimately points to the eschatological Kingdom of God which we will one day be a part of. Jesus saves us so that we can be made citizens of his Kingdom as members of the Body of Christ. The Spirit’s continual healing and sanctification ultimately points towards the glorified bodies we will receive that were made possible in and through Christ. Speaking in tongues serves to empower the community as a “charismatic witness along the way to the city whose builder is God.”¹³³ Whenever we participate in the Eucharist, we do so in anticipation of Christ’s imminent return. As a community of disciples, we are the embodiment of Christ’s future kingdom, making known in the present the promises of God for eternity. As individual disciples, we are called to embody the ways of Christ so that we can carry out His mission in our daily lives and make known the saving grace of Jesus Christ to the lost sheep of the world.

¹³³ Ibid., 78.

Conclusion

Several notable conclusions can be developed from the above interpretation when placed in conversation with existing understandings of Pentecostal discipleship. First, the implied communal dynamics inherent within the metaphor of the sheep and the Shepherd allows for a redefinition of discipleship. Discipleship is the ongoing process through which individuals-in-community are developed into greater Christ-likeness of being.¹³⁴ Within this definition, four specific aspects of discipleship can be further developed.

Discipleship is primarily soteriological in nature. The process of discipleship necessarily follows the path of the *via salutis* because in order to be a disciple of Jesus, we must first experience salvation. This salvation should not be understood as having effect only after we die, but should inspire a radically changed life in the present. Especially for those Pentecostals who are not living in a marginalized community, this salvation should result in a commitment to social change and advocacy for the oppressed.

Discipleship is eschatological in its orientation in that it is a perpetual striving for that which will ultimately be accomplished upon the full inbreaking of the eschaton. The discipleship process should not create disciples content with remaining where they are at spiritually and simply waiting for Christ to return. A life of discipleship is characterized by an intentional striving for the ideal which will only be made possible when we enter the Kingdom of God. In this sense, Johns' understanding of the purpose of formation, which is to develop individuals capable of understanding and shaping their reality, can be placed within a broader eschatological framework.

¹³⁴ I attribute the term "individuals-in-community" to Ken Archer. See *Ibid.*, 77.

Furthermore, discipleship is pneumatological in its affection. The Spirit guides and actualizes the discipling process in cooperation with each disciple. The Spirit will only work in the life of a disciple in accordance with how willing the disciple is to be transformed, not out of an inability to transform, but out of respect for the free-will of the individual. Discipleship cannot be accomplished without the internal transformation brought about by the saving grace made available through the indwelling of the Spirit. The pneumatological dimension of discipleship is best understood within Johns' framework of conscientization.

Discipleship is ecclesiological in its context. God uses the Church as the community through which individual disciples can experience greater transformation than is possible in isolation. When immersed within a worshipping community, individuals are able to participate in the Kingdom of God in the here and now as the Spirit makes His presence known. For Pentecostals, this is best exemplified through the communal observance of the sacramental ordinances which serve as "opportunities for the Spirit to work redemptively in the faithful participants within the Pentecostal proleptic worship service."¹³⁵

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 80–81.

CONCLUSION

After completing this study, several contributions and areas for future study can be recognized. One important contribution of this study was the hermeneutical strategy developed in Chapter 4. This particular strategy harmonized Ken Archer and Chris Green's interpretive models in light of the interpretive philosophies of early Pentecostals. It takes a soteriological approach to the text, rather than the traditional epistemological approach, that allows for a creative reappropriation of Old Testament texts through the lens of the saving work of Christ. This reading is made possible through the discerning voice of the Spirit between Scripture and the interpreting community as part of Archer's tridactic negotiation for meaning.

The redefinition and revisioning of Pentecostal discipleship in the preceding chapter is the most significant contribution of this study. First, my proposed definition emphasizes the necessarily overt dimensions of ecclesiology and soteriology for a Pentecostal theology of discipleship. Secondly, the two additional dimensions of pneumatology and eschatology, in conjunction with ecclesiology and soteriology, give my proposed theology of discipleship a broader theological foundation than is traditionally attributed to the topic.

However, the above definition and theological foundation for discipleship are by no means an exhaustive assessment of the topic from a Pentecostal perspective. The nature of this study did not warrant the full, systematic development of a theology of discipleship. This study was conducted in order to identify and develop a foundation for Pentecostal discipleship that reflects the movement in its North American context. My research was conducted using resources almost exclusively pertaining to North American

Pentecostalism. Thus, while the theological foundation which I developed within this thesis should be readily accessible to Pentecostals within North America, certain characteristics of Pentecostal communities outside North America may result in significant differences.

Further research will need to be conducted on the soteriological, eschatological, pneumatological, and ecclesiological dimensions of discipleship. For example, while the importance of the ecclesiastical community to discipleship was evidenced in my research on the early Pentecostal movement and existing theologies of discipleship, by and large my research did not interact with monograph-length works by Pentecostals dealing specifically with ecclesiology. My proposed model would have to be developed further in conversation with Pentecostal ecclesiologies in order to better understand the role of the Church in the discipleship process, such as the nature of conscientization in non-marginalized ecclesiastical communities.

Lastly, while a theoretical understanding of discipleship is important and much needed, it will ultimately fail in its purpose if it cannot be effectively translated into the ecclesiastical communities within which the discipleship process must take place. Therefore, a practical theology of discipleship would have to be developed in light of the theoretical theology of discipleship. This practical theology should emphasize a more intentional and overt emphasis on discipleship within Pentecostal worship services. Furthermore, Johns' proposed method for bible study could potentially be appropriated in creative ways which consider both the implications of my proposed theology of discipleship and of the digital age in which we live.

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