Contents

Editorial: The Courage to be Prophets

Shane Clifton

Lecturer in Theology and Director of Research, Alphacrucis College
shane.clifton@alphacrucis.edu.au

This last month has seen the launch of the third volume of the APS supplementary series, *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts*. Edited by Jacqueline Grey and myself, the book brings together scholars from diverse traditions (Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan, Pentecostal and Charismatic) and a range of academic and practical disciplines (biblical studies, theology, history, spirituality, communications, leadership), who all share a passion to raise up a generation of leaders who are not constrained by gender categories.

The book has its impetus in women's experiences; both the experience of empowerment that comes from life in the Spirit and, at the same time, the experience of explicit and implicit sexism that arises from stereotypical assumptions about the identity and role of women in the home, church and society. Cheryl Catford, whose PhD research investigated and described female experiences in the CRC movement, notes that:

> Female leaders recount stories of being ignored as their (non-ministerial) husbands are addressed, of leadership decisions made by male leaders while attending sporting events to which the women were not invited, of being directed to attend the denominational meetings for pastors' wives rather than those for ministers, and of enduring sexist jokes at their expense from their male colleagues. A female leader noted, "I have walked into many leadership conferences and joined a group of males discussing religion or politics. Intangibly the conversation shifts

and changes - it becomes patronising - and to be honest I have lost heart going to some of these things and "would like to POKE THEIR EYES OUT."[1]

It is disappointing, especially since Pentecostalism prides itself on its focus on the liberating power of the Spirit, to discover that these sorts of experiences are ubiquitous. They have their ground in long established theological assertions about male leadership and female submission, and are sustained by social practices that go unnoticed by most people. Indeed, it is this practical, socialised dimension of sexism that ensures that, even when philosophical presumptions about gender categories are overcome, the actual experience of women in our churches changes very little or, at least, very slowly. To give but one of many possible examples, the common practice of ensuring that men and women don't spend any time alone together – a practice whose intention is to prevent infidelity (or the appearance of it) – has the unintended consequence of contributing to the continued alienation of women from the structures of power in churches. By preventing the formation of cross-gender friendships, we not only exclude women from the informal relationships and settings in which many decisions are really made (even if they are formalised elsewhere), but we also prevent cross-gender mentoring. And since most church leaders are, presently, men, the consequence is that women do not receive the support that is vital to their rising to positions of leadership and authority.

Other practices could be cited, but the point is that change is dependent not only on theological development, but on the ability to reflect upon socio-historical practices with a critical eye, to recognise that common sense assumptions and habits may not, in fact, make sense. As Bernard Lonergan notes:

> Common sense commonly feels itself omnicompetent in practical affairs, commonly is blind to long term consequences of policies and courses of action, commonly is unaware of the admixture of common nonsense in its more cherished

1 Cheryl Catford, "Women's Experiences" in Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey, *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts* (Sydney: APS, 2009), 36.

convictions and slogans.[2]

He goes on to highlight the way in which common sense group behaviours and practices feed into ideologies (labelled by Christians as biblical theologies) that become entrenched communal biases, which work against human liberty and flourishing:

> in the measure that the group encouraged and accepted an ideology to rationalise its own behaviour, in the same measure it will be blind to the real situation, and it will be bewildered by the emergence of a contrary ideology that will call to consciousness an opposed group egoism … Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good. … A civilisation in decline digs its own grave with relentless consistency."[3]

Lonergan's discussion of common sense and group bias is relevant to Pentecostal attitudes to women, which have become ideological, self-referential, and thoroughly entrenched in horizons of the community. The reversal of this bias will be dependent upon the grace of God, which is capable of changing the way people think and reversing decline. This grace is mediated to communities through what Lonergan labels as the cosmopolis; the theologians, pastors (priests) and artists of various sorts (singers, musicians, poets, writers, painters) who have the responsibility of critically engaging with cultural values, identifying biases and envisaging knew ways of looking at the world.[4] Those Lonergan labels as the 'cosmopolis,' Pentecostals might describe as 'prophets' – people called to discern spirits and speak critically about the past and present and creatively about possibilities for the future.

In this way, the academic can be said to have a prophetic calling. We are more than just teachers of Christian tradition but, in fact, have the opportunity and responsibility to exercise discernment, and further, to raise our voice in both encouragement and challenge. This prophetic responsibility is not an easy one. If what we have to say is seen to be encouraging, defending the status quo, then life within our

---

2 Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: DLT, 1972), 53.
3 Ibid. 54-55.
4 Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 497.

movements and institutions is relatively straightforward – although we are confronted by the memory of the ancient prophets who faced divine judgement when their words proved to be nothing more than hot air, telling the powerful only what they want to hear. If what we have to say confronts the common sense ideologies of those in power, life is much more difficult. What does it mean for our careers (and the well-being of our families) to confront 'cherished convictions and slogans' that we believe have become ideological nonsense, and that are propagating and sustaining corruption and injustice? It is easy enough to address topics that are unlikely to cause us any real political difficulties. But what do we do when our pursuit of truth and spiritual discernment causes us to question aspects of communal identity that lie at the heart of institutional cultures and social structures?

I have no easy answer to this question. Pentecostal culture has a reputation (deserved or otherwise) for its reluctance to engage in the task of critical reflection, and this reluctance is particularly acute in Australia, with its critique of criticism itself, and its relentless insistence on positive thinking. This culture, derived from the fundamentalist response to the liberal takeover of institutions of higher learning, and expressed in "word of faith" and "prosperity" doctrines, declares that "negativity is an enemy to life." There is no doubt that negative thinking can be self-perpetuating, as can a positive attitude, but the greater danger occurs when a particular culture confuses "negativity" with "criticism", and rejects critical thinking altogether.   What is needed is the valuing of what might be termed "faithful criticism" (or, rather, "faithful critique").[5]

Notwithstanding this need, there are some topics that it seems easier to just avoid, at least in the conservative context of Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism. Gender based role distinctions are only one such topic and, at this point in our history, it is an issue that has lost some of its heat (if not its importance). Yet there are other topics that might not even be 'safe' to discuss (at least not if one has a view that differs from the norm); the church's treatment of homosexual people; centralising

---

5 See Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, ed. Andrew Davies, Global Pentecostal & Charismatic Studies (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 5.

trends in ecclesiology and the authority of the pastor; inter-religious encounter and dialogue; formative doctrines (such as baptism in the Spirit); literal six-day creationism; fundraising practices and theologies of tithing and prosperity, etc.. While the topics that may be unquestionable will differ from one movement and culture to another, the underlying dilemma for Pentecostal academics remains the same. Our own pursuit of authenticity in the process of study is likely to have taken us beyond the constraints of the common sense ideologies of our communities. In such cases, the challenge is working out how and when to become agents of change. Controversy for controversy's sake is not only likely to be motivated by egoism (which, no doubt, has formed the basis of many an academic career), but it is also likely to have little impact upon community values. A person kicked out of a movement, labelled a heretic or rebel, is essentially rendered voiceless. On the other hand, to say nothing about group biases potentially undermines one's own integrity, and may make one complicit in the corruption and power structures that have created and sustained error, manipulation and injustice.

The way forward is to hold together courage and wisdom. Paul Tillich describes the need for "the courage to be as oneself"[6] in the context of a democratic conformist society. His point is to note that corporate harmony is not undermined by individual research, by the free encounter of everybody with the bible, by "the courage to follow reason and to defy irrational authority."[7] In fact, this kind of revolutionary courage is essential to the flourishing and freedom of the whole, since it facilitates a transition towards "a good in which more and more people can participate, to a conformity which is based on the free activity of every individual."[8] Such courage, however, must be matched with wisdom, the spiritual discernment that enables one to realise that one is part of a larger whole, that the life of the community is more important than individual ego, that cultural change takes time, and that way one communicates challenging ideas is as important as the idea itself.

---

6 Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 2nd ed. (USA: Yale University Press, 1952), 113.
7 Ibid. 116.
8 Ibid. 114.

Having said all of this, I have to confess that I am neither courageous nor wise. I am, therefore, deeply aware of my need for the grace of God and the empowerment of the Spirit, so that I can take up my cross and follow Christ. Only then might I begin to fulfil my prophetic call and, along with my fellow scholars, contribute to the good of the community of which I am a part and, thereafter, play a redemptive role in society. I hope Jacqui and I have been courageous and wise in the publication of *Raising Women Leaders* and, more significantly, I pray that God might help me to understand and begin to model the self-sacrificing love of Jesus that is the true source of courage and wisdom.

In terms of this issue of APS, it is my belief that we have given voice to what can be labelled prophetic scholarship. In the first place, we have emphasised the work of three Old Testament scholars. Scott Ellington develops a biblical theology of the Spirit as creative and re-creative force, whose presence not only sustains every living thing, but who renews and repairs the spiritual and moral life of human persons and communities. Jacqui Grey explores a theology of creation and redemption from Isaiah 40-55 that moves beyond an anthropocentric focus to embrace the renewal of creation as a whole. This is an especially challenging message in the context of a church that has not taken its ecological responsibility seriously. Thirdly, Narelle Melton challenges us to renew the practice of lament, a form of spirituality that was vital not just to exilic Judaism, but also in the experience of early Australian Pentecostal communities, for whom honest dialogue with God was a vital means of engaging with the injustice and pain of everyday life.

Moving beyond the Old Testament, Neil Ormerod explores the shared missionary task of Catholicism and Pentecostalism in proclaiming the gospel in a globalising world. Ormerod is a Catholic scholar whose modelling of this ecumenical responsibility is apparent in his mentoring of my own scholarship – a service that has borne fruit in the forthcoming publication of our jointly authored book, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*.[9] Lastly, our next generation essay features Wayne Harrison, who explores the various

---

9 Neil Ormerod and Shane Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

factors that contribute to longevity of tenure of Pentecostal youth leaders. His research is of significant practical importance, since he identifies various contributing factors to the development of a long term vocational orientation for youth ministers, factors that prove vital for ministry effectiveness.

I commend these prophetic works to your reading and reflection

Shane Clifton
(Editor)

The Sustainer of Life: The Role of the Spirit of God in Creation

Scott A. Ellington

Emmanuel College, Franklin Springs, Georgia
sellington@ec.edu

Abstract

The following article investigates the role of the Spirit of God in creation. The Spirit remains aloof from the initial creation of the cosmos recorded in Genesis, having instead the responsibility for continually sustaining and redeeming life. The unusual participle used to describe the Spirit's presence in Genesis 1:2c, מרחפת (merachefet), best characterises the ongoing and unfinished nature of the Spirit's creative activity. For the writer of Job, the Spirit of God works constantly to sustain life. In the Psalms the Spirit as creator comes to be identified both with the enduring presence of God and with the maintenance of spiritual and moral life.

The Unassuming Spirit

The Bible opens with accounts of God's creation of the cosmos that provide the theological underpinnings for all that follows, most particularly for understanding the scope of God's sovereignty and the trajectory of his redemptive plan. Already in the second verse of Genesis we encounter God's רוח (*ruach*), hovering over the face of the unformed chaos. Given their placement and prominent role in our understanding of the larger biblical narrative, it is surprising that the Old Testament has so little to say about God's creation and even less about the role of God's Spirit in that creation. Additionally, Israel's understanding of the role of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) or Spirit of God in creation is a late development. Direct references to the Spirit as creator are found only in Gen. 1:2 (a Priestly text), Job 27:3;

33:4; 34:14-15; Pss. 33:6; 51:10-12; and 104:29-30.[1] In this article I will develop the hypothesis that the principal activity of the *spiritus creator* in the Old Testament is not found in the original creation of the cosmos, but rather in the sustaining and re-creating of life. The creative role of the Spirit is characterised not by a past event, but by perpetual movement and unfolding potential.

Letting the Text Speak

In considering the person and action of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, two basic decisions need to be made with regard to the nature of biblical revelation and the understanding of the Spirit that we draw from it. The first is whether we should consider the biblical revelation of Spirit to be homogenous or contextual and unfolding. Should we expect each biblical writer to have a similar understanding of the identity and function of the Spirit of God or does that understanding evolve with the addition of new revelation and shift to reflect the unique context and concern of each writer?

A second and closely related decision concerning biblical revelation is whether we should regard it as essentially ontological or epistemological in nature. By this I mean, do biblical statements about the Spirit of God depict the essential nature of the Spirit, regardless of whether or not the biblical writer is aware of all that his or her revelation incorporates and implies, or do such statements reflect the understanding of the writer, so that what we are offered by the biblical writer is always shaped by context and limited by perspective? An ontological reading of the text allows the New Testament reader to look back from a "privileged" perspective and discern a meaning in the text that was denied its author. If, on the other hand, we read the text epistemologically, focusing on what the writer does and does not know, such surplus meanings are limited or excluded all together. Such an approach argues for answering the questions "What does this text say?" and "What does this author know?" before moving on to the question "How does this text fit with the larger biblical witness?"

1 While noting a heavy wisdom influence on these texts, Lloyd Neve argues for their origin either in the prophetic or other independent traditions. *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1977), 108-111.

Several conservative authors writing on the Spirit of God in the Old Testament engage in a certain amount of "back reading" in their approach to the biblical text. They assume a degree of homogeneity, so that references to the Spirit are thought to reflect a New Testament understanding, even when that understanding is clearly alien to the text's author. They further assume that the revelation offered describes the ontological nature of the Spirit rather than the Spirit as she reveals herself to be in a contextually limited way.[2] Leon Wood, for example, argues that Old Testament references to the Spirit of God should be understood as references to the third person of the Trinity. Furthermore, Wood maintains that revelation is ontological, that is, that it expresses how God is rather than how he is encountered or perceived to be.

It is also important to recognise that the matter of the identity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is not so much a question of what people thought regarding this member of the Godhead as it is what the intention was of God Himself who inspired the writers.[3]

But this begs the question, how can we distinguish "what God intended" from "what people thought"? All we have to go on is the text and the perspective offered by its authors. To go behind the text and speculate on "what God intended" is, in fact, to read our own concerns into the text. Bolstered by his assumption, Wood draws a theological portrait of the Holy Spirit based on the New Testament and then looks for points of contact between that portrait and references to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament. "What God intended" is, for Wood, nothing more than the overlaying of one understanding of the Spirit onto another, so that the Old Testament's unique contributions to our understanding of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) are frequently blurred or passed over altogether.

John Rea takes a more moderate approach, finding "intimations"

---

2 The decision with regard to pronouns used for the Spirit is a vexed one. I have chosen a feminine personal pronoun because I understand the Spirit to gain a measure of personification in the Old Testament and I have adopted a feminine personal pronoun in order to acknowledge both the feminine form of the term in Hebrew and the fact that it is the male and female together who comprise the image of God. To refer to the Spirit of God as a woman tells us no more about the "gender" of God than does referring to Yahweh or even the Father as a man. My choice, though not arbitrary, is certainly not theologically loaded.
3 Leon J. Wood, The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998), 19.

of the Trinity in God's use of the first person plural, such as is found in Genesis 1:26;[4] "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."[5] But even this more restrained approach imports an explanation that is nowhere clearly articulated in the Old Testament, all the while ignoring other more indigenous explanations for the plural, such as the gathering of heavenly hosts in Job 1 or the divine council in Psalm 82.

Such an approach has two detrimental effects on our reading of the text. First of all, it "flattens" individual texts, forcing on each a homogeneity that often robs them of their voice, so that they can make no unique contribution to our understanding of the Spirit. In a headlong rush to find traces of the Trinity in the opening pages of the Bible, we do not permit ourselves the question, "What might we learn about the Spirit from a writer who shares with us no such insights into her nature?"

Secondly, such flattening of the text, by muting the individual voice of the text and opening the door to the import of surplus meanings, facilitates the imposition of theological frameworks that are foreign to the biblical writers. Again Wood provides an example of the excesses of such an approach. Not content with finding a mature Trinitarianism in the Old Testament accounts of the Spirit, he insists that each of the Spirit's major New Testament offices can be found in the Old. In a strained series of arguments, he attests to evidence of the spiritual renewal of individuals by the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit, sealing by the Spirit so that the "believer" is eternally secure, and filling with the Spirit in the Old Testament.[6] While Wood's lack of moderation admittedly leaves him vulnerable to easy criticism, he nevertheless illumines for us a set of assumptions that are often brought, consciously or unconsciously, to a study of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament.

When, however, we allow that we cannot get behind "what people thought (and said)" to a hypothetical "what God intended," we are left with drawing insight from that which can be pointed to in the text.

4 John Rea, The Holy Spirit in the Bible (Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 1990), 19.
5 Unless otherwise indicated, biblical citations are draw from the New Revised Standard Version.
6 Wood, 68-72.

Lloyd Neve is correct in his assessment that the רוח (*ruach*) of God is revealed not in an ontological sense, but as an expression of God's action and intent.

In the Old Testament literature *ruach* is only used to express God's activity *as he relates himself* to his world, his creation, his people. It was Israel's way of describing God, not as he is in himself, but as he communicates to the world his power, his life, his anger, his will, his very presence.[7]

In this article I will attempt to value the individual voices of the Old Testament both for what they do and what they do not say about the Spirit of God. I will develop the hypothesis that, with regard to the Spirit's role as creator, she is described not as the architect or principal agent of original creation, but as the sustainer of creation and the promise of renewed life.

Wind or Spirit?

The Spirit of God appears already in the second verse of Genesis where she is remarkable for the ambiguity and open-endedness of her activity. One of the questions that has dominated the discussion of this first biblical reference to the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) is whether we should see in this phrase a reference to God's Spirit, to the breath of God, or simply to a mighty wind sent by God. This question centers on the relationship between the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) in verse 2c with the "formless void" and the "covering darkness" that precede it. Both Gerhard von Rad and Claus Westermann understand the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) to be in a parallel relationship with the formless void of the earth and the darkness that covers the sea. Westermann suggests that verse 2 provides a three-part description of the uncreated state of the world in preparation for God's first word of creation in verse 3, translating רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) as "God's wind."[8] Westermann's explanation, though, does not account for the reference being to God's רוח (*ruach*), which suggests an adversative relationship to the void and the darkness. Von Rad points out that there is no further mention of the

---

7 Neve, 2.
8 Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, translated by David Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 8.

spirit taking an active role in the creation process, so that רוח (*ruach*) is unlikely to refer here to God's spirit, and suggests the translation "storm of God."[9] While von Rad's observation does not offer sufficient grounds for his understanding רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) to refer to God's wind rather than his Spirit, it is nevertheless suggestive. There is a decided gap between the hovering רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) and the creative word that follows in verse 3. The hovering Spirit remains in the background as God speaks the word and initiates creation, but never alights to take a more active role.

The suggestion that אלהים (*elohim*) should be understood as a superlative, thus a "mighty wind," has even less to commend it. As Hildebrandt points out, such an understanding of רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) would be unique in the Old Testament.

In the OT, the phrase *ruah elohim* occurs fifteen times in Hebrew and five times in Aramaic. It is never rendered "mighty wind" or "a wind of God" in these occurrences. If the writer intended to convey "mighty wind," he would have used an adjective to make this clear (cf. Jonah 1:4; Job 1:19).[10]

Hildebrandt's assertion that the ו (*waw*) that precedes רוח (*ruach*) should be understood as an adversative provides the most probable reading.[11] Based on this adversative relationship of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) to the pre-formed creation and the observation that the phrase is uniformly translated "Spirit of God" in each of its other appearances, Hildebrandt opts correctly for a translation of God's Spirit, rather than a wind from God.[12] But what role, if any, does the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) play in the creation that is initiated by God's word in verse 3?

---

9 Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, revised edition, translated by John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 49-50.

10 Wilf Hildebrandt, An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 34.

11 Ibid., 32.

12 Fabry also argues for an adversative sense, but on very different grounds. Drawing on the adversarial relationship between wind and water in many Near Eastern cosmogonies, he asserts that the wind of God would be understood as raging against the primordial sea in a "fundamental preexisting polarity." H. – J. Fabry, "רוח," in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, vol. 13, edited by Johannes Botterweck et al. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 365-402, 384-385. See also Neve, 66.

In the Beginning the Spirit of God Kept Hovering

It is not the Spirit of God that creates in chapter 1, but his word. Indeed God's Spirit receives no further mention in the creation accounts that follow. Thus, a second question that has been central to the discussion of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) in Genesis 1 is what role, if any, does this Spirit play in the original creation event?

Numbers of scholars have argued that the Spirit's active participation in creation is implicit, based on the possibility of translating רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) as "God's breath" and the act of God's speech beginning in verse 3. Hildebrandt, for example, follows Stek and Tengstrom who argue for just such an implied connection. "It is evident," says Hildebrandt, "that the *ruah elohim* is not only superintending the work of creation but in fact brings creation about through the word. The passage is emphasising the actual, powerful presence of God, who brings the spoken word into reality by the Spirit."[13]

Yet this connection, though intimated, is never clearly stated and the absence of any such unambiguous association is suggestive. DeRoche observes similarities between the Genesis 1 creation account, the flood reversal beginning in Genesis 8:1, and God's parting of the Red Sea in Exodus 14:21. Noting parallels in creation language and imagery, DeRoche argues that in each instance the presence of the רוח (*ruach*) from God announces, but does not enact the creation or re-creation that follows. In all three instances, DeRoche suggests, the רוח (*ruach*) serves to herald an impending creative act, but is not an active agent in that act.

Neither is the fact that the *ruah* plays no role in the account of creation a problem, especially in the light of Gen 8:1 and Exod 14:21. In neither the flood story nor the account of the crossing of the Red Sea does the *ruah* appear other than in these two verses. In all three examples the appearance of the *ruah* is annunciatory. Once that task has been accomplished, it disappears from the scene.[14]

13 Hildebrandt, 35. So also Wood, 23; Rea, 29; and Eduard Schwietzer Spirit of God (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 3.

14 M. P. DeRoche, "The ruah elohim in Gen 1:2c; Creation or Chaos?," in Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie edited by Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, Glen (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 315.

Though the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) is present at the creation, we should not conclude from this that the breath expelled by God as he speaks creation into being is an active and direct expression of the Spirit of God.

Ellen van Wolde argues that the רוח אלהים (*ruah elohim*) in Gen. 1:2 should be understood in terms of creative potential that describes the pre-relational state of God prior to his first creative act.

In this situation of the beginning the *ruach elohim* stands for God as he is before he begins to create and for God who still does not have a relationship with 'beings', because these do not yet exist. The moment God begins to speak, God ceases to be *ruach elohim* and becomes *elohim*, the creator God.[15]

Van Wolde's hypothesis that the nature of God changes ontologically with the act of creation is not a compelling one. Were that the case, we would not expect to see further references to the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) after the opening verses of Genesis. Van Wolde's argument does, however, underscore something that we do observe in the Genesis creation account, namely, that the Spirit remains aloof from the stages of creation, with her exact role ambiguous. "Thus *ruah elohim*," John Walton suggests, "can retain a provocative ambivalence in meaning."[16] This partitioning of the Spirit, so that her activity is more potential than realised, is, I would argue, far from accidental. Throughout the Old Testament the Spirit's role in creation is not its initiation, but its perpetuation.

This open-ended function of the Spirit is reflected in the verb used to describe her action. God's Spirit "moves," "flutters," or "hovers" מרחפת (*merachefet*) over the deep waters. The only other occurrence of the verb רחף (*rachaf*) in the piel is an imperfect found in Deuteronomy 32:11; "As an eagle stirs up its nest, and hovers (ירחף *yerachef*) over its young." The Genesis occurrence is a piel participle, which suggests ongoing movement that never quite alights nor comes to rest. The Spirit's presence is active, expectant, and ongoing. There is a sense of <u>anticipation and</u> imminent action. But that action is not fully realised

15 Ellen van Wolde, Stories of the Beginning: Genesis 1-11 and Other Creation Stories, trans. John Bowden (Ridgefield, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1996), 21.
16 John H. Walton, "Creation," in Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch, edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 157.

in and is certainly not exhausted by the initial creation of the cosmos. That the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) is present at creation seems clear,[17] but her involvement has been over-emphasised. Eduard Schwietzer contends that the Spirit's presence in Gen. 1:2 serves first and foremost to underscore her role as sustainer of creation.

Here [in Gen. 1:2] . . . the Spirit of God is grasped as a dynamic and creative principle. But it is not a matter only, or even principally, of the activity of God's will completing the creation of the universe (cf. Ps. Xxxiii. 6); it is much more the fact that this dynamic force is responsible for all that is alive, for all physical life. The Spirit of God is the active principle which proceeds from God and gives life to the physical world (Gen. ii. 7).[18]

The primary role of the Spirit in creation as it is described both here and elsewhere in the Old Testament is not with its inception, but its continuation. "In the Old Testament," says Derek Kidner, "the Spirit is a term for God's ongoing energy, creative and sustaining (cf. Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30)."[19] For Lyle Dabney, the Genesis account of the world's creation "interprets the world as defined not by necessity but by possibility, that is, as fraught with the very possibility of God's Spirit."[20] The רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) is present at the beginning, but she comes into her own as creator through the ongoing activity of sustaining and recreating life.

The Relation of Spirit and Word

The most obvious point of contact between the hovering Spirit and the creation that follows is the spoken word. As we have already seen, numbers of scholars draw a direct connection between God's Spirit and his word from the lexical range of רוח (*ruach*) which may be translated wind, breath, or spirit. Hildebrandt acknowledges, though,

---

17 Neve's suggestion is the most useful, that the Spirit is not to be equated with the spoken word of God, but that she accompanies and stands along side of that word as the cosmos are created. (109)
18 Schwietzer, 3.
19 Derek Kidner, Genesis (London: Tyndale Press, 1968), 45.
20 D. Lyle Dabney, "The Nature of the Spirit: Creation as a Premonition," in The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism, edited by Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 77-78.

that the participle מרחפת (*merachefet*) must preclude a translation in 1:2c of the "breath of God," so that a direct association between the רוח (*ruach*) and the דבר (*dabar*) cannot be made. But, as was mentioned above, he nevertheless envisions a partnership between Spirit and word in creation.

It is evident that the *ruah elohim* is not only superintending the work of creation but in fact brings creation about through the word. The passage is emphasising the actual, powerful presence of God, who brings the spoken word into reality by the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit and the word work together to present how the one God is responsible for all that is seen in the physical universe.[21]

Hildebrandt does not, however, offer any support for his supposition. Neve also suggests a partnership between Spirit and word in which the Spirit acts both in the ongoing role of standing against chaos and partners with the word in creation.

But the spirit of God, not at all out of harmony with the spirit of God that has been described from the earliest writings of the Old Testament, not only joins the God of creation in v. 1 to the same God in v. 3, maintaining the continued action of the creative God of verse 1 over against the chaos, but also in harmony with Ps 33:6, finds its direct issuance in the creative word of v. 3. The spirit of God is the creative power of God which joins with the word, bearing and articulating it, in the creative act. On the other hand the word communicates and authenticates the spirit, making it specific and concrete ("Let there be light") a fact which served the pre-exilic prophets well in distinguishing the spirit. Particularly in this passage the word safeguards the spirit from interpretation as an emanation, the divine fiat revealing that the true nature of spirit is power at work in creation.[22]

But such a partnership, though not excluded by the Genesis 1 account, finds remarkably little support in subsequent references to the Spirit in creation. Neve suggests only two other references which expressly connect the creative Spirit with God's word, Pss. 33:6 and 147:18.[23]

---

21 Hildebrandt, 35.
22 Neve, 69.
23 Ibid., 109.

Psalm 147 praises God for his power and provision for Jerusalem. The psalmist does not call to mind God's forming of the cosmos, but rather his provision for his creation and his command of the seasons. By his word he sends snow and by his word he melts it. The רוח (*ruach*) in verse 18, given the context of Yahweh's control of the seasons, is best translated wind rather than Spirit, just as the NRSV does. "He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow."[24] Also, the references to Yahweh's word are not to his creative word (ברא (*bara*) does not appear in the psalm), but to his statutes and ordinances (v. 19).

Psalm 33 praises God for his dominion and appeals to his power over his creation in order to show his authority over the nations (vv. 10-11).[25] Verse 6 reads "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their hosts by the breath of his mouth." The NIV, ASV, NKJV, and Tanakh also translate רוח (*ruach*) here as "breath," suggesting that an association between the spoken word of Gen. 1:3 ff. and the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) in 1:2c is not being affirmed. The focus of the psalmist is on Yahweh's character, specifically his righteousness, justice and steadfast love which fills his creation, as well as on his dominion over the forces of nature.[26] An equating of the hovering Spirit with the spoken word is far less tenable here than in the Genesis account.

To summarise, then, only a single verse outside of Genesis 1 expressly joins Yahweh's רוח (*ruach*) with his דבר (*dabar*) in a creation context. But the writer of Psalm 33 has little interest in the breath of God as an agent of creation. That interest lies with Yahweh's commanding word with which he exercises his dominion over the nations. In speaking more broadly of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) as creator, the Old Testament writers saw the creative function of the

---

24 The NAS and NKJV also opt for wind and the NIV for breezes, while the Tanakh perhaps alludes more directly to the creation account with the reading "He issues a command – it melts them; He breathes – the waters flow."

25 Craig Broyles argues that focus of vv. 6-19 is on God's dominion. Psalms (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson Publishers,1999), 165.

26 Both James Mays and Konrad Schaefer suggest that the controlling image for this section is not God's dominion and power, but his חסד (*hesed*) or steadfast love. James L. Mays, Psalms (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994),149; Konrad Schaefer, Psalms (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 83-84.

Spirit in the power to sustain creation and to restore life.

The Spirit that Creates Our Every Breath

The dominant role of the creating Spirit is not as an agent for establishing the cosmos, though the Spirit was present hovering over the face of the deep, but as the creative power that sustains life. Job most particularly understands life in terms of the ongoing creation of the רוח (*ruach*) of God. Job 27:3 equates the presence of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) with continued life; "as long as my breath is in me and the spirit of God is in my nostrils."[27] For Job, though, life is more than simply maintaining the mechanics of existence. It is the continued possession of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) that enables Job to keep his tongue from falsehood and to hold to his integrity. Ironically, it is God's Spirit that empowers Job to contest with God "who has taken away my right" and "has made my soul bitter." In an association not unlike that found in Psalm 33:4-9, Job realises a relationship between the fact that the breath of life is a gift of God's spirit and the moral imperative to righteousness and integrity that such a gift implies.

In a speech permeated not with God's words but with his own, Elihu affirms in 33:4 that "The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."[28] The רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) is the giver of life for each individual person and Elihu finds in the fact that all of humanity shares the same need for the Spirit's ongoing creation an essential social leveler. Elihu may be the youngest and by society's standards the least worthy to speak, but he is equal with his elders in that he shares with them the continual need for the Spirit's creation. "It is," says Gerald Wilson, "the ultimate reminder of human dependency on the creator – the essence of 'fear of God.' "[29] The Spirit that hovered over the deep in anticipation of the first word of creation

---

27 H. H. Rowley asserts that "[t]he reference to 'nostrils' here show that the meaning is 'breath', and that the line is synonymously parallel with the preceding line; 'spirit' is simply for stylistic variation." Job (Greenwood, S C: The Attic Press, 1970), 220-21. This rendering, though, offers no explanation for the affirmation that it is God's רוח (ruach), suggesting more than a straightforward synonymous relationship "breath" in 3a.

28 In the opening verses of Elihu's address he gives answer, declares, speaks, opens his lips, answers, speaks, offers words, opens his mouth, speaks, declares, and speaks.

29 Job (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson Publishers, 2007), 369.

is now perpetually creating life with each new birth and, indeed, with every new breath, so that none of us ever moves very far from the place when we were naked, newly formed and utterly contingent.

Elihu, like Job, sees God's Spirit both as the giver of life and the gift of life.

> If he should take back his spirit to himself,
> and gather to himself his breath,
> all flesh would perish together,
> and all mortals return to dust." (34:14-15)

It is not simply that the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) grants each breath. Apart from the enduring presence and activity of that Spirit, humans possess no breath of their own. As with Psalm 104:29-30, the emphasis here is not on God's initial creation, but on the utter dependence of every living thing on God's Spirit in order to draw their next breath.

The Spirit as the Presence of God

The manifestation of God's Spirit as the sustainer of creation is most fully expressed within the Psalter. On three occasions, in a move that is unique to the Psalm writers, the creating רוח (*ruach*) of God is paired with his face or presence (פנים *panim*).[30] In Psalm 139:7 the writer exclaims "Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" Admittedly this psalm makes no direct reference to God's creating Spirit, but the constant presence of that Spirit includes the moment of the psalmist's conception as he or she is formed, knit together and made (vv. 13-15).

In a more explicit depiction, Psalm 104 portrays God's care and provision for his creation. Verses 27-30 read:

> These all look to you to give them their food in due season;
> when you give to them, they gather it up;
> when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
> When you hide your *face*, they are dismayed;
> when you take away their *breath*, they die and return to dust.

---

30 See Scott A. Ellington, "The Face of God as His Creating Spirit: The Interplay of Yahweh's panim and ruach in Psalm 104:29-30," in The Spirit Renews the Face of the Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation, edited by Amos Yong (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Press), 2009.

> When you send forth your *spirit*, they are created (ברא *bara*);
> and you renew the *face* of the ground. [italics added]

The psalmist describes a three-part movement from filling, to emptying and death, to new creation and rebirth. Verses 29-30 offer a chiasm that intertwine God's Spirit and face or presence (פנים *panim*) with the spirit and face of his creation. When God hides his פנים (*panim*) the רוח (*ruach*) that sustains creation is withdrawn, so that the now empty physical bodies dissolve and return to dust. The process of creation is reversed and they are un-made. When God sends forth his רוח (*ruach*), a new act of creation occurs whereby the פנים (*panim*) of the ground is made new. Whereas the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) hovered, as it were, in the background while God spoke the cosmos into creation, she has come for the psalmist to embody God's presence. Though the Old Testament nowhere presents the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) as the third person of the Trinity, nevertheless we have in the Psalter a decisive shift in thinking about the Spirit as she is now equated with the person and presence of God.

There is a second way, though, in which the psalms writers advance Israel's understanding of God's creative Spirit, anticipating the Spirit's role in the New Testament. Hildebrandt suggests that the function of the Spirit as sustainer of physical life in the Old Testament continues in the New Testament, but that "the focus there changes from the physical to the spiritual dimensions of life."[31] Psalm 51 pairs God's creative רוח (*ruach*) with his פנים (*panim*), but this time it is the spiritual and not the physical life of the psalmist that is the object of that creative force. In 51:10-12 we read:

> Hide your face from my sins,
> and blot out all my iniquities.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God,
> and put a new and right spirit within me.
> Do not cast me away from your presence,
> and do not take your holy spirit from me.
> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
> and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Just as in Psalm 104, here too the hiding of God's face leads to

---

31 Hildebrandt, 196.

death. Firstly, it results metaphorically in the death of the writer's sin. If God would only hide his face from those sins, they would be erased and would cease to live. Secondly, though, sin has occasioned the need for a fresh act of creation in the psalm writer. It is not possible to repair or reform the heart of the psalmist. The damaged heart must be re-created and the warped spirit replaced. It is perhaps no accident that the description of this new role of the Spirit as sustainer of a person's spiritual life is accompanied by one of the very few references in the Old Testament to God's רוח קדש (*ruach qodesh*) or "holy spirit."[32]

Conclusion

Though far from being an exhaustive exploration of the role of the Spirit of God as creator in the Old Testament, this present study suggests a number of conclusions.

1) Old Testament writers are relentlessly reluctant simply to equate the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) that hovers over the face of the waters in Gen. 1:2 with the God who speaks the cosmos into existence beginning in verse 3. The absence of any direct reference to the Spirit in either of the creation accounts that follow seems unlikely to be accidental or unintentional.

2) The unusual use of the piel participle מרחפת (*merachefet*) creates a sense of perpetual movement and unfolding potential. Though present at the inception of creation, the real task of the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) awaits the dawning of the seventh day. God may rest from his labor, but his Spirit cannot. Were the Spirit to cease from creating, even for a moment, our own רוח (*ruach*) would depart and we would return to dust.

3) Though the Old Testament offers no clear understanding of the Trinity, we do find a development in the thinking of its writers, so that the רוח אלהים (*ruach elohim*) as a creative force gradually comes to be identified with the פנים (*panim*) or presence of God. This association is a reciprocal one. In the Psalms the רוח (*ruach*) is less an expression of God's power and more an expression of his self. Similarly, whereas God could contemplate withholding his פנים (*panim*) from Israel in

32 Also Isaiah 63:10-11.

Exodus 33 after their sin with the Golden Calf, for the psalmist no such withdrawal of the Spirit is possible if life is to continue. This association of the רוח (*ruach*) and the פנים (*panim*) of God sets the stage for eventually personifying God's spirit.

4) Though more fully developed in the New Testament, there is nevertheless among Old Testament writers room for the role of the Spirit in creating and re-creating the spiritual and moral aspects of personhood. God's spirit that sustains Job also empowers him to speak truth and maintain his integrity. For the psalmist, sin does not simply damage, it destroys completely, so that a new act of creation is called for. The creating Spirit makes our own spirits anew. For the writers of the Old Testament, the Spirit's creation is found in every breath that we breath and with every cry for renewal that we pray.

"The trees of the field will clap their hands": Is there hope for the renewal of Creation in Second Isaiah?

Jacqueline Grey

Academic Dean and Lecturer in Old Testament, Alphacrucis College
jacqui.grey@alphacrucis.edu.au

Abstract

This paper is a study of the role of creation in the eschatological salvation of humanity envisioned in Isaiah 40-55. The vision of Second Isaiah presents a promise of salvation and homecoming to the exiled Judean community. This promise offers not only the reversal of their political marginalisation and social inferiority but the transformation of Creation. To facilitate this return of the exiles, Yahweh forms a highway in the desert. This path will level the mountains and raise the valleys (40:4). While this metaphor represents the overcoming of obstacles in the restoration process, it emphasises the subordination of the environment to the requirements of humanity. Just as the Reed Sea was utilised to ensure the liberation of the covenant people in the first Exodus, the desert is now employed in this second Exodus. In this opening vision, the blossoming of creation is subordinate to the needs of humanity. In comparison, the conclusion of Second Isaiah presents an eschatological vision with a glorious picture of salvation and worship. It concludes in chapter 55 with a description of the joyful people being led by the bursting song of the mountains and the trees of the fields clapping their hands. The environment that previously produced thornbushes, is to be repaired with pine trees (Is 55:13). This final prophetic vision creates a picture of the regeneration of the earth as a consequence of the repentance of humanity and their restored worship. Creation that was once under the servitude of humanity is anticipated as participating as co-worshippers in their salvation. The

earth is no longer subordinate to its stewards, but a valued partner in glorifying Yahweh. Yet what is the cause of this shift in Second Isaiah? Why does it move away from an anthropocentric vision to a universal hope that embraces Creation as a partner of praise? Parallel with this changing view of Creation is the increasing meekness of Judah as they accept their role as the servant of Yahweh; a role that would lead to their voluntary humiliation and suffering (Is 53). From this place of chosen servitude comes an increased appreciation and embracing of the 'other', including the earth. It is the same voluntary humiliation demonstrated by Jesus Christ on Calvary that also leads to the hope and renewal of Creation.

Introduction

The theme and imagery of a renewed creation is central to the message of Second Isaiah. The literary unit begins with words of comfort to the exiles in Babylon. It presents a message of hope that Yahweh will restore them to their homeland. He will carve a highway through the desert. This path will level the mountains and raise the valleys (40:4). Yet while the earth is utilised by Yahweh for the redemption of the people, it still remains a desert. It is unchanged. It is simply a commodity used for anthropocentric concerns and bereft of the benefits of salvation experienced by the people. It remains infertile and barren. This opening of Second Isaiah presents a hope for a new creation of the nation, but not the environment. However the literary unit of Second Isaiah concludes with a description of the redeemed people being led in a victorious procession to the bursting applause of the trees of the fields and song of the mountains. The earth celebrates a reversal of its former infertility as the barren thorn-bushes are replaced with lush pine trees (Is 55:12-13). This conclusion to Second Isaiah creates a glorious picture of the whole creation joining together in worship. This finale looks toward the creation of redeemed community consisting of both humanity and the environment. Nature is a co-worshipper, rather than a commodity. It is a participant in <u>redemption, rath</u>er than property.[1] Yet what is the cause of this shift

1 Earth Bible Team,'The Voice of Earth: more than Metaphor?' in Habel, Norman (ed) The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets: The Earth Bible, Sheffield: SAP, 2001, p.28.

in Second Isaiah? Why does this literary unit move away from an anthropocentric salvation to a universal hope that embraces nature as a partner of praise? It is the concern of this paper to consider this shift in attitude toward the environment and the development of the theme of creation's renewal in Second Isaiah.

To speak of the theme and motif of creation within Second Isaiah does not refer only to the absolute beginnings of the physical world, but is to speak of God's dominion, order and purpose.[2] Ollenburger notes that "Creation cannot be limited to talk of origins, but must include the entire, diverse biblical witness to God the creator."[3] While this definition may be so overly broad that it leads to a vague categorisation of creation, it is helpful in that it does diversify the topic beyond simply the origins of the physical world. It acknowledges the implications of creation (and its preservation) outside a sole ecological focus to include its relationship and interaction with humanity. The "ordered" universe begins with Yahweh as Creator and Lord. It is to his lordship and sovereignty that all creation (human and non-human) must submit. All peoples are subject to Yahweh's purposes. The purpose of Yahweh is not the promotion of the international prestige or pride of nations, such as that represented by Babylon (Is 46-47). Instead, Second Isaiah promotes the values and outcome desired by Yahweh. These are linked to the moral quality on which Yahweh has ordered the world.[4]

The "order" established and expected of the created world is contrary to the types of attitudes epitomised by Babylon (Is 47). These attitudes are based on manifestations of pride, the elevation of the self over and against the sovereignty of Yahweh, and the promotion of the self at the expense of others. In comparison, the type of order that develops as the ideal in Second Isaiah champions the humble and contrite. This is a reversal of 'worldly' expectations – vulnerability and humility is power. Those that reject self-promotion will be recipients of Yahweh's promotion. Pride and wilful disobedience to that sovereignty is a transgression of the created order. All creation

2 Ollenburger, Ben C., 'Isaiah's Creation Theology', *Ex Auditu*, Vol 3, 1987, p.61
3 Ibid
4 Ollenburger, p.54

– including Judah and the nations - are subject to the sovereignty of Yahweh and this moral order. The dominion of Yahweh includes all of creation and its relationships, not just the non-human dimension. This sovereignty includes the destiny of the physical world. To reject Yahweh's rulership, even through human unbelief, is to overturn the renewal of the physical environment. Second Isaiah presents an inextricable connection between humanity and the environment they are entrusted to steward. So, therefore, one cannot speak of the renewal of creation without connection to the role of humanity in that process.

Yet while creation imagery and motifs appear frequently throughout Second Isaiah, they do not always point to the actual renewal of creation. The environment is regularly utilised for Yahweh's purposes, however it is not always expressed as a re-creation. Creation motifs are used to represent the salvation of humanity (40:3-5; 41:14-16; 43:1-3) and to emphasise the sovereignty of Yahweh (40:8, 12-14; 42:14-17). In these texts the environment is employed in Yahweh's saving plan, but is not necessarily a recipient. In the same way, the nations are regularly utilised for Yahweh's purposes in Second Isaiah, yet it does not always refer to their redemption or renewal. Although Cyrus fulfils the purposes of Yahweh's plans and achieves restoration for Israel, he is not necessarily a recipient of salvation (44:24-45:7). Instead, the environment is emphasised as a commodity to serve the salvific needs of humanity. While scholars such as Cook highlight the references to the status of earth as "first object of divine creativity, source of life to living things and home to humans,"[5] they neglect the important role of the earth as recipient of redemption and participant in worship. In this sense, there is some justification in the critique of von Rad that creation as a biblical concept has been subordinate to soteriological considerations.[6] Yet the vision of Second Isaiah concludes with a picture of all creation joining together in the worship of Yahweh. Instead of hierarchy there is an interdependence in their

---

5 Cook, Joan E., 'Everyone Called by My Name: Second Isaiah's Use of the Creation Theme' in Carol J. Dempsey & Mary M. Pazdan (eds), *Earth, Wind, & Fire: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Creation*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), p.42.
6 von Rad, Gerhard, 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation' in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays,* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p.142.

shared status as creatures of God.[7] The earth and its inhabitants experience a transformation as part of the express purpose of Yahweh. Like humanity, the environment is enslaved and eagerly awaits salvation. However unlike humanity, the environment did not cause this bondage.[8] What then are the factors integral to the achieving of renewal in creation? What is the role of humanity in helping to rectify the bondage of the environment their rejection of Yahweh has caused? Is there hope for the renewal of creation in Second Isaiah?

The vision of Second Isaiah presents a promise of salvation and homecoming to the exiled Judean community. The vision begins with a message of comfort to a seemingly abandoned and defeated people. Yet in this place of despair, Yahweh speaks to them. The community once rejected by God have paid for their sins and are now "my people" once more (40:1). This promise offers the reversal of their political marginalisation and social inferiority. To achieve this purpose, Yahweh will carve a path through the desert. This is the express purpose of Yahweh. This road through the sterile desert is a reference to the Exodus victory. As a way was once made through the impassable Sea of Reeds, a path is formed in the wilderness. While this imagery of the levelled desert represents the overcoming of obstacles in the restoration process, it emphasises the subordination of the environment to the requirements of humanity. Just as the Reed Sea was utilised to ensure the liberation of the covenant people in the first Exodus, the desert is now employed in this second Exodus. Yet the picture created of this community is one to whom salvation is offered, but who cannot see beyond their own preservation. The earth will move mountains and valleys to see the salvation of these people realised; but there is nothing offered to the desert. The environment is ignored; it is merely a commodity to be used and discarded. Isaiah 40:3-5 makes the creation a place that sustains life for humanity only. The people are only concerned with their own rescue, no matter what it may cost others or the earth. The land serves the people, yet these

7 McGinn, Sheila E., 'All Creation Groans in Labor: Paul's Theology of Creation in Romans 8:18-23' in Carol J. Dempsey & Mary M. Pazdan (eds), *Earth, Wind, & Fire: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Creation*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), p. 116.
8 McGinn, pp,115-116.

supposed stewards of the earth ignore its needs. The concern at the beginning of Second Isaiah is anthropocentric – salvation is initially described exclusively for the exiles.

Following this promise of a highway through the desert are some rhetorical questions that utilise the creation motif (40: 11-14). These questions present claims about the creator Yahweh. These claims emphasise the sovereignty of Yahweh in the ordering the creation. The nations are nothing in comparison to the knowledge and power of Yahweh, as are the idols of the nations (40:18-20). The created order (including the domain of international politics) ultimately cannot resist the creator's purposes.[9] However there is no transformation of the environment. While creation imagery is employed, it does not point to the renewal of creation In fact, there is no express renewal of the environment announced in Second Isaiah until the introduction of a servant. It is with the introduction of the servant in 41:8 that hope for renewal of creation begins to be explored. A pattern emerges in Second Isaiah whereby the transformation of the environment is preceded by the introduction of a servant figure. This pattern occurs with the introduction of a servant figure in five identified sections within Second Isaiah that precede the renewal of creation: 41:8-20; 42:1-13; 49:1-13; 50:4- 51:3; 52:13-55:13. This figure(s) of servitude and humility labours for the benefit of others which results in a transformation of the physical world. This servant figure is not necessarily directly equated with the derivation of the 'servant' in Duhm's 'servant songs,' although there is much correspondence. Instead it refers to occasions when the renewal of creation is achieved through the mediating work of Yahweh's servant. The work of the servant to benefit the exiled community provokes a concern for the greater benefit of the physical creation. Yet, why does this mysterious figure reference the shift towards a universal salvation rather than just an anthropocentric salvation? How does the servant provoke this outward focus? The servant represents the moral order sanctioned by Yahweh. In particular, the servant demonstrates humility, compassion and radical trust in Yahweh. They are an exemplar of sacrificial giving, even suffering, for the benefit of others. Through the various descriptions of this elusive

9 Ollenburger, p.64

servant, they demonstrate the ideal moral qualities and behaviour of the created order. Their energies and concern is for the 'other'. From this place of chosen servitude comes an increased appreciation for the suffering of others, including the earth. Through their experience and example, the community of Second Isaiah begins to look beyond its own need to the salvation of others, including the physical creation. While there is much debate concerning the identity of the servant(s), it is not the purpose of this paper to identify the servant with a historical figure, but to simply note the soteriological effect of their work upon the physical creation.[10]

The first description of the renewal of creation within Second Isaiah is preceded by the introduction of a servant figure in Isaiah 41:8. This figure operates as the chosen one of Yahweh. The singular servant is identified as Israel; the corporate community. Yahweh declares that the community of Israel are not only "my people" (40:1) but also "my servant" (41:8). The community is promised Yahweh's presence and strength (41:10) as the work of this servant will not be easy. They will encounter opposition (41:11-13). Despite this humiliation, the servant demonstrates their trust and faith in Yahweh as they overcome that resistance. The servant becomes strengthened and empowered as they promote God's rule. Then through their service, humility and radical trust in God, salvation begins to emerge. The symbol of the emerging salvation that is achieved through the sacrificial actions of the servant, is the renewal of creation. The work of the servant produces a radical intervention of Yahweh and reversal of the previous infertility of the land. In this salvation oracle, water appears in the desert to provide for the poor and needy (40:17) as part of the creative act of God. The water then overflows to all creation and restores the wilderness and desolate places into a place of nourishment and life.

> I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree,
> the myrtle and the oil tree;
> I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine

---

10 Since the identification and isolation of the four 'servant songs' by Duhm (Is 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), there has been a proliferation of theories developed by scholars to identify the suffering servant. For a more exhaustive discussion on possible identities of the servant, see John F.A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).

And the box tree together (41:19)

The desert is transformed and renewed as a result of the work of the servant. This renewal of creation testifies to the sovereignty of Yahweh. As Brueggemann writes, "the miracle of creation points to the creator."[11]

The second example of the universal hope achieved by the work of the servant begins in chapter 42. Yahweh promises to support the chosen servant in their assigned task, and assures them of success despite opposition. The role of the servant is to promote Yahweh's justice to human communities. The character of the servant is not to be bombastic or demonstrative – they are not to cry out in the street (42:2). Instead they are to associate with the suffering of the people by showing compassion and empathy. They will not break the already crushed reed (42:3). The down-trodden remnant of Judah already overwhelmed by Babylon will not be crushed further. Nor will they snuff out the dim wick – those already poor and oppressed. This moral order of Yahweh is contrary to the controlling powers of international politics. As Brueggemann writes, "Israel's way of relationship is thus drastically contrasted with the way of Babylon (or any other worldly power), which is to break such reeds and snuff out such wicks."[12] The servant is tasked to demonstrate compassion and bring forth justice. The injustice in the world will be undone by the servant – they will open the eyes of the blind and set prisoners free. The servant will restore the creation and society to Yahweh's original intention. God has chosen a human agent to complete his purposes for the whole creation. It is the creator God who has called the servant to achieve this salvation (42:5). As Cook notes, "Yahweh who cares for the people (singular) sends them (singular) forth with assurances of intimate, nurturing presence. This call to be prophets, given in the singular, highlights the communitarian aspect of the chosen ones."[13] Those people who require justice are benefited in this celebration of freedom as the blind now see and prisoners are released (42:5-9). The symbol of this renewed salvation is, once again, the renewal of creation. The

11 Brueggemann, Walter, *Isaiah 40-66*, WBC, (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1998), p. 37.
12 Brueggemann, p,42
13 Cook, p.42

coastlands and its inhabitants are charged to bring their worship of the Creator God. The whole creation is summoned to sing a new song extolling the praise of Yahweh. The earth is no longer subordinate to its stewards, but a valued partner in glorifying Yahweh (42:10-13).

In comparison to this chosen servitude, the rejection of radical faith in Yahweh results in self-serving and self-promotion. Despite the work of the servant, the people are blind (43:8) and do not hear the offer of salvation. Yet rather than be rejected, they are promised a new exodus (43: 1-21). In this new deliverance (that resonates with Isaiah 40:3-5) Yahweh will carve a path through the desert (43:19). Once again, as the people reject Yahweh's word and choose to not hear the offer of salvation (as symbolised by their blindness) they express exclusive interest in their own destiny. As a result, the environment is treated as a commodity for their own purposes. The environment will serve as a disposable vehicle for the deliverance of the people. Water is provided in the desert (43:20), but only to give drink to the people. Where disbelief is expressed, creation is suppressed. Distrust in Yahweh is a violation of the moral order. Therefore there is deliverance for the people, but no corporate celebration of hope of universal re-creation. It serves the steward with no reward for the earth. There is no joining together of land and people in a partnership of praise as disbelief rules the hearts of the people. Yet the prophet continues to remind the people of the superiority of Yahweh over idols. The idols are simply wood cut from the same tree that has been used to cook their dinner (44:9-20). Yet when the prophet reminds them of their status and role – they are reminded that they are "My servant" (44: 21-23) the result is a call to all creation to join in the song of salvation. The trees, mountains and earth are called to sing in celebration of the redemption of Judah (44:34). After a lengthy description of the futility of idolatry and the future humiliation of Babylon and its gods (46-48), there is hope of redemption. The power structures of the nations that violate the moral order of Yahweh will be removed. The prideful Babylon will be humiliated (47:1-15). The water is provided (once again) for the redeemed people as it was previously in the Exodus, but the earth still is not renewed. Instead "there is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked" (48:22).

Yet, there is hope for a renewed creation. The servant appears once again in chapter 49. The servant announces their role in Yahweh's purposes. The servant has been chosen and prepared by Yahweh for the task before them (49:1-2). They now expend their energy and strength to promote the work and rule of Yahweh (49:3-4). The servant acts on Yahweh's behalf to gather, like a shepherd, the lost of Israel. Despite this noble work they will be despised and abhorred (49:7). The servant will suffer humiliation that will cause them to seek the help of Yahweh (49:8). Yet their rejection by the nations leads to their acceptance by Yahweh. As a result, the servant will be instrumental in bringing freedom and protection to the poor (49:9-10). Through the humble service of the servant, salvation will be achieved. The servant becomes the model of service – a vehicle through which the salvation of others can be achieved. In this way, the self-sacrificial work of the servant becomes a model that creation will imitate. The mountains and pathways will again be utilised in service to achieve the salvation of the people. They will follow the model of the servant in self-sacrifice for the return of the exiles and salvation of humanity. The mountains will (once again) become a road. This path will level the mountains and raise the valleys (49:11). However this description provides a difference. It looks forward to the arrival of those scattered among the nations – people from the north and west (49:12). Here, comfort has been achieved. The heavens and earth are called to sing and be joyful for Yahweh has comforted the people through the work of the servant. Unlike the opening statement of Second Isaiah (40:1), creation can now join in the celebration of the comfort offered to Israel (49:13). They are no longer simply commodity but partners with humanity in praise. Through the servant they are no longer promoting self-interest, but humility, collaboration, and participation in the stewardship of redemption. They share in service towards others. This is the triumph of Yahweh's rule and Yahweh's ways: the path of humility and servitude.

As the literary unit of Second Isaiah continues, the humble figure of a servant once again precedes the restoration of the environment (50:4-51:3). If the previous servant(s) were discouraged, this servant is more determined than ever. Yahweh has given the servant an 'instructed

tongue'. The servant demonstrates trust in Yahweh for their speech and receives the guidance of Yahweh each morning (50: 4-6). Their speech is persuasive, giving support to the weary. The speech of the servant also reinforces the trustworthiness of the divine word. Despite increasing violence against this servant, they persist in following the rule of Yahweh (50:6). Although they are persecuted and humiliated, they are unwavering in their trust of God. In the midst of opposition and condemnation, they are confident that Yahweh is the one who will vindicate them (50:7-9). This is the moral order of the sovereign Creator. This trust and humble service, leads to a broader experience of salvation. As a result of the servant's attitude and actions, creation is transformed and the environment renewed. When humanity accepts the rulership of Yahweh, it impacts the created order – the earth is transformed from sterility to fruitfulness:

> For the Lord will comfort Zion
> He will comfort all her waste places;
> He will make her wilderness like Eden,
> And her desert like the garden of the LORD;
> Joy and gladness will be found in it,
> Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. (51:3)

The work of the servant precedes a massive renewal of creation and return to the original established order of Eden. The barrenness and decay of the wasteland will be reversed. It will become a garden of life. The comfort promised to humanity in the opening of Second Isaiah (40:1), now extends to the whole of creation. Just as human rejection of the order of Yahweh resulted in the decay of all creation, now the restoration of humanity to the order of Yahweh results in rejuvenation of all creation. The earth that was once under the servitude of humanity is anticipated as participating as co-worshippers in their salvation.

The final prophetic vision of a renewed creation presented in Second Isaiah creates a picture of the regeneration of the earth as a consequence of the repentance of humanity and their restored worship. Once again it is preceded by the appearance of a servant figure (52:13-55:13). Parallel with this changing view of creation is the increasing meekness of the community as they embrace the role of the servant

of Yahweh; a role that promotes voluntary humiliation and suffering. From this place of chosen servitude comes an increased appreciation and embracing of the 'other', including the earth. The servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a model of non-violent power. He[14] exemplifies the moral values of Yahweh. Through rejection, suffering and shame (53:1-3) the servant achieves honour, reward and salvation (53:11-13). This is a reversal of the 'worldly' expectations of promotion and power. Rather than seek self-preservation, the servant is "a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (53:3). Despite his innocence he voices an association with the rebellion of the community – "we all, like sheep, have gone astray" (53:6). He suffers on behalf of others for the benefit of the community. Rather than dominate, he is led voiceless "like a lamb to the slaughter" (53:7).Through his suffering, he resonates with the suffering of the exiles and works toward their future restoration. He uses his power to intercede for others. His self-less sacrifice and vulnerability breaks the cycle of tyranny.[15] This cycle cannot be broken by force or power, but by following the moral order of Yahweh – the way of humility.

This work of the servant precedes the announcement of salvation to the exilic community. They are to sing and celebrate the reversal of their barrenness (54:1). The community is to enlarge their tent in expectation of their transformed family (54:2). Instead of shame, they will experience the kindness of Yahweh (54:4-8). However the land is yet to sing. This occurs finally in chapter 55, once the true repentance of the exiles is complete (55:6-7). The final invitation of Second Isaiah is a summons for humanity to accept their role in the moral order of Yahweh. Their place in that order is one of repentance and humility. This acquiescence to the sovereignty of Yahweh by humanity results in the salvation of the cosmos. This salvation is founded on the guaranteed word of Yahweh, the creator who supplies water for the flowering of the earth (55:8-11). The result of the humility of the community – as modelled by the servant(s) is the renewal of all creation. Isaiah 55 concludes with the spontaneous worship of the environment as

---

14 The masculine gender is used here to be consistent with the text, however it is acknowledged that this servant, or their attitudes, is not exclusively male.
15 Brueggemann, p.147.

co-worshippers with humanity. Their celebration highlights their eagerness for freedom and renewal.

> You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace;
> the mountains and hills will burst into song before you,
> and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
> Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree,
> and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.
> This will be for the LORD's renown,
> for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed (55:12-13).

The promised homecoming of the opening vision of Second Isaiah is being realised. The text presents a picture of the new Exodus being achieved. Yet although it resonates with their collective memory of the Exodus event, this is a new work and a new salvation they are to experience. The final vision presents a triumphant and calm procession of exiles heading home. As Brueggemann notes, "the processional parade here is a visible, cosmic event."[16] All creation joins together in the worship of Yahweh. In the opening vision of Second Isaiah, the blossoming of creation was subordinate to the needs of humanity. However now in this final vision, it presents a restored creation in which humans are not superior over nature, but they enjoy a shared status as creatures of God.[17] By the end of this literary section, there is a concern for all creation, including non-human life. The environment has once been enslaved, but now celebrates its freedom. Nature erupts into fruitfulness as the plants of desolation and death – the brier and the thornbush - are transformed into trees of life and beauty. This reversal and renewal of creation has been achieved by the submission of humanity to the sovereignty and rulership of Yahweh. It reminds us of the responsibility of humanity to be stewards of the environment, rather than oppressors. The land is not a commodity but a partner in worship. This reversal will testify to the order and rule of Yahweh.

For Christian readers, this humility and vulnerability evidenced by the servant(s) of Second Isaiah is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Like the servant(s), Christ models the moral qualities on which Yahweh has

---

16 Brueggemann, p.162.
17 McGinn, p.116

ordered the world. The life and ministry of Jesus reversed the 'worldly' expectations of power and arrogance. He was born into humility and ministered with compassion. At the Cross he was dishonoured and shamed. This voluntary humiliation demonstrated by the ultimate servant, Jesus Christ, has righted the moral order of creation and offers hope for the ultimate renewal of the cosmos. Through his resurrection, redemption for both humanity and the environment has been achieved. As followers of Christ, we continue his ministry of compassion and grace. We continue to proclaim the good news of freedom for all creation until the realisation of that eschatological hope.

A Pentecostal's Lament: Is there a correspondence between the form of the biblical lament psalms and the early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer?

Narelle Melton

Lecturer in Old Testament, Alphacrucis College
narelle.melton@alphacrucis.edu.au

Abstract

In recent years the church has lost the practice of lament. This loss is costly. It forfeits honest dialogue with God and silences the questioning of covenantal-injustices and the everyday pain of life. It has been noted, however, that the language of early Pentecostal prayers echoes the laments psalms. This has been uncritically examined in scholarship. As such, this paper examined whether there is a correspondence between the form of biblical lament psalms and the early Australian Pentecostal (1908-1937) practice of prayer. The analysis discovered, through a form-critical examination, that there was a correspondence between the form of the lament psalms and eleven early Australian Pentecostal prayer occasions methodically derived from the Good News and The Australian Evangel periodicals. Thus, as a result, it was proposed that Pentecostal Christians today, are uniquely situated to re-incorporate laments into their worship and pastoral care practises.

1. Introduction

Sadly, the lament psalms have been relegated to the sidelines of church praxis. The neglect of these psalms and the practice of lament is "costly."[1] It comes at the cost of authentic interaction with

---

1 Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith,* ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 98-111. Chapter 5 in this book is called "The Costly Loss of Lament" and is very informative for framing the discussion in this paper.

God and the unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. In an era of globalisation, the daily news of worldwide distress combined with our own resident grief can inundate us. It is proposed that the practice of lament could provide a sure voice for this pain and permission to appeal to God for intervention. Thus today, more than ever, lament needs to be recovered.

For Pentecostal commentators, there has been recent consideration of the relevance of the Old Testament laments and their potential resonance with Pentecostal spirituality.[2] Although this examination remains preliminary, what appears to be significant is that the form of the lament psalms - which transition from the cry of distress to praise, petition to assurance, complaint to hope - reflects Pentecostal sensibilities. This form resembles a Pentecostal's expression of prayer, testimony and experience of God.[3] Indeed, it has been suggested that there is a "striking affinity"[4] between Old Testament laments and the terminology of early (North American) Pentecostal documents. Nonetheless, further research is required to ascertain this 'affinity' in reference to the biblical lament psalms, as well as within early Australian Pentecostalism. In the Australian context there has been very little (if any) evaluation of the use of lament. As such, it is not known whether lament has ever been part of the spirituality of Australian Pentecostalism or, alternatively, whether the practice of lament has been lost progressively – as Brueggemann suggests has occurred in the wider church.[5] Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to examine the biblical lament psalms in reference to the early Australian Pentecostal documents. It aims to evaluate whether there is a correspondence (a 'striking affinity') between the form of the

2 Larry R. McQueen, 'Joel and the Spirit: The Cry of a Prophetic Hermeneutic', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Supplement Series 8* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), and Scott A. Ellington, 'The Costly Loss of Testimony', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2000): 48-59. See also Ellington's newly released book, *Risking the Truth: Reshaping the World through Prayers of Lament,* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 98: Pickwick Publications, 2008).
3 For further information about early Pentecostal distinctives and spirituality see Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993)
4 McQueen, 'Joel and the Spirit', 76.
5 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith,* 98-111. See Chapter 5 'The Costly Loss of Lament.'

biblical lament psalms and the early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer. If such a heritage can be found, then a re-visioning of lament for contemporary Pentecostalism is anticipated.

2. The Lament Psalms

Before exploring 'lament' in early Australian Pentecostalism, we need to determine the parameters of the form and content of lament in the Psalms. Of course, laments are not unique to the Psalter; they pervade the entire Old Testament. Indeed the "call of distress" or the "cry out of the depths" is a prominent part of what the Old Testament describes as occurring between God and humanity.[6] Yet, it is the lamenting aspect of ancient Israel's relationship with God as depicted in the Psalter which will be considered.

2.1 Elements of Lament Psalms

In broad terms, the lament psalms are greatly stylised. The unit as a whole is a call of distress or prayer to God. A lament psalm, as initially observed by Gunkel (through Form-Criticism) and refined by Westermann, is generally comprised of five key elements, Address, Lament, Petition, Confession of Trust, and Vow of Praise (as displayed in individual and communal psalms). A holistic overview of the typical elements within the lament psalms is displayed in respect to Psalm 13, an individual lament.[7]

Address (and introductory petition):
How long, O Lord? (13:1a)

---

6 Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* trans. K.R. Crim & R.N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 261.

7 Psalm 13 is used generally within the literature to outline the form of lament as it is a simple example which allows us to see clearly the basic typical form-elements of lament psalms. For example see, Craig C. Broyles, 'The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms: A Form-critical and Theological Study' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 52,* ed. D.J.A. Clines & P.R. Davies (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 14, and Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Ausburg Publishing House, 1984), 58. All biblical quotes taken from this source unless otherwise stated, *The Holy Bible: New International Version,* (Nashville, Tennessee: Cornerstone Bible Publishers, 1999)

Lament:
How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and everyday have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me? (13:1-2)

Petition:
Look on me and answer O Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death;
my enemy will say "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall. (13:3-4)

Confession of Trust (or Turning toward God):
But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation. (13:5a)

Vow of Praise:
But I trust in your unfailing love;
My heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me. (13:5-6)[8]

From this outline of the form of a lament psalm it can be observed that they are not just lamentations. Although they are designated as laments (or sometimes as complaints) this is not their primary function. These psalms do not simply present a complaint to God; they seek change. Specifically, it is the petitions within the lament psalms which indicate this purpose. Thus, to achieve this goal "the one praying strives to move the heart of God with everything he *(sic)* says."[9] As such, "A lament functions not simply to report an incident to Yahweh or achieve catharsis for the psalmist, but to motivate Yahweh to act

---

8 These form elements can also be demonstrated with Communal Lament Psalms. e.g. Psalm 80: Address (80:1-3); Lament/Complaint (80:4-7); Petition (80:14-15); Vow of Praise (80:18).
9 Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (completed by J. Begrich, trans. J.D. Nogalski; Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1998)*,* 169.

on the psalmist's behalf, usually by making the description evocative and provocative."[10] In sum, lament psalms are primarily appeals. How this is expressed in the five form-elements of the laments will now be developed.

Address

In bringing an appeal to God, the first sentence usually begins with the *Address.*[11] The address is to God, and it occurs from one who has had a long history of trustful interaction with God. Thus, the address is usually in personal terms which claims a relationship to God that is "an implicit but significant ground for the appeal."[12] It is usually as simple as "O God", "My God" or "Lord my God",[13] and can occur up to three or four times within the psalm itself.

Lament

Secondly, once the summons to God is made, the whole purpose of the prayer is acknowledged, that of the *lament* being brought to Yahweh. As the address is usually short and simple, this part of the prayer comes forth emphatically. Gunkel highlights, "That which oppresses and torments the heart of the one praying flows unrestrictedly in the complaint."[14] The distress is painted in the deepest colours, with respect to both its external and its internal aspects, with the human "limit-experiences" articulated in dramatic religious language, known as "limit-expressions."[15] Whilst the rhetoric in these psalms seems

10 Gunkel cited in Broyles, 'The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms', 14.
11 This is most commonly the case, but sometimes the address may not occur until the middle of the prayer. See for example Psalm 142.
12 Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 58, Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 54, and Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship,* 195. See also Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 1,* 12-13.
13 For example Psalms 12:1; 16:1; 17:1. Other examples of direct personal address includes: "O my righteous God", *"*O Shepherd of Israel", *"*O God of our Salvation" (Psalms 4:1, 80:1, 94:2, 86:1 respectively.) The address can also be well detailed with Yahweh appealed to in terms of majesty and transcendence, for example, "O Most High" (9:2), "O Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel" (59:5).
14 Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms,* 155.
15 See Paul Ricoeur, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 4 (1975): 29-148, especially pages 127-129. See Brueggemann also for further comment on this theme in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 18-19.

to overstate the case, this is employed to evoke from Yahweh an "intrusive, transformative act."[16]

Specifically, Westermann has identified three elements of the *lament* within the lament psalms.[17] First, the most frequent aspect of *lament* within the lament psalms is the questions and complaints directed to God.[18] Here the psalmist challenges God's attitude and actions towards them.[19] The most frequently asked questions of God are: "Why?" and "How long?"[20] Namely, why has God abandoned, rejected, or forgotten the Israelites? And how long do I/we have to endure this suffering? As Miller states, "The complaint to God in these prayers thus gives voice to the most fundamental of human questions when life is threatened and falls apart."[21]

Secondly, there is a cry to God about the psalmist's personal suffering. Within the communal lament psalms this aspect is closely related to the complaint against God and against the enemy, as the personal suffering is viewed as being caused by a national enemy and their reproach. Whereas, within the individual lament psalms the complaint of personal suffering is usually related to persecution, physical or spiritual suffering, especially the immanence of death.[22] Whilst it is straightforward to note that there is personal suffering within the psalms, the psalms presentation in poetic terms makes it difficult to interpret their literal context and meaning. It is

---

16 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 54. Hence, the laments are not *reflections* on suffering, but express the *reality* of suffering. (Samuel, E. Balentine, *Prayers in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 150. (italics his))

17 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 169.

18 All of the complaint psalms identified by Craig C. Broyles, (except Psalm 102), have questions addressed to God.

19 Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 70. This is true whether it is an individual or communal lament psalm, although it appears with less vigour in the individual lament psalms. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 183-186.

20 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 176.

21 Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 72. For examples see: Ps 13:1; 35:17; Ps 44:23-24; Ps 22:1; Ps 74:1; Ps 74:10-11; Ps 77:7-9.

22 Broyles, 'The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms', 95. The specific areas of personal suffering that are mentioned within the lament psalms can include; sickness of body, mind and spirit, loneliness, a sense of abandonment, danger from enemies, shame and personal humiliation, the burden of sin or God's wrath experienced due to sinful deeds. See Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 79-81, and Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 70-71.

unquestionable, however, that they are vivid presentations of internal, physical, mental, and spiritual anguish. Thereby, displaying that no area of personal distress is exempt from lament.[23]

Finally, the lament-element in these psalms also arises out of the circumstance of hostility and oppression caused by a third party, known as the enemy.[24] The enemies of the pious are mentioned continuously within the lament psalms. Yet, the elusiveness of their description and how to respond to the accusations against the enemies has resulted in much discussion, which due to the constraints of the paper, cannot be detailed here.[25] However, the complaint against the enemy occurs for two main reasons: what they have done to the people of God, and what they have said against them.[26] It is important to also observe the distinction here, between the communal laments, where the enemy is recognised as a political enemy who has dealt a severe blow to the lamenter, and the individual laments, where the enemy only threatens the lamenter.[27]

Overall the lament-element of these psalms; comprising the complaints against God, the personal lament and the complaint against the enemy, reveal that no aspect of Israel's life and suffering was un-lamentable. It could all be brought to God in protest and prayer.

Petition

Thirdly, the lament-element within these psalms usually leads

23 For example: See Ps 38:3-5a; 22:14-15
24 Also commonly referred to as the psalmist's persecutors, slanderers, adversaries, and opponents, with their nature being described as arrogant, violent, lying witnesses, godless, and perverse. For further discussion see Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms,* especially page 140.
25 Particularly the discussion centres around Mowinckel's reference to there being a connection between enemies and illness. (See Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship,* 7 and Trent, C. Butler, 'Piety in the Psalms,' *Review & Expositor* 81 no.3 (1984): 387.)There is much discussion regarding this and other possible interpretation of the 'enemy' within the psalms but the current consensus remains discordant.
26 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 180.
For example, the actions of the enemy within the lament psalms describe the enemy setting traps, conspiring together, surrounding, seeking the life of and arming themselves against the psalmist. The speech of the enemy is described as mocking, cursing, slandering, falsely accusing, and celebrating in the psalmist's misfortunes. Se Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 189-190, Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 82, and Broyles, 'The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms,' 94.
27 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 193.

directly to the *petition*. According to Gunkel, the petition is the most significant part of the lament psalms. "It is the heart of the genre, which is understandable since the efforts of the praying are designed to obtain something from God."[28] Logically, the petition then corresponds with the lament. An example of the corollary between the lament and the petition is observed in Psalm 22, where the psalmist cries a lament of "Why are you so far from me?"(v1), in which the prayer of petition echoes, "Do not be far from me…"(v11) and "But you O Lord, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me"(v19). Thus, if the lament within the psalm was due to sickness, the plea is for healing and health. If it was the absence of God, the plea is for God to hear and be near, and so forth.

The petitions within these psalms ask God to act, and to act decisively, for God's sake as well as theirs.[29] The psalmist does not draw back, instead assumes the right to speak boldly and insist upon their covenantal rights.[30] This is especially highlighted by the psalmist's use of Hebrew imperatives to voice their petition.[31]

Confession of Trust

Another form-element of a lament psalm is the *confession of trust*. This aspect of the lament psalm voices the psalmist's confidence in God and God's ability to intervene in their distress, usually based on past acts of deliverance.[32] "Confidence in YHWH is the preferred and the most frequently stated reason why the poets of the complaint songs offer their petition."[33] It is recognised that confidence in God is the foundation for the lament and petition, for why would you bring

---

28 Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms,* 158.
29 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 55.
30 See Sung-Hun Lee, 'Lament and the Joy of Salvation in the Lament Psalms,' *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception,* ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 224-247, for a thoughtful discussion of covenantal relationship, especially the prominence of the terms of *hesed* and '*emet* in relation to the lament psalms.
31 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 55. Examples of the insistent nature of the petition include: 'hear me', 'examine my words', 'turn', 'save', or 'deliver'.
32 For example see Ps 44:1-8; 74:12-17; 77:11-20. See again Lee, 'Lament and the Joy of Salvation in the Lament Psalms' who details how the appeal and expectation of deliverance is made because of understanding the *hesed* relationship.
33 Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 170.

a lament and petition to someone whom you did not trust and who cannot change the situation?[34]

Typically the psalmist voices a straightforward confession in God, which can be as simple as: "But I trust in your unfailing love" or "My eyes are on ever on Lord."[35] The confession of trust can also be "a *statement about God* in which some characteristic or quality or way of God's being and doing is lifted up in relation to the psalmist."[36] Again, the confession of trust is closely related to the lament and petition, vividly reinforcing the psalmist's appeal for God to intervene.[37]

Praise

Finally, when the lament psalms shift into its final section, it is with a very different mood. The melancholy and distress of the lament has been removed. The psalmist offers *praise*. The transition is so distinct that Brueggemann comments, "This movement from plea to praise is one of the most startling in all of Old Testament literature."[38] The urgency and desperation of the psalmist is replaced with confidence, gratitude and well-being, (this movement occurs in all lament psalms except for Psalm 88.)[39]

Specifically, there are three main elements of praise within the lament psalms. Firstly, the psalmist praises God due to the assurance

34 Typically the confession of trust is found intervening between the lament and petition but can be integrated within or following the petition (especially with the later dated psalms.) See Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 57-59.

35 Ps 13:5; 25:15; 31:14.

36 Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 127. (italics his) These statements include God being described as the psalmist's 'help', 'shield', 'rock', 'fortress', or even the one who 'lifts up their head.' Ps 40:14; 7:10; 73:26; 91:2; 18:2; 3:3.

37 For example, the lament in Psalm 3 is "Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.'" (v1). The petition cries out, "Deliver me, O my God!" (v7). The confession of trust resounds, "From the Lord comes deliverance" (v8). For more details see Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 127-130.

38 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 56.

It is difficult to tell whether the psalmist's buoyant declaration of praise is uttered on receipt of a divine word of assurance, God's actual intervention, or whether it is voiced in anticipation. Moreover, there is no definite way of knowing, yet this unknown reflects the way in which these prayers are "themselves open". (Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 133.)

39 Although, interestingly this has not been discussed or noted by Westermann in his seminal work; *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* as he perceives that this transition occurs within all lament psalms.

of his hearing them.[40] Instead of the wrestling of petition and complaint previously observed, the psalmist is now certain and confident that they have been heard. Whereas before in the complaint, God was described as being absent, or unresponsive, this has changed and the psalmist is convinced that Yahweh has heard their cry for help. Whether or not the petition was actually answered, the crucial aspect is that Yahweh has heard. "This in itself is enough. … It is not thinkable that God would hear and then not act. And therefore, the crucial thing is Yahweh's hearing, from which everything else happily will follow."[41] In response to this assurance the psalmist can offer God a payment of their vows.

The second aspect of praise to God is that of the psalmists declaring their thanks and praise through the payment of their vows.[42] At the time of lament and petition it may be that the psalmist vowed to pay an offering of thanksgiving and praise when God answered their appeal.[43] This is especially depicted within the formal and sanctuary-orientated lament psalms which conclude with an act of praise, thanksgiving and sacrifice before a gathered community in the sanctuary.[44] Westermann, additionally states:

> Whoever truly cries to God out of the depths, and in this cry thinks not of his need but of God … knows that the moment of making a vow, a promise, is part of this cry. I *know* then that the matter is not finished when I have pled and God has heard, but that something else must still come. I know that I owe something to God.[45]

Finally, the third aspect of praise within the lament psalms is classified as doxology and praise.[46] For Brueggemann this is the most important element of resolution within the lament psalms.[47] The doxology makes clear that things have changed. God, who was appealed to and accused of neglect, is now acknowledged as generous,

---

40 For example Psalm 13:5-6; 17:15; 28:6; 69:33.
41 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 56.
42 For example Psalm 26:12; 54:6-7; 56:12-13.
43 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 56.
44 Miller, *They Cried to the Lord,* 131, and Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms,* 184.
45 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 78. Specific examples of the payment of vows within the lament psalms include, Ps 54:6; Ps 56:12; Ps 66:13-15; Ps 22:22.
46 For example: Ps 7:17; 16:9-11; 22:22-31; 35:27-28; 86:12-13.
47 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 56.

faithful and saving. The lament psalm has changed from petition to thanksgiving, from grief to joy. As such the psalmist responds in the only reasonable way; with praise.

Summary of Lament Psalms

In summary, the lament psalms are comprised of elements which progress from the address, lament, and petition, to trust and praise. Significantly:

> The form of the lament reflects the liturgical conviction that the situation is transformed when Yahweh acts. The pattern of expression corresponds to and gives voice to that view of the situation. Thus the form enables the faithful to read situations of hurt as situations of potential transformations.[48]

This is the wonder and power of these psalms. Yet this aspect of transformation needs further explanation, for why the change? What has caused the turn from distress to hope, plea to praise? Further consideration is needed before we can begin to explore the early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer and develop any conception of a correspondence.

2.2 Transition from Distress to Relief

The uniqueness of the lament psalms are "to be understood and interpreted around the turn from distress to relief. The crucial structural question is the relation between these contrasted parts."[49] For example, within Psalm 13 it appears that between verses 4 and 5 something occurred, likewise in Psalm 22 between verse 21 and 22. But what was this? In providing answers for this transition there have been a variety of suggestions.

Firstly, Joachim Begrich offers the most notable hypothesis. He proposes that an authorised speaker, most likely a priest or prophet, answered the appeal and petition by voicing a "salvation oracle".[50]

48 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 72.
49 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 72.
50 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 57. Also see James L. Crenshaw, *The Psalms: An Introduction*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 85.

"The salvation oracle is a promise on God's part to be present with, to help, and to intervene on behalf of the complainer."[51] It is a speech that "resolves the desperate situation and permits the speaker to begin life anew in confidence and gratitude."[52] Mowinckel and Gunkel proposed a similar idea that after the lament ritual had come to an end, an oracle of blessing was given by the officiating priest. Since this was an oracle, the suppliant could now be satisfied, since the deity had spoken.[53] Correspondingly, F. Külchler discusses that in four texts (Psalm 12:5; 60:6; 91:15-16; & 108:7) God speaks, most likely through the priest. As such it is this 'divine oracle' which stands between the petition and the praise. He then infers that although not explicit in the other psalms, it can be presumed to also occur.[54] On the other hand, John W.M. Wevers argues that speaking the name of Yahweh itself is the point of transition. This name is decisive and when it is spoken; the situation is transformed.[55] Additionally, S.B. Frost believes that the very announcement of praise and thanksgiving is the most powerful guarantee that divine intervention is on the way. No other formal divine statement is needed or expected.[56] Finally, F. Heiler proposes a psychological explanation. He suggests that during the prayer an unconscious metamorphosis took place. The suddenness of this change is explained as "… the result of the psychic impact of repeated petition and expressed longing for an answer. Such a psychological phenomenon is certainly not impossible; it, however, only applies to private prayer."[57]

Where now does this leave us? Perhaps, with a 'conflict of interpretations.'[58] However, Brueggemann notes; "What is clear in the text is that there is a covenantal-theological move from one part of the

51 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 57.
52 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 57.
53 John W.M. Wevers, 'A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms,' *Vestus Testamentum.* Vol 6, no 1(1956): 81 style than genuine prophetic speech. See John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 1-9.
54 Explanation found in Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 73.
55 Wevers, 'A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms'. The New Testament parallel is found in the invitation to pray "in Jesus' name." For example, John 14:13.
56 Again quoted in Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith,* 73.
57 Wevers, 'A Study in the Form Criticism of Individual Complaint Psalms,' 81.
58 Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics,* ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

text to the next. Beyond that, we are engaged in speculation ...”[59] Yet what we do know "is that grievance addressed to an authorised partner does free us."[60] Significantly, Westermann comments likewise;

> The transition in the lament psalms is rooted in the lament's function as an appeal. Because the lament is directed *toward the one* who can change the suffering … Understood in this way, the structure of the Psalm of lament, which enables us to see the path leading to an alleviation of the suffering, is one of the most powerful witnesses to the experience of God's activity in the Old Testament.[61]

This is an explanation which could offer us a way forward in the next stage of this essay. Particularly as it harmonises with the wider portrayal of Israel's historical self-understanding as an experience of cry and rescue, based on their paradigmatic experience of the Exodus and re-visioned at every stage of their history.[62] Israel has consciously held to the event of 'conversion' from a situation of distress to unexpected deliverance, based on their dialogical covenant-relationship with Yahweh. It is this consideration that seems to offer a thoughtful new horizon and contributes to our exploration of the hypothesis proposed previously. It is with this in mind that we now turn to explore the early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer.

---

59 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 58.
60 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 58.
61 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 267. (italics mine)
62 Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 77-83. This is outlined further in Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terrence E. Fretheim, & David L. Petersen, *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd ed* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 118, where it is commented that at every crucial place in its history, Israel perceived its experience according to this form of cry and rescue. For example:
a. Exodus
          complaint of oppression……answer of liberation
b. Wilderness
          complaint of hunger……..answer of food
c. Philistine threat and monarchy
          complaint of threat………answer of judge/king
d. Canaanite syncretism in the ninth century
          complaint of death………answer of life
e. Assyrian threat in the eighth century
          complaint of siege…….answer of deliverance
f. Babylonian destruction and exile
          complaint of abandonment………answer of God's presence

3. Exploring early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer

To clarify what constitutes early Australian Pentecostalism, it is defined for this paper as the period from 1908 to 1937. The official beginning of Pentecostalism within Australia is attributed to 1908 when Sarah Jane Lancaster opened Good News Hall in Melbourne.[63] From this time there arose many loosely affiliated Pentecostal fellowships. However, it was not until 1937, when thirty-eight Pentecostal assemblies from across Australia came together to form the Assemblies of God Australia (AGA),[64] that Australian Pentecostalism became recognised as an official institution. Thus, these first 29 years will be classed as the formative and early years of Australian Pentecostalism. During this formative period, there were two Pentecostal periodicals circulated, the *Good News,* and *The Australian Evangel.* The data for the early Australian Pentecostal practice, subsequently, will be acquired from these periodicals and limited to the period of 1908 to 1937.

Methodology

The methodology developed to achieve useful examples of early Australian Pentecostal prayer for this exploration consisted of three main phases. Firstly, eleven key words were placed into the electronic search of the *Good News* and *The Australian Evangel* journal databases.[65] The eleven key words chosen were: lament, prayer/s, groan/s, tears, wail, petition/s, travail, tarry, cry, testimony/testimonies, and complaint/s. These words commonly arose out of the lament psalm and Pentecostal literature on lament in the North American context.

---

63 Barry Chant, *The Spirit of Pentecost: Origins and Development of the Pentecostal Movement in Australia, 1870-1939* (PhD. diss., Sydney: Macquarie University, 1999)*,* 65 & 135. The first known Australian Pentecostal meeting was held in rural Victoria around 1870. But it was in 1908 that a formal Pentecostal congregation began to meet.

64 See Shane J. Clifton, *An Analysis of the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Ph.D. diss., Fitzroy, Victoria: Australian Catholic University, 2005), 157-158. The AGA was initially formed with 38 assemblies and a membership of 1, 482 people.

65 Hosted at Alphacrucis College, Sydney, Australia. The Australasian Pentecostal Studies Electronic Journal - http://aps.webjournals.org Also available at the Pentecostal Heritage Centre, Alphacrucis College, Sydney, Australia.

It was anticipated that these key words would provide results which would allow a possible correspondence between the lament psalms and early Australian Pentecostal prayer to be envisaged.

This initial search with the eleven key words produced an overall result of 869 periodical references. Of these, 295 articles were multiples. Thereby, with the removal of the repetitions, a total of 574 individual, unrepeated articles were gathered. Next, a second phase of examination was employed to discover whether of the 574 articles, an occasion of prayer was described or other extraneous information beyond the scope of this paper generated.[66] This analysis of independently reviewing each article resulted in a total of 186 prayer occasion entries being identified (see Figure 3 in Appendix 1).

Finally, a third phase of analysis was undertaken. This consisted of seven questions being developed and asked of the resulting 186 prayer articles. These questions were created based on the form-elements of the lament psalms as outlined in the previous section. The questions were as follows:

1. Did it address God?
2. Was there a lament
    a. Against God?
    b Against an enemy?
    c. A personal lament?
3. Was there a petition?
4. Was there a confession of trust?
5. Did the prayer end in praise?

On the basis of these questions, the data of the prayer occasions was sorted. A scoring of one point per item, was given to the prayer occasions, with a maximum of seven points achievable for each article.[67]

Results

The final results of this data analysis yielded no "7 point"

---

[66] A prayer event was defined as an article which directly detailed a prayer, gave a testimony of an experience of prayer or another person's prayer or similar. What a prayer event did not entail included sermons, notice of a prayer meeting, meeting reports or poems and the like.
[67] Please see Appendix 1 for additional discussion of the results.

prayer occasions. This was due to the lack of lament in relation to 'God' being articulated.[68] However there were eleven individual prayer occasions which received a total of "6 points" (see Figure 1). Significantly, eight of the eleven results were identified more than once within the keyword search. For example, the prayer occasions were identified with multiple keywords, such as *cry* and *prayer* or *testimony* and *tears.* Notably, of the eleven initial keywords only five were represented within these results. They were tarry/s, cry, tears, testimony/testimonies and prayer/s. One of the prayer occasions was located within *The Australian Evangel* and the remaining results, (ten articles), were located in the *Good News* periodical.[69] Noticeably, no corporate occasions of lament-form prayer was identified within this analysis.[70] Substantially, for the purpose of this paper, it was evaluated that the eleven prayer occasions provide a good representation of the data.

---

68 This would benefit from further research – as has this protest and complaint against God been completely silenced within Pentecostalism or does it still occur beneath the surface but because it is seen as 'a lack of faith' it is not mentioned in public arenas?
 Notably there was no mention of lament against physical enemies either within this section. This may be due to both periodicals not distributing issues during WW1. By WW2, *Good News* was no longer in existence and only the 1937 issues are included from *The Australian Evangel* due to our definition of 'early Australian Pentecostalism' (1909-1937). It would be interesting to research whether there are references to physical corporate 'enemies' in the wider periodicals.

69 The references for the eleven prayer occasions are as follows: Winnie Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' *Good News* 18 no. 3 (1927):19. C. Cousins, 'Ask and Ye Shall Receive.' Good News 17 no. 2 (1926): 11. W.H. Dakin, 'Authentic Healing', *Good News* 17 no. 9 (1926): 7. Beatrice May Douglas, 'Prove Me Now.' Good News 17 no. 3 (1926): 16-17. E.M.W. 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' *Good News* 18 no.12 (1927): 14. Cyrus B. Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers: How I Sought and Received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.' *Good News* 17 no. 12 (1926):16-17. Pauline, Heath. 'Testimonies: Saved by the Power of God.' *Good News 17* no. 6 (1926):6. Charles Heatley, 'Wonderfully Healed.' *Good News* 17 no. 2 (1926): 6-7. Harry, O. Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' *Good News* 17 no. 9 (1926): 6-7. A. Tuck. 'Testimonies: Mrs A Tuck [Stephen Jeffreys]', *The Australian Evangel* (July 1929): 6-7. Fred, B. Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report of the Geelong Campaign', *Good News* 17 no. 10 (1926): 14-15.

70 Whether this is due to the form the periodicals took, (with many individual testimonial accounts and general teaching articles), the transitioning societal influences of the early 20th century, (from extended community-minded to individually-focused), or the methodology used to achieve the data; is difficult to ascertain. These questions are also outside the confines of this paper to explore.

Figure 1: "Form-correspondence" results of early Australian Pentecostal Prayers
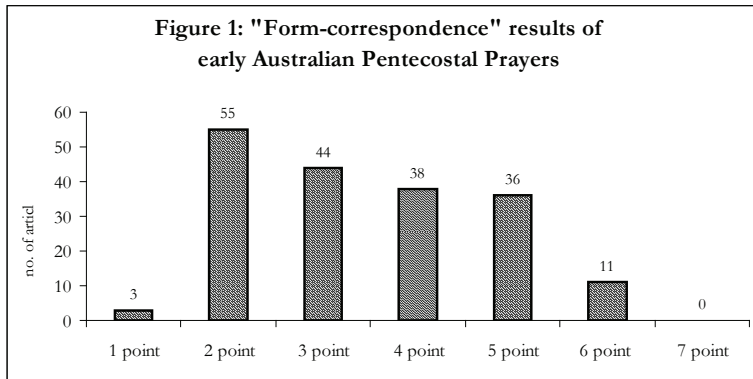
Additionally, for the purpose of comparison, forty-six 'unmixed' biblical lament psalms (communal and individual) as identified by Gunkel,[71] were similarly scrutinised according to the seven question analysis. The results are displayed in Figure 2. Significantly, the majority of the biblical lament psalms (76%) showed a "6 & 7 point" correspondence with the form-elements discussed earlier. This result supports the supposition that the lament psalms are highly stylised and the majority include typical form-elements.[72]

This paper will now determine whether the eleven "6 point" early Australian Pentecostal prayer occasions likewise correspond to the distinctive stylisation of the lament psalms.

---

71 Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms,* 82 & 121. It is acknowledged that the Psalter comprises of many more lament-type psalms than these 46. However, these 46 are unmixed in genre and are clearly identified as complete lament psalms. These are Psalms 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 79, 80, 83, 86, 88, 102, 106, 109, 120, 125, 130, 140, 141, 142, 143.

72 Potentially this contributes to the premise of the hypothesis that the church has lost the form of lament, as there were limited "6 & 7 point" results from the early Australian Pentecostal church.

Figure 2: "Form-correspondence" results of early Australian Pentecostal Prayers compared to the Lament Psalms
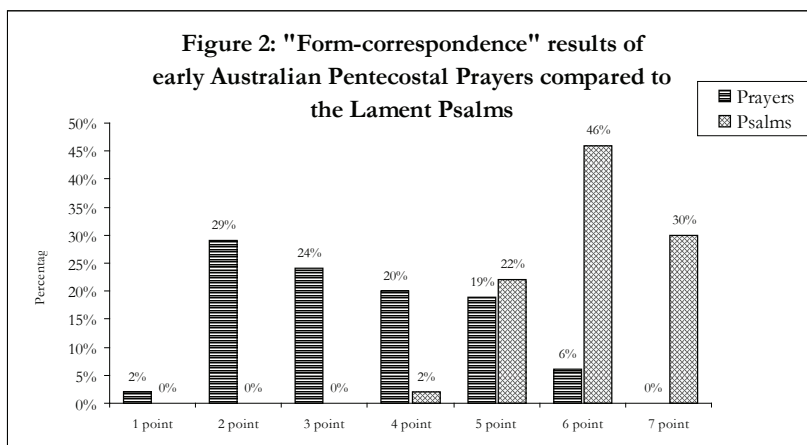
3.3 Explanation of Results

The eleven "6 point" prayer occasions vary from appeals for healing from sickness, testimonial accounts of Holy Spirit baptism, and general prayer petitions. For ease of explanation the results are divided into these three topical categories for in-depth discussion; (1) Sickness and Healing, (2) Spirit Baptism, and (3) General Appeal.

Sickness and Healing

To begin, one of the most frequent themes present within early Australian Pentecostal lament-type prayer was sickness and healing. Five of the prayer results are categorised as such. This is comparable to 37% unmixed biblical lament psalms mentioning this same theme.[73] In accordance to the form of the lament psalms, (discussed previously), the data itself is considered as follows:

The Address:

The address to God within these five prayer occasions echoes the frankness and personal intimacy of the lament psalms. For example:

---

73 The unmixed lament psalms which included themes of bodily illness or health symptoms were Psalm 6, 13, 22, 31, 35, 38, 39, 42, 51, 61, 63, 69, 70, 88, 102, 109, and 142. That is seventeen of the forty-six unmixed lament psalms included bodily illness symptoms.

I cried unto my God.[74]

...and pleaded with God.[75]
How precious the Lord was to me through it all.[76]

The address in these prayer occasions is brief and understated. As per the lament psalms there is little formality. The address of the prayer to God is voiced so that the purpose of the appeal can be hastily divulged.

The Lament:

The lament-language described in these early Australian Pentecostal prayers is filled with rawness, grief and suffering, equally as vivid and intense as the lament psalms. Excerpts of this are portrayed as follows:

> *I was ill at home for three weeks, and the odors* (sic) *of the decayed lung were awful, but the pain was beyond description, every time I drew my breath or coughed it felt as though my whole inside was being torn to pieces. I cried unto my God that I might be freed from all suffering and be at rest, ... deliver me from the powers of hell.*[77]

Mrs Tuck's 'crisis' event occurred after the death of her husband:

> *I had a very serious breakdown; for three months I felt myself going steadily down, it was if I were sinking into a deep mire from which I had no power to get out…I grew weaker each day, then my whole system collapsed, and I became a nervous wreck. …I felt death upon me like a huge monster coming up from my feet and creeping up my body. I was filled with terror…Then there were times when I was too weak to fight, pray or think; … I felt unless the Lord undertook I could not live…My cries could be heard outside; my nerves were all on fire, I was one mass of suffering… My life seemed to be ebbing away; too weak to talk, I was watched night and day… My life was at a very low ebb,*

---

74 Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' 6-7.
75 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.
76 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6-7.
77 Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' 6.

no sleep for nights.[78]

In summary, it can be observed that the language used in these 'sickness and healing' prayers resonates with the lament psalms. For example, '*my whole inside was being torn to pieces,*'[79] '*moaning and groaning all day,*'[80] '*pain so severe,*'[81] '*our souls were burdened,*'[82] '*I was one mass of suffering,*'[83] '*unless the Lord undertook I could not live,*'[84] and '*my life seemed to be ebbing away.*'[85] In these examples the physical, mental and spiritual anguish of a lament is clearly identifiable. Even the metaphor commonly utilised by the psalmist of being overwhelmed by floodwaters is clearly depicted in Mrs Tuck's testimony, '*I felt myself going steadily down, it was if I were sinking into a deep mire from which I had no power to get out.*'[86] These pray-ers correlate with the psalmists, and even highlight the potential influence of the psalmist's words, in their unrestricted lament cries to God.

The Petition:

Arising out of these aforementioned laments the people testified of their petition to God or seeking out someone to petition God on their behalf.

> *I made up my mind to pray for her healing, and, amidst tears, I put my hands on where she said the pain was, and pleaded with God, through the Name of Jesus Christ to heal her. I prayed for about five minutes…*[87]

> *One day the pain was unbearable. We sent for Elder Roberts, and the Lord used him mightily in prayer, claiming the protection of the blood and victory in Jesus' name. After five hours' persistent prayer, we were conscious of the sweet*

78 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
79 Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' 6.
80 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.
81 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.
82 Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report,' 14-15.
83 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
84 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
85 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
86 For example, compare Mrs Tuck's comments with Psalm 69:1-2.
87 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.

presence of Jesus, and instantly every trace of the trouble disappeared.[88]

The petition in these prayer occasions, like the lament psalms, are frank and strongly stated; '*blast this cursed disease*'[89], '*in the Name of Jesus*',[90] '*I...pleaded with God*'.[91] There is an insistence and boldness to their prayers which desires to see '*victory in Jesus' name*'[92] and '*a full and free deliverance from suffering.*[93]' The petition as 'praying through', an idea presented in our initial proposal, is also represented here.[94] Wherein, one prayer occasion details five hours of persistent prayer ensuing until the pray-ers were '*conscious of the sweet presence of Jesus*'[95] and a change in circumstance.

<u>The Confession of Trust:</u>

The confession of trust exemplifies the recounting of personal history between the pray-er and God, as well as the reliance on the larger biblical testimony. For Pentecostals who self-consciously see themselves as 'people of the book' and their story closely reflected therein, it is no surprise that this aspect comes through clearly in these accounts. For example:

> *At last they landed me out in the Austin Hospital for incurables. The doctor there, and some of the older students, would sometimes tell me that I would never get well from this disease. I told them…the Lord would deliver me from this trouble as He had done from many other complaints.*[96]

Further, in speaking to his doctor during this time, Hultgren states his trust in "*A true and living God*", his reason being that,

> *… He is the same God to-day as in those days of old, when He led the Israelites through the wilderness and across the Red*

---

88 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
89 Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report,' 14.
90 Heatley, 'Wonderfully Healed,' 6.
91 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.
92 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
93 Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report,' 14.
94 See Section 2. The Proposal
95 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
96 Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' 6.

> *Sea dryfooted.*[97]

Mrs Tuck states that she:

> *… I knew He was able* [to heal and keep her from death]*, for I had proved the Lord for my body for fifteen years.*[98]

She states further,

> *"How precious the Lord was to me through it all…I knew from the beginning that God would heal me, for it is His will that His people should be well."*[99]

<u>The Transition from Plea to Praise:</u>

Then, just like the lament psalms, something occurs within the prayer results which changes the whole mood of the testimonial accounts, from plea to praise. Sometimes there is an explicit reason articulated within these prayer occasions for this change in mood, as illustrated by the dramatic intervention of the healing power of God. At other times it is more implicit, with the assurance of a forthcoming healing confirmed. This is portrayed in the following examples:

> *Instantly I was healed in front of 1400 to 1500 people. Oh! What a scene! Everyone was carried away, joining with me in a shout of praise to God. I ran home without my crutches to my dear wife…'I am healed, healed.' Oh! What rapture… I laughed and cried, and shouted, and danced with joy.*[100]

In the next example we note the pray-er make a statement that matches the 'assurance of being heard' aspect within the lament psalms. Furthermore, the outing to the Croydon Junction meeting is a demonstration of corporate praise, and could depict a modern-day equivalent of the lament psalms 'payment of vows'.

> *…and, when I had finished praying I said, 'You are going to get better,' and she told me the pain had all gone…To test that she has been healed, she went out with me to a meeting at Croydon Junction the next afternoon.*[101]

Mrs Tuck also recounts her healing and states the requirement of

---

97 Hultgren, 'An Incurable Consumptive Healed,' 6.
98 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
99 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
100 Heatley, 'Wonderfully Healed,' 7.
101 Dakin, 'Authentic Healing,' 7.

needing to corporately testify of this:

> *… when dear Pastor Jeffreys' prayed Heaven opened to me, the power of God came upon me and shook every organ of my body… and I was instantly healed… All that night the Lord kept saying to me, 'Go, tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee.' So I knew that He wanted me to go to the meeting and testify. … It was with great difficulty that I got to the meeting… But praise God, when I stood up to testify these words came to me, 'They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony,' and instantly my body was quickened… It is now four months since the Lord healed me…Praise God I am free, free, free. Hallelujah![102]*

Also, at the Evangelist Van Eyk's meetings we see a vivid transition to praise because of miraculous healings, for example:

> "*I just had to call and let you know my little stepson, who is now nine and a half years, and who has been suffering since babyhood from catarrh, weak stomach and general debility, which many physicians have failed to relieve, was healed when you prayed for him. He is now eating heartily, and is, oh, so happy! The change is truly marvellous… He sings your hymns day long.[103]*

Also, although not healed, there is a tangible transformation and change of mood occurring within Van Eyk's account.

> *At the meeting one dear young man with cloven palate, for which we prayed last night, elbows his way to the front, and, gaining our ear, says, 'Brother, I'm not healed yet; but the spiritual blessing and uplifting in my soul, which I have received through your prayers, is simply wonderful…[104]*

It is particularly interesting to note the role other people play in praying and petitioning God on behalf of the person testifying. Possibly, this could equate to the function of priest/prophet within the lament psalms and the proclamation of a 'salvation/divine oracle'.[105]

Thus, overall in the examination of these five 'sickness and healing'

102 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 7.
103 Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report,' 15.
104 Van Eyk, 'Evangelist Van Eyk's Report,' 15.
105 See earlier discussion of the 3.2 'Transition from Distress to Relief'

prayer occasions there is a high correspondence with the form-elements of the lament psalms. There is displayed an intimate and brief address, the lament is vivid and expressive of the limit-experience of pain and suffering, the petition for healing is bold and persistent, there is a confession of trust which relies on the history between the pray-er and the healing character of God, and finally there is a transition to praise due to the transformative act of healing or at least an assurance that healing will come. Will the other prayer-occasions show an equally strong correspondence?

Spirit Baptism

Secondly, the periodical search for lament-type prayers resulted in another five prayer occasions which detailed the experience of tarrying for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Conventionally, the occasion of Holy Spirit baptism is not a situation of grief or suffering, as for example with sickness. However, as depicted through the language, it reflects an experience equivalent with the lament psalms' absence or hidden-ness of God. In accordance to the form of the lament psalms the multiple parallels with the testimonial accounts will be detailed.

The Address:
Within the accounts the address is usually inferred and not explicitly stated, yet there are examples of the simplicity of the address.

> *Yes, Lord…*[106]
> *Oh, God…*[107]
> *My God…*[108]

These examples of address likewise correspond with the lament psalms, in which it was previously noted that the most common address was the simple "My God" or "Lord my God."[109] This is apparent in these prayer occasions.

The Lament:

---

106 E.M.W. 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
107 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16-17.
108 Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' 16-17.
109 See discussion of the Lament Psalms; 3.1.1. The Address

Similarly, the emotional limit language of the lament can be heard in the following descriptions:

> *For hours I prayed with strong crying and tears. My soul agony was so great that I sweat until my woollen underwear was wringing wet.*[110]

> *For a week I was in great distress, and there seemed no help anywhere, in spite of attempts at prayer, God seemed to have turned His face from me, I could not even pray, and all looked hopeless.*[111]

> *Later there came physical manifestations, some of the most humiliating character; there were sighings, groanings, stretchings, gaspings, actual travailing of the body at different times, twisting of the tongue, frequent complete prostrations on my face.*[112]

As displayed, tarrying for the baptism in the Spirit portrays a similarity with the psalmist's anguished laments. There is an equal emotional ('*strong crying and tears*',[113] '*all looked hopeless*',[114] '*I felt black and as miserable as could be*',[115] '*irritable*'[116]), physical ('*sighings*',[117] '*groanings*',[118] '*stretchings*',[119] '*travailing of the body*',[120] '*little sleep*',[121] '*sweating*'[122]), and spiritual distress described ('*no help anywhere in spite of attempts at prayer*',[123] '*conscious of His hand being upon me*',[124] '*the enemy was telling me*',[125] '*I do not believe I have any God in my soul anymore*'[126]). The event of tarrying is

---

110 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
111 Heath. 'Testimonies: Saved by the Power of God,' 6.
112 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
113 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
114 Heath. 'Testimonies: Saved by the Power of God,' 6.
115 Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' 16.
116 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
117 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
118 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
119 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
120 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
121 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
122 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
123 Heath. 'Testimonies: Saved by the Power of God,' 6.
124 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
125 Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' 16.
126 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.

characterised as one of fragile desperation and sense of abandonment by God ('*God seemed to have turned his face from me'[127]*). This is comparable to various psalms which express the very same lament, although admittedly evolving from a different *Sitz im Leben*.

The Petition:

In turning to petitionary statements we observe:

> *I cried mightily unto Him that He would fill me.[128]*

Brother Tom when asked by what he is seeking for stated: "*I don't know, only my full inheritance.*"[129] And also:

> *I got down on my knees and bellowed out like a mad bull. I was desperate, and said to the Lord, 'I have lost everything I ever had. I don't know whether I am saved or not. Oh, I'm lost!'[130]*

The petitions within the laments psalms are strongly and resolutely stated. This is exemplified in these prayer results, with the pray-er crying out '*mightily*' and '*bellowing out like a mad bull*' due to desperation. This is the crux of the lament appeal, the pray-ers want all that God has for them, that is their '*full inheritance*'. The petition is furthermore, based on their knowledge of God and clearly linked to the confession of trust.

The Confession of Trust:

A Confession of Trust is exhibited in these testimonies. Predominantly in the lament psalms, the psalmist confessed the victory of God's past actions with his people, thus indicating their confidence that he will act similarly. In our prayer results the reliance on the previous actions and promises of God is voiced in prayer usually via the scriptural testimony. As for Pentecostals what has occurred for the biblical characters, should equally be experienced today. For example:

> *The Lord convinced me that I needed the same baptism, that He gave, the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius as recorded in the 10th chapter of Acts. So I began to seek for it with all my*

127 Heath. 'Testimonies: Saved by the Power of God,' 6.
128 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
129 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
130 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.

heart.[131]

Then I took a text from the Promise Box, 'Prove me now' (Mal 3:10), and I was filled with joy, and was satisfied that I would get through, and before 10 o'clock I found the Holy Spirit magnifying God through me in an unknown tongue, and then I knew that out of my innermost being the rivers of living water were flowing, Oh! It was joy unspeakable and full of glory.[132]

The Transition to Praise:

In the last example, a transition from plea to praise occurred with no explicit indication of how. Other portrayals of this transition from distress to relief are described as follows:

A Lady preacher 'EMW' states that she was tarrying at home:

Then a voice said: 'Now ye are clean'; and almost immediately my tongue begun stammering… while I became blessedly conscious of being in the most wondrous communion with my God that I had ever known in my life. … Later in the afternoon,… the Spirit was singing through me! Oh, the glory, the joy, the wonder of it all! …For days my joy was so great I could not refrain from speaking in tongues.[133]

In this example, observe the correlation with the salvation/divine oracle theory.[134] The voice, presumably of God, speaks to her *'Now ye are clean'*. Thereafter, a transformation occurs. Significantly, there is no human intermediary in this account. God speaks directly to her, as promised at the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2.

Fockler writes that he finally yielded all to God and then:

I don't know whether I went up to heaven, or heaven came down to me; but I was truly in a heavenly state, and spoke in other tongues. I surely did magnify God…Before the meeting was over I had the joy of joining with others in that glorious ecstasy of praising and magnifying God, ending up with the heavenly choir.[135]

---

131 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 16.
132 Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' 16.
133 EMW, 'Testimonies: From a Lady Preacher,' 14.
134 See section 2.2 Transition from Distress to Relief, for further detail.
135 Fockler, 'A Message to Seekers,' 17.

Cousins tarried month after month at tarrying meetings with no experience of the power of God manifested in her life. Then she began to set aside time each day to wait upon God for the Holy Spirit. She soon testified:

> *I was kneeling beside a chair, and emitted a big sigh (or, rather, the Holy Spirit sighed through me), and thought the people would think I was sobbing; then I felt great waves of glory going over all my shoulders. Everyone in the room was praising the Lord. I was filled with wonder…*[136]

Finally, Pauline Heath's account discusses feeling joy at meeting Christ afresh as a surrendered and repentant sinner. However, "*Each day I pray that he will send me His Holy Spirit, so that I may be able to speak for Him.*" She had not yet received the fullness of the baptism of the Spirit. Even so, she expressed confidence and assurance that the breakthrough of God was near. "*Last week I got the promise in Jeremiah, 29:13. I am seeking 'with all my heart', and the promise is sure. Pray for me that I may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.*" This appears to mirror the form of the lament psalms, although the fullness of the petition has not been realised, there is a plea to the community to believe with and affirm her petition, an assurance that God has heard her cry, and confidence that the answer is on the way.

In these results, the form-elements of the biblical lament psalms are echoed in the early Australian Pentecostal's experience of tarrying for Holy Spirit baptism. There appears to be genuine affirmation of the proposal presented in this paper, with clear parallels of the transition from distress to praise, the form-elements (of address, lament, petition, confession of trust, and praise) and scholarship's hypothesis of the salvation/divine oracle. Before explicitly jumping to final conclusions, the remaining prayer occasion results will be reviewed.

General Appeal

Finally, the last early Australian Pentecostal lament-prayer result did not fit easily into any category. Possibly it is wrestling for the

---

136 Cousins, 'Ask and Ye Shall Receive,' 11.

salvation of family and friends, although this is not fully described. However, it again corresponded to the form of the biblical lament psalms. It is outlined here.

The Address:
The address of the prayer continues to display a simplicity and intimacy of relationship.

> *O, Lord…*[137]
> *The dear Lord himself…*[138]

The Lament:
As with the previous early Australian Pentecostal prayers, the prayer occasion describes the crisis event in lament-like language. Briefly:

> *I fell wearily to sleep, for I had been wrestling earnestly in prayer for a friend; and how often it is so: We struggle till aweary…*[139]

The Petition:
The direct petition arises from the lament.

> *…and then we cry: 'O Lord, do Thou the rest.'*[140]

The Confession of Trust:
Within this prayer occasion, the confession of trust again portrays a reliance on the character of God.

> *The Lord heard my cry, and He alone knew the agony of my heart. Praise be unto the dear Lord, who always knows why we sigh or smile.*[141]

The Transition from Plea to Praise:
Finally, we perceive the breakthrough and intervention of God within the situation through the subsequent change of mood. Even

---

137 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.
138 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.
139 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.
140 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.
141 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.

though, in this case, the answer to the petition is not immediately forthcoming or apparent.

> *That night a sweet vision I saw…The dear Lord Himself came to me…. Oh, the rapture of that moment! In a voice filled with the tenderest compassions, He breathed the words: 'You love me, don't you?' While I looked upon that face, I could but answer one word – 'Yes'...I awakened, and a great joy filled my heart, for I knew I had seen the dear Lord, and it was He who had spoken. … He knew, too, that it would not be best for me if He answered my prayer, as I desired, immediately; but though it tarry, it is coming, for 'all things are possible with God.'[142]*

Overall, this prayer occasion also shows a correspondence to the form of the lament psalms.

3.4 Discussion

In this paper an attempt has been made to explore whether there is a correspondence between the form of the biblical lament psalms and the early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer, and "saturating it, so to speak, with intelligibility."[143] In examining the early Australian Pentecostal's practice of prayer a correspondence between their form and the biblical lament psalms is unmistakable. We note that the early Pentecostals' address God in a familiar frankness and relationality of the lament psalms. The early Australian Pentecostal lament is equally filled with limit-language which portrays the crisis experience vividly and bodily. The Pentecostal's petition matches the lament psalms with its intensity of passion and directness, both frankly appealing to obtain something from God. Significantly, the presence of others being included in making the petition to God on the pray-er's behalf is influential within the early Australian Pentecostal prayers. Potentially this describes the equal function that a priest/prophet within the cultic setting or a lay leader within the community of ancient Israel performed.[144] Further, the confession of trust is apparent within the

---

142 Andrews, 'You Love Me, Don't You?' 19.
143 Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 355.
144 This is what the scholarship for example, of Gunkel and Mowinckel (and others) who place the laments within the cultic setting, and Gerstenberger, who places the laments within

Pentecostal's prayers, with a reliance on the past relational history between the Pentecostal pray-er and God, as well as the reiteration of the biblical promises of healing, Holy Spirit baptism, and God's deliverance. Finally, the transition to praise is extensively grand and expressive, bodily and verbally, occurring within the corporate and individual settings. The transition to praise also concurs with scholarship's hypothesis of a salvation/divine oracle, being spoken by God directly or via an intermediary. Further, it is noted that the majority of early Australian Pentecostal prayer results displayed the expectation of a direct "intrusive, transformative act"[145] by God, through an observable healing or baptism in the Spirit as exhibited by tongue-speaking. Where this did not directly occur, the results portrayed an 'assurance of being heard' wherein a trusting and joyous mood was conveyed. Thus, on every level of form - address, lament, petition, confession of trust, and praise - there is a definitive correspondence between the lament psalms and early Australian Pentecostal prayer.

There is one significant omission, however. This was that the prayer occasions analysed did not display a 'complaint against God.' We did not see the bold accusations or protests against God himself. Possibly this is connected to Westermann's observation that this type of complaint is dominant within the communal laments rather than the individual laments.[146] Further, it may indicate a passive acceptance of suffering as the 'will of God' by the pray-ers or a reluctance to accuse and defame the reputation of God.[147]

Moreover, the 'complaint against an enemy' in the early Australian Pentecostal prayers is different compared to the lament psalms. Instead of references to human accusers, we observe statements to the devil as the spiritual enemy within the early Australian Pentecostal prayer occasion results. For example:

> *But the enemy was at work, and as I arose to go, I heard,*

---

healing ceremonies conducted within the family by community lay leaders, assert. Hence the role of others is assumed within the lament psalms. See Patrick D. Miller *Interpreting the Psalms,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 4-8 for further discussion.

145 Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms,* 54.

146 Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms,* 183-186.

147 This theme will be discussed in a subsequent article.

'What if nothing happens? Your friends will laugh at you.'[148]

I was not without temptation during this time of waiting. The first began by a dark shade covering my face. I tried to push it way, striking at it with my hand, but I only hit the floor. The second time a black hand came, and all the while these trials were on I struck at them and praised God all the more, praying in my heart to God for deliverance.[149]

During that time the devil attacked every organ of my body; he tried his utmost to kill me. One night I suddenly awoke and a black veil was around my bed enclosing me in. I knew it was death.[150]

The devil knew his time was short. He tried to kill me before I was prayed for.[151]

Consequently, from these examples, we can see that there is a complaint against an enemy's behaviour and mocking indictments, including corollary petitions for deliverance from them. The difference is that the nature of 'the enemy' has changed. That is from a physical human enemy to a spiritualised evil archetype. This is due to the New Testament perspective of the enemy no longer being "flesh and blood but…the spiritual forces of evil."[152] Even so, it can be stated that there is still a correspondence of the form of a complaint against the enemy, although this is modified in character. This is due to the "open and metaphorical"[153] language of the lament psalms which is able to incorporate these modifications, as the function of the enemy whether portrayed as physical or spiritual, is still antagonistic against the psalmist or pray-er.

5. Conclusion

To close, this paper has substantially determined that there is a correspondence between the form of the biblical lament psalms and early Australian Pentecostal practice of prayer. In a subsequent

---

148 Heatley, 'Wonderfully Healed,' 7.
149 Douglas, 'Prove Me Now,' 16.
150 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
151 Tuck, 'Testimonies,' 6.
152 See Ephesians 6:12
153 Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms,* 51. See, for further discussion regarding the 'enemy' within the laments.

article possible implications for Pentecostal praxis will be discussed. Therein, it will be affirmed that Pentecostals are ideally positioned to recover and re-vision lament praxis for themselves and the wider church today, due to their heritage and distinctive understanding of prayer, crisis, glossolalia, prophecy and God's dynamic in-breaking presence.

APPENDIX 1: EARLY AUSTRALIAN PENTECOSTAL PRAYER RESULTS

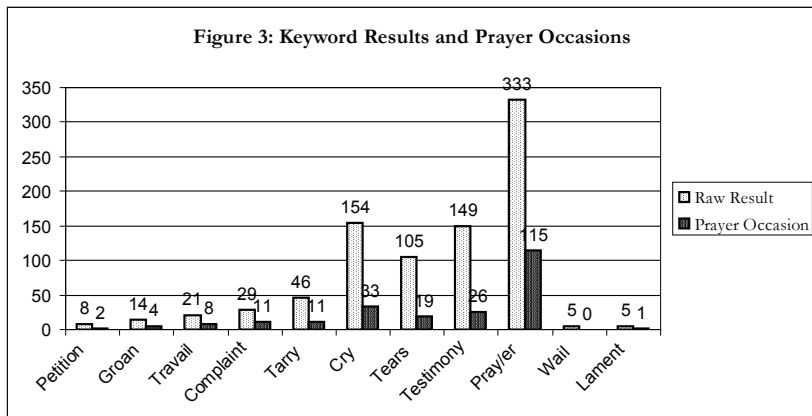**Figure 3: Keyword Results and Prayer Occasions**

Figure 3 charts the raw data results of the keyword search of the early Australian Pentecostal periodicals. The eleven keywords yielded a total of 869 references within the periodicals. When examined further, to remove extraneous results, there was a total of 230 prayer occasions identified, some of which were identified with multiple keywords. This figure shows the distribution of all the prayer occasion results per keyword. With the removal of repeated references, there was a total of 186 individual prayer occasions identified from the eleven keyword search.

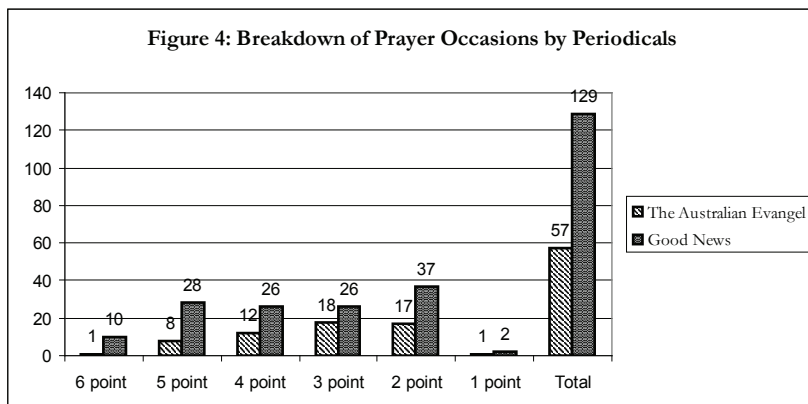Figure 4: Breakdown of Prayer Occasions by Periodicals

Figure 4 demonstrates the distribution of the 186 individual prayer occasions per early Australian Pentecostal periodical. A total of 129 prayer occasion results were from the *Good News* and 57 prayer occasion results were from *The Australian Evangel* periodicals. A further breakdown of these results per the seven question analysis: ((1) Did it address God?,(2) Was there a lament against God? (3) Was there a lament against an enemy? (4) Was there a personal lament? (5) Was there a petition? (6) Was there a confession of trust? (7) Did the prayer end in praise?), is also demonstrated in the graph.

Catholics and Pentecostals – A Shared Mission in a Globalising World

Neil Ormerod

Professor of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University
neil.ormerod@acu.edu.au

Abstract

This article sets out to argue that, while it may seem that Catholicism and Pentecostalism are polar opposites (mirror images of one another that share little in common), in fact these two global Christian movements are linked together in their shared commitment to the mission of proclaiming the gospel in a globalising world. Given that the mission of the church is grounded in the Missio Dei, the mission of God, Pentecostals and Catholics share a common purpose, one which transcends them both. This paper sets out to argue, therefore, not only that these movements can learn from one-another but, more fundamentally, that they need one-another.

Introduction

Catholics and Pentecostals do not at first glance look like the most natural of bedfellows among the many options available to us in this post-denominational era. Catholics seems to have more in common with Anglicans (apart from those in Sydney) and the Orthodox churches, while Pentecostals might trace their lineage to the heritage of John Wesley through various mediations of revivalist movements into their present form of mega-churches. Catholics are bound, if not trapped, in tradition, while Pentecostals are almost footloose and fancy free in that regard; Catholics have a strong central hierarchical authority

structure while Pentecostals move in a free-church tradition where authority is not centralised but dispersed within the local communities and their leaders. In many ways these two movements can be thought of as polar opposites in the set of competing denominations, almost mirror images of one another.

However, there is another sense in which they are linked when we consider the issue of the mission of the church in a globalising world. Both Catholicism and Pentecostalism are truly global phenomena. Since its inception the Catholic Church has taken its lead from the biblical injunction to "make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). As its name implies, the Catholic Church has been truly "catholic", that is, it has found a home for itself in every nation, every race, every culture, and every continent on earth. Whatever its shortcomings in adapting to local conditions – and these shortcomings are many and acknowledged by Catholic missiologists – it has still managed to plant the seeds of the Gospel in communities around the globe. In this sense it is very different from many of those churches closest to it which are more closely linked to particular cultural or ethnic groups. When people speak of the Roman Catholic Church, the qualifier "Roman" does not express the same sense of limitation that the qualifier "Greek" has in relation to the Greek Orthodox Church.

Likewise Pentecostalism is a truly global phenomenon. Though its history is measured in decades rather than centuries, it is now a truly global movement – and I think the term movement it more appropriate here than church. In the course of a century Pentecostalism has erupted onto the world stage, spreading like a bushfire across a dry field, bringing energy and faith to communities around the world. While estimates vary and are disputed by some, it would appear that globally there are now 800 million Pentecostals globally making it one of the largest Christian movements at the present time. And the Australian figures would indicate that on any given Sunday, there are more Pentecostals in church than any other denomination apart from Catholics. And like Catholicism, Pentecostalism has been relatively successful in adapting to the local context in a way which displays more flexibility than many evangelical churches. This is evident in

Latin America where Pentecostal churches have adopted elements of popular religion which has strongly Catholic roots, something that evangelicals have much more difficulty in accepting.

I would like to suggest that in these two global phenomena we can find the basis for a shared mission in which Catholics and Pentecostals need one another in order to bring that mission to its completion. Because of what are often mirror opposite characteristics we need one another to keep the other honest and in a more precise sense "in balance". We have much to learn from one another even while we may maintain our distinctive approaches to the one faith we profess.

The one mission, the *missio Dei*

As a starting point we should note that the mission we share is neither Catholic nor Pentecostal. The mission we share is the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, realised in history through the two inextricably linked missions of incarnate Word and life-giving Spirit. The triune God has irrevocably given Godself to us in human history through the coming of the Son in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and has further empowered us to continue that mission through the Spirit poured out at Pentecost. This link to the *missio Dei* is something we must never forget, for that mission is larger than all of us, larger than any denominational differences and indeed larger than our Christian identity as a whole. We live in that mission, we do not possess it; it possesses us.

Jesus himself speaks of that mission by evoking the symbol of the "kingdom of God". References to the kingdom frame Jesus' mission, from his first preaching after his baptism by John – "repent for the kingdom of God is close at hand" (Mark 1:15) – to his final meal with his disciples – "I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:24). Jesus' kingdom message is preached and embodied in his parables, his healings and his table fellowship with sinners. We can think of the kingdom as a symbol of complete human flourishing, a flourishing that is only possible through the power of divine forgiveness and graciousness.

As a symbol of such human flourishing the kingdom stands in opposition to all the forces we experience which diminish that flourishing. These forces may be personal, cultural, social or vital. This diminishment in flourishing is of its nature an evil, a privation, sometimes moral, sometimes physical, and it is against these evils that Jesus' mission stands. The great Protestant missiologist, David Bosch spoke of Jesus' mission, his preaching of and action towards the Kingdom as launching "an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations."[1] And so we see Jesus overcoming the alienation of sin through the power of forgiveness; challenging dominant cultures of domination through his model of service; breaking down social divisions through his outreach to the socially marginalised and excluded; and restoring people to bodily vitality through his healings.

One can find the same emphasis on overcoming evil in the following quote from Pope John Paul II:

> The Kingdom is the concern of everyone: individuals, society, and the world. Working for the Kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God's activity, which is present in human history and transforms it. *Building the Kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms*. In a word, the Kingdom of God is the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness.[2] [emphasis added].

This mission is larger than any church. Indeed as mission it is "the concern of everyone" for the problem of evil is a human problem. And it is not a problem of us vs. them, for the Christian doctrine on original sin makes it clear that the problem lies within each one of us.[3] However, it is a human problem beyond the resources of human beings to overcome, because the problem itself undermines our resources and renders us incapable of finding the solution, what the tradition refers to as moral impotence. In Christian faith we say that the only lasting solution to the problem of evil is that manifest in the suffering love of

---

1 David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991), 32.

2 Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, n.15. Available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html.

3 For a modern treatment of the doctrine of original sin see Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace and Redemption*, ed. Peter Phan, Theology in a Global Perspective (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007).

Jesus, and it is only through the power of his Spirit that we can enter into this solution without either self-righteousness or self-negation.

Both Catholics and Pentecostals are called to share in, indeed to live within, this mission, each bringing to that mission their own perspectives, resources, strengths and weaknesses. That mission is global in scope. The problem of evil does not respect national boundaries; nor cultural markers; nor ethnic boarders. Now more than ever the problem of evil is global in its manifestations, not just that it is present in all aspects of human existence but in a more formal sense of globally organised, through global networks of crime, violence and terrorism. If we are to respond to this emerging dimension of the problem of evil we will need a commensurate response on the global scale and in this sense it is significant that both Catholics and Pentecostal are part of truly global phenomena.

What Catholics can learn from Pentecostals

The Catholic Church is an ancient institution, whose roots go back to the first Christian communities. Whichever way one looks at it there are discernable elements of the future shape of the Catholic Church evident in the New Testament and in the other primary documents of the first and second century. Protestant exegetes used to speak disparagingly and dismissively about elements of "early Catholicism" in the pastoral epistles of Paul.[4] Turning the observation around, we can indeed say that the basic structures and practices of the Catholic Church are not alien additions to the faith of the earliest Christian communities but are in continuity with them. This element of continuity is reinforced by a reading of other early documents such as the Didache and the epistles of Ignatius of Antioch. Structures of ministry and sacramental practice form a thread of continuity from the past to the present within the Catholic Church.

This thread of continuity has not meant static repetition however. It is clear that there have been significant changes along the way and one can map these changes in terms of major epochs – the medieval Church, the counter-Reformation Church, the Vatican II Church

4 See for example Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (Naperville, Ill.,: A. R. Allenson, 1964).

and so on. Whether any or all of these changes represent genuine developments or serious departures from the Gospel is of course a matter for debate. One characteristic, however, of this whole process, has been the constant stress on a sense of continuity with the past. Protestant theologian Langdon Gilkey speaks of Catholicism's respect for history and tradition as one of it defining characteristics.[5]

However, this respect for tradition is a double-edged sword. Many people who grew up as Catholics in the 50s and 60s lived in a world of traditions and practices which at the time we took for granted as representing "our sacred tradition", only to find that many of them were relatively recent in origin and could be removed at the stroke of a pen, as happened at Vatican II. Catholics have found it a continual challenge to distinguish between Tradition (with a big T) and traditions (with a small t). This has impacted on a range of issues, such as priestly celibacy and the possibility of ordaining women, down to questions of Church architecture and music. The overall impression of those on the outside is that of a Church community which continually lives in the past and lives out of the past, a community which is cut off from contemporary concerns and perspectives. In many ways our respect for the past runs the risk of making us simply irrelevant to the present, and in particular the young people of the present generation.

It is refreshing then to encounter Pentecostal churches which have such a contemporary focus and which can respond to the present without carrying forward the burden of 2000 years of history, with one eye constantly looking over its shoulder. Theologically Pentecostals live with a freedom of the Spirit which Catholics seem unable to appreciate, or realise in their own communities. Here we have much to learn from our Pentecostal brothers and sisters.

Coupled with this burden of tradition is a sense of tiredness or perhaps a loss of heart or confidence, especially in relation to the overriding mission of the Church. I have written elsewhere that the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II had seriously failed in its mission to the world.[6] This failure was most evident in its reactive stance to

5 Langdon Gilkey, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity: A Protestant View* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).
6 Neil Ormerod, "The Times They Are A'changing – a Response to O'Malley and Schloesser," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006).

the modern world which it viewed with undiminished hostility. This defensiveness began with the Protestant churches of the Reformation, but extended to modern science, philosophy and political movements. There was a loss of confidence in the power of the Gospel to be personally, culturally, and socially transformative, and hence I would argue, a loss of confidence in the mission of the Church to the world. Again this is something where we have much to learn from our Pentecostal brothers and sisters. The spiritual energy and vibrancy of Pentecostalism is not a common occurrence within Catholicism and where it does emerge people often find that they no longer find a home within that tradition. That energy and vibrancy speaks to me of a deep confidence in the power of God to transform us personally, culturally and socially for the sake of building up the Kingdom.

What Pentecostals can learn from Catholics[7]

Pentecostalism is a far more recent phenomenon than Catholicism. It has generally been assumed that Pentecostalism began initially on 1 January 1901 at C.F. Parham's bible school in Topeka Kansas and was popularised through the 1906 Azusa Street Los Angeles revival. To some it is essentially a North American movement that has traveled throughout the globe on the back of American missionary and capitalist expansionism. Yet the reality is more complex. As Mark Hutchinson observes, the story of Pentecostalism "is far from uni-linear, ... it is not one thing spreading out, but many mutually-recognizable things coalescing."[8] Pentecostals have tended to emphasise the fourfold message that Jesus saves, heals, baptizes in the Spirit and is coming again soon (the so-called fourfold or full gospel), but the nature of this proclamation differs greatly from church to church. It is generally accepted that Pentecostals are characterised by an experientialist orientation, a spirituality focused on the experience of God through the power of the Spirit.[9]

7 I freely draw here from Shane Clifton and Neil Ormerod, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2009).

8 Mark Hutchinson, "The Power to Grasp," Unpublished paper, Southern Cross College, Sydney, 2003.(now Alphacrucis College).

9 See for example Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty First Century* (Massachusetts: Perseus, 1995), 299-321.

Like the Catholic Church, Pentecostalism is a truly global phenomenon. And it is the bringing together of the global identity of Pentecostalism (with its accompanying experiences and ideas), with a seemingly bewildering degree of indigenisation, that constitutes Pentecostalism as a truly globalised movement. Its global identity exists as the mutual interplay between shared experiences and concepts intersecting with local realities, generating diverse ecclesial and spiritual expressions that are, nevertheless, in mutual relationship.

One major thing that Pentecostals might learn from Catholics is the importance of embedding your story within a larger narrative. Pentecostals can learn from Catholic's sense of history and tradition. It must locate itself within a tradition that stretches back to the earliest Christian communities. I have already mentioned its relationship to the Wesleyan tradition, but this too has its antecedents in various Christian movements, perhaps even the early monastic communities in the fourth and fifth centuries that sought to develop a more committed and enthused Christian life, out of the prevailing mediocrity of a Christianised Roman empire. Often emerging Christian churches present themselves as making some form of direct link with the communities of the early Church, jumping over centuries of Christian history as if they never existed. Such an approach, in seeking to distance itself from the failures of that history, also fails to honour its vast achievements. There are elements of continuity and Pentecostals can learn to honor the whole Christian past, not just the most recent and the most remote.

This is particularly the case in relation to the intellectual tradition which has been at its strongest within the Catholic Church. Again to refer to the work of Langdon Gilkey, another characteristic of Catholicism is its commitment to the intellectual reasonableness of faith. Yet much of this intellectual tradition is not Catholic in the narrow sense, but part of the whole Christian patrimony. This was brought home to me in reading the work of Stanley Hauerwas, a self-described high church Mennonite and Christian ethicist. Hauerwas was reclaiming the work of Thomas Aquinas, the great Catholic medieval theologian.[10] When questioned as to why he was drawing on

10 For example his work Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a*

such a prominent Catholic thinker he defended his stance by claiming his right to draw on the whole Christian intellectual patrimony, and certainly that part which existed prior to the western schism of the Reformation.

My own experience has been that Pentecostals are far more at home in the intellectual horizon provided by the Catholic intellectual tradition than they are in various Reformed theological horizons. Both Catholics and Pentecostals have a respect for genuine religious experience and some confidence in human nature. It should be remembered that John Wesley rejected the Reformers insistence on the simul justus et peccator, that we are simultaneously justified and sinners.[11] He viewed it as undermining the Christian quest for holiness, and in this matter he concurred with the Catholic position. This area of common ground is an important starting point for dialogue on the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The Latin American experience

I would now like to consider something of the experience of Latin America in the past decades. For some time the Catholic Church in Latin America was politically aligned with non-democratic forces which supported oppressive military governments throughout the region. In the 60s and 70s a movement called Liberation Theology arose which challenged this alignment. Inspired by elements of Marxist philosophy, Liberation theology argued that fidelity to the Gospel meant working for liberation from oppressive social and economic conditions, primarily through working for social transformation. They developed a pastoral strategy of Base Christian Communities which were often led by laity to assist in the conscientising and empowering of the poor.[12] At times this led to some (only a few) liberation

Constructive Christian Social Ethic (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).
11 Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), Vol.2, 52.
12 For an account of Liberation Theology see some of the following: Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1987); Roger Haight, *An Alternative Vision : An Interpretation of Liberation Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985); Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973).

theologians to promote violence as a solution to political oppression. The key catch-phrase of liberation theology was the notion of the "preferential option for the poor".

The stance of Liberation Theology caused much concern with the Vatican which accused it of overly politicising the Gospel and reducing the Gospel to a purely social and political agenda.[13] It should be noted however that despite this criticism, elements of Liberation Theology have found their way into Vatican documents, especially in the teachings of Pope John Paul II.

The stance of Liberation Theology also caused concern in Washington which had a vested interest in maintaining strong governments in Latin America to protect their own regional interests. They noted in particular the Marxist influence in Liberation Theology. Through the CIA it is rumored that they funded evangelical and Pentecostal movements to set up shop in Latin America because these churches were viewed as more politically conservative than the radical liberation theologians.

How did the poor respond to this situation? It has been quipped that while Liberation Theology opted for the poor, the poor opted for Pentecostalism. While the Base Christian Communities and Liberation theology have struggled to maintain their relevance, Pentecostal churches have experienced explosive growth in Latin America, often incorporating elements of popular Catholic belief into their worship.

However far from putting a halt to social transformation, the emergence of Pentecostal churches has had a significant impact on people's lives. Peter Berger notes:

> What takes place here is nothing less than a cultural revolution, sharply deviant from traditional Latin American patterns. This new culture is certainly "ascetic". It promotes personal discipline and honesty, proscribes alcohol and extra-marital sex, dismantles the compadre system (which is based on Catholic practice and, with its fiestas and other extravagant expenditures, discourages saving), and teaches ordinary people

13 See the document of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on certain aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'", available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html.

to create and run their own grassroot institutions. It is a culture that is radically opposed to classical machismo, and indeed is in many ways a women's movement -- while most preachers are men, women are important missionaries and organizers. Even more important, women take on leadership roles within the family, "domesticating" their husbands (or, alternatively, kicking them out if they refuse to adhere to Protestant moral standards) and paying attention to the education of their children.[14]

This is in fact a way of empowering people out of their poverty, both individually and communally. But it is not based on the approach of liberation theology to work for social change directly. Rather it is the more indirect approach which begins with personal religious conversion and subsequent moral transformation. This moral transformation leads to new ways of thinking and behaving, not just individually but as a community.

This same logic of social transformation can be found in the encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, Deus caritas est (God is love).[15] In this letter Benedict speaks of the power of the Gospel to bring about social justice not through the direct involvement of the Church but through the moral and cultural transformation that the Gospel engenders. While the first part of this encyclical has been widely acknowledged as a beautiful and significant reflection on the nature of human love, the second part deals with the more difficult question of the relationship between Church and state, in the context of the Church's charitable works and agencies. What we find in this document is a clear rejection of the Christendom model of Church-state relationship: "it is not the Church's responsibility to make [its] teaching prevail in political life … the Church cannot and must not replace the state" (n.28). The Church's task is to "inform consciences", "stimulate

---

14 Peter L. Berger, "Max Weber Is Alive and Well, and Living in Guatemala: The Protestant Ethic Today," in *The Norms, Beliefs, and Institutions of Capitalism: Celebrating Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Center for the Study of Economy & Society, 2004).

15 The text of the encyclical is available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/ encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html. The quotes taken in this paragraph come from the indicated sections.

greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice", and foster "greater readiness to act accordingly" (n.28). The Church's social teaching is based on "reason and natural law", "rational argument" so that a "just society must be the achievement of politics, not the Church" (n.28). In fact "the direct duty to work for a just ordering of society … is proper to the lay faithful … called to take part in public life as a personal capacity" (n.29).

What we find here is I think a convergence between Pentecostal practice and Catholic teaching. Benedict is targeting those forms of liberation theology which advocate a direct involvement in politics. Rather the task is to "inform consciences", "stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice", and foster "greater readiness to act accordingly" and so promote citizens committed to "work for a just ordering of society". This is what we can witness in the practice of Pentecostal churches working with the poor and marginalised in Latin America. The religious conversion they promote is leading to a renewed moral perspective which is transforming society as a leaven from within, not by direct confrontation.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a quote from Matthew's Gospel:
> *Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old. (Matthew 13:52)*

Some Biblical scholars see this as a self-referential statement by the Gospel writer who viewed himself as a scribe drawing of the best of the old and adding what was most truly new in the mission of Jesus. I have often thought that same observation could be made about my ongoing relationship with the Pentecostal church through my work with Alphacrucis College. Together we bring to our common task things old and new like the wise scribe, not in competition with one another but with a genuine appreciation and willingness to learn from one another.

Next Generation Essay: Longevity and Effectiveness of Youth Leadership in the Assemblies of God in NSW[1]

Wayne Harrison

Abstract

In the years since becoming an acknowledged ministry position, youth ministers and youth group leaders have struggled to gain positions of vocational acceptance and respectability within their ecclesiastical context. Why has this been the case? With a considerable history of systems and institutions being scolded for their ineffectiveness in the production of leaders, this paper seeks to provide evidentiary data that can contribute to increasing the effectiveness and longevity of tenure of current and future youth leaders. It is based on research that represents the first major effort to survey youth ministers in the NSW Assemblies of God, and provides new data that enables reflection on how the movement might strategise to build vocationally effective youth leaders.

Introduction

Youth leadership is a diverse and demanding responsibility. Job expectations normally incorporate all of the dynamics that come with running a major department in the ministry of the church, often without equitable status or support. Youth pastors, in fact, are subject to many of the same expectations as senior pastors, in regards to ministering and leading people. Barna makes this point emphatically clear when he states; "The multiplicity of roles that are expected for the youth leader to perform have been well noted and recognized."[2] In response,

---

1 This article is based on a research paper written for the Master of Arts (SCD) leadership track at Alphacrucis College, Sydney, Australia. For space reasons, the paper presents abstracted results, which refer to research methods and findings available only in the full paper. Please email the author for permission to access the full research paper at wayneharrison777@gmail.com

2 G. Barna, *Today's Pastors* (Ventura, California:Regal Books, 1993), 130.

the research of this paper looks at the patterns of relationship between youth ministry, educational expectations and practice. It is apparent that organisational structure and ministry demands can provoke neglect (by a youth leader) of ongoing education and preparation. This ministry pattern has been reinforced by the growing tide of successful and influential youth speakers instilling the need to be "doing the work" as the foremost priority in youth ministry.[3] In his best selling book, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, Doug Fields highlights the pressure placed on youth leaders, noting that they "can never do enough, there is always more to be done. Youth ministry never stops!"[4] Along with Fields, I am concerned at the emerging pattern of youth leaders who are inadvertently busy doing, focusing on immediate pressures, rather than taking a long term view and becoming great leaders.

Research Methodology & Approach

The research that stimulates this paper is grounded in a survey, which took the form of a confidential questionnaire sent to all current serving youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches. Throughout mid- to-late 2007, some 434 email surveys were sent directly to youth pastor(s) or to churches. The surveys involved a series of questions that were designed to identify and determine how educational background and attainment reflects on the sense of adequacy in performing the role of a youth leader.[5] The subsequent analysis of the replies received involved extracting and analysing correlations arising from the survey's datasets,

See also S. W. Blizzard, *The Ministers Dilemma* (Christian Century: April 25, 1956), 508-510.
3 One of the main catalysts of this research paper is the fact that experts in youth ministry, such as authors, speakers, and college professors, predominantly write about the development and praxis of a successful youth ministry as opposed to materials devoted to the personal development of the youth minister in becoming an effective and efficient leader. The focus of youth leader training and education has therefore been primarily oriented towards the 'how to's' of achieving ministry objectives, rather than towards the training of youth leaders themselves for the ministry role for which they are responsible. This tendency can create short term leaders who get short term results rather than longer term development of (vocationally orientated) youth leaders, (referred to throughout this paper as VYLs).
4 D.Fields. *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1998), 37
5 For the purposes of definition of terms 'an active youth leader' is defined as a person who has a recognised leadership position within their local church context, responsible for providing leadership to a teenage age group or youth program. The research data and responses have been compiled and represent 19.12% of the known surveyed demographic.

and then comparing these findings to the 'vocationally oriented youth leader's' (VYL) educational model (discussed later). This pointed towards the definable leadership skills and learning stages which promote a process of continuing self development through formal education and other applicable forms of learning. More importantly, it highlighted the strategic factors between those who become VYL (i.e. longer term youth leaders) and those who don't remain in this area of ministry. This provided an evidentiary basis upon which to propose models which will further help, develop and support youth leaders responsible for ministry within the AOG movement and beyond.

The Youth Leader: 'The Place of Call'

Twenty first century youth leaders are carrying out one of the most important ministries in the life of the local church. Youth leaders are faced with the formidable challenge of being 'Godly examples' and leading a ministry where parents and congregations project responsibility for being the prime instigators in bringing their young people into a living relationship with Christ. It operates in the context in which research shows that there is "no difference between churched youth and secular youth."[6] In addition, youth leaders minister in a culture which is becoming increasingly ambiguous. The pressures on the youth leader to not only pastor teenagers but consistently perform and meet ministry outcomes and tasks are enormous, placing increasing focus on adequate training and preparation.

There is a general assumption that those who serve as active youth leaders do so out of a sense of divine call. It is our general assumption that youth leaders are serving in this ministry capacity because they feel they have been both identified and chosen, and believe that they have something to give. For this reason, subjects were requested to identify their attitude to their 'calling'. Yet when participants were asked to respond to the statement 'I believe God has called me to serve in the area of youth ministry and for this reason I am not

---

6 M. Rakes, "Character Development: Preparing the Next Generation for Ministry," *Enrichment Journal,* Online, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200701/200701_026_CharDev. cfm, Accessed January 2006.

looking to move on from this area of ministry in the future', 31% of respondents (obviously non-vocational youth leaders) could not clearly acknowledge that they were called by God to youth ministry. In other words, nearly a third of youth pastors enter their positions out of a sense of organisational need or career expectation, rather than because of a sense of call which legitimises their ministry. The other two thirds (69%) recognised that, at least for the time being, youth work was their vocational call. Such VYLs can thus be treated as a separate group for the purposes of analysis. Though not within the boundaries of this research, it would be of interest whether this sense of calling relates to measures of effectiveness, e.g whether there is a correlation between the size of youth groups and self-identification as non-VYLs and VYLs.   Certainly, the data seems to indicate differences in self orientation between the two groups (as responses to the following questions indicate).

One can conclude from this that the belief that VYLs have been called to longevity in ministry helps them to see themselves as effective youth leaders. It causes VYLs to pursue and actively cultivate areas of improvement in their ministry – such as personal efforts to read and study the scriptures, and informal study to keep up with developments in youth culture etc. One way of improving a leader's ministry tenure, it would seem, would involve the strategic fostering of a larger 'leadership horizon' for VYLs.

Notwithstanding the fact that 69% of leaders felt a long term vocational call to ministry, the majority of youth leaders tend to serve as youth leaders for a 2-4 year period (See chart, next page)

Generally, they choose to move from this area of ministry either during their first year of service or after having served a period of 4 years in succession. Thus, the average tenure of an AOG youth leader is at least 2 years but normally no longer than 4 years in duration[7]. There are clear patterns of 'rise and decline' in the active tenure of youth leaders. Obviously, the longer a person is successfully involved in the practice of youth ministry, the greater their understanding and experience, and the more effective their ministry. While 88% of current

7 The survey data is not specific enough to tell us whether this duration of tenure is linked to one place, or if the transition is from one youth ministry to another

serving youth leaders see themselves as committed to long term youth ministry the data tells us that only 4% of youth leaders remain in youth ministry for a 6 year period or longer, again supporting the premise that the development of leaders through their youth program doubles as a training ground for the ecclesial organisation as a whole.[8] If the latter is indeed projecting ministry as a point through which one passes, as opposed to a vocation to which one is specifically called, there may be ramifications for longevity of ministry and, further, for the success of youth groups.

Q; How long have you been actively involved (as a youth leader) in youth ministry
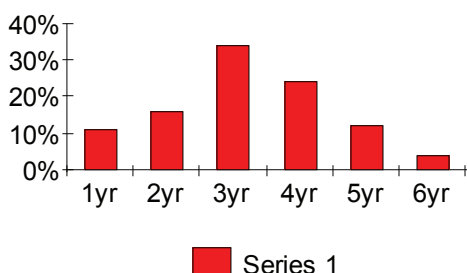
It is also evident from the data that the majority of youth leaders 60% serve on a volunteer basis. A large percentage, though seeing themselves as 'called' to this area, are not remunerated, and are therefore forced to balance a passion for ministry with the challenges of administrating and financing their divided lives. Youth leaders clearly find it hard to fulfill their ministry roles while working to bring in a consistent income, combined with the demands of managing family and marital commitments. Understandably, VYLs view their ministry

8 Often times the length of tenure is indicative of sense of adequacy and skills-specific training. In many cases it may well be that the less effective leaders either step down or move on from ministry and VYLs remain (having proved themselves and their ministry call) and, as noted above, move to other areas of the organisation.

as 'God given' and important, but many find it hard to maintain an effective balance in these areas. Interestingly, volunteer workers report that they are more likely to feel confident about their people skills than full time workers.[9] This indicates, perhaps, an 'identity cocooning' effect once young pastors join a church's staff, or perhaps a realisation that the personal skills considered adequate when one was a volunteer are no longer adequate as a professional. The consequences of this for the relatively short period of service that most youth leaders give, and therefore their commitment to ongoing training, should be apparent.

A potential lack of ministry recognition, as marked by the lack of remuneration and the reported lack of accreditation, might be a contributor to lack of self-esteem, therein, the 'stickability' of youth ministers.[10] While this conclusion is based only on trend data, obviously one of the things contributing to a sense of longer term call is the prospect that the size of the church and the related youth group being served is sufficient to support the calling that they feel. Youth ministers, one could conclude, find more space for self-fulfillment in larger churches, simply because appropriate structures are more likely to be in place and the reinforcers for self-respect are easier to achieve. An analysis of youth group attendances uncovers two main clusters of responses, which further support the idea that something is going on here; by showing that participants from large churches with multiple youth leaders accounts for 28% of responses.[11] Youth leader survivability, one may conclude, interacts with the contribution made by church polities to the ability of youth leaders to balance the pressures placed upon them – either through promotion of internal motivation and coping strategies, or through external resourcing.

The 'character' related data indicates that a successful VYL in current youth ministry will be a leader who is personally a quick learner, and who is equipped with flexible learning strategies. Such people are more likely to be committed to longevity in ministry, though the trend data indicates that respondents did not necessarily

9 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) Table1(Correlation F:X), 46.
10 Ibid, 46.
11 Ibid., 12.

limit this call to 'youth ministry'.[12]   Because of their commitment
to the church as a whole, these people are also more likely to be
supportive of the leaders above them, willing to delegate real authority
and opportunities to those who report to them, willing to be involved
in the wider community, and in mentoring others in ministry. They
structure their time and programs better, have an eye for excellence,
are more likely to report that they see people regularly won to Christ
and consider themselves to be effective youth ministers.[13]

   In summary, the place of 'call' still remains a pertinent issue in the
life of the youth leader and although 31% of youth leaders may not be
necessarily convinced they are called to serve specifically in the area
of youth ministry, they remain committed to focusing their efforts and
avoiding distractions in order to be successful at what they do. They
regularly report seeing young people give their life to Christ and are
more likely to be 'people focused' rather than 'programs focused' in
meeting the needs of their young people. Factors such as facilitating
effective follow up with their young people and mentoring those who
are committed to their ministry objectives prove that although many
move on to other areas of ministry, those who are successful in youth
ministry serve as if this is where they will potentially remain. Given
this, the internal issues of dealing with complexity, and the external
issues of institutional support, become significant.

The Youth Leader: 'The Challenge of Ongoing Vocational Learning'

   It doesn't take long for any youth leader to recognise that there is a
lot to learn, and the expertise required to do the job well is not quickly
learnt or attained. Youth leaders are aware of their limitations, with
55% acknowledging that their ministry job demands more time than
they currently have. Further research would be needed to discover if
belief in a call from God actually contributes to youth leaders feeling
under qualified.[14]

12 Ibid., 46.
13 Ibid., 46.
14 Many report that at this stage they are still discovering and developing their ministry
abilities in relation to what is expected of them. The high degree of conflation between divine
expectation and pastoral expectation in charismatic religious settings no doubt contributes to
this sense of pressure.

With the majority of current serving youth leaders between the ages of 21-29 (still at a critical stage of ministry learning and development), most are doing the best they can with what they know, in the light of current youth culture and meeting the needs of young people in their delegated ministry care. One could conclude that the active youth leader is not only open to learning and to educational opportunities in the area of their ministry, but are actively pursuing the learning and educational opportunities (within their practical means) available so as to better train themselves for the task required of them. Youth leaders subsequently admit (in the top ranking response) to having to learn from their own/life experience and from the advice of others as the primary means of education and self-training. The importance of this result (from an organisational perspective, and with regard to why youth leaders need to be encouraged to pursue a broader 'learning horizon') is highlighted by Senge: "Herein lies the core learning dilemma that confronts organizations: we learn best from experience but we never directly experience the consequences of many of our most important decisions"[15] In youth ministry especially, this has implications for church communities.

Youth leaders either agree (27%) or are neutral (25%) with regard to their responses to feeling disorganised due to lack of ministry specific training, leading to ineffectiveness and frustration. They feel many times that they are lacking the specific skill set necessary to lead young people while managing the ministry and themselves. This may well affect the way they view themselves and their ministry call. Adequate and specific ministry education and training may well be factors that need to be revisited to ensure that our youth leaders are effectively trained and equipped. From these trends there seems to be a definite need to redefine and refocus efforts, and to adequately and effectively train active youth leaders in areas of their personal and professional organisational skills.

In determining 'sense of adequacy' in a youth leader it is important to ascertain what attitudes are held towards vocation-related learning

---

15 P. M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organisation* (Australia, Random House, 1992) p. 23.

and education. How do they learn? And is what they learn able to help them to achieve what is expected of them? In being asked whether they find learning new things in their area of involvement as a youth leader 'relatively easy', data indicates that the majority (51%) found this to be the case, while 18% strongly agreed that this was not a concern for them. Some (29%) however were either neutral or disagreed, reported learning difficulties, or a lack of certain types of skills training in their area of ministry. This represents a significant number of youth leaders who report that they are open to the opportunity of ongoing learning and being educated with the necessary skills and information to be successful as a youth leader.

When investigating the educational background and training of current youth leaders, it becomes apparent that, although open to educational and ministry specific training, there is still a large percentage of respondents that sense their abilities and training do not help them adequately to minister in the areas required of them. Many of these express a desire to become a part of a ministry specific training process. It is also apparent that those who have undergone specialised training in youth ministry feel strongly about the need to see all youth leaders undergoing formal education and specialised training in relation to their ministry vocation. Some 44% agreed and 8% strongly agreed (Σ= 52%) that ministry training had positive effects, and was needed to produce successful long term VYLs. Interestingly, 26% remained neutral about whether their training (as experienced) had any effect on their ministry efforts. This possibly points to the need for real time contextual training topics linked to the felt needs and concerns of both youth and youth leaders themselves.

Q; I have had specialised training in some aspect of youth ministry

N/A	2%
No	43%
Yes	54%

Although over half of the surveyed youth leaders have had some form of specialised training in youth ministry (54%), nearly as many

have not (43%). This indicates that although we acknowledge youth ministry as increasingly complex in terms of ministry expectations, we still have a large percentage of youth leaders that have had little or no specialist training in the area. This should certainly be of concern to organisational leaders at large.

When asked whether youth leaders felt they needed to receive specialised training in order to serve in their church, 64% (10% more than have received any training) felt they should be receiving this kind of specialised ministry training. This denotes a positive trend (21%), indicating that those who have not received specialised training (previously 43%) recognise the need for and desire the opportunity for ministry specific training, and recognise that this contributes and is needed to help build better youth leaders.[16]

To further understand the educational background and training of youth leaders, respondents were asked as to what percentage of youth pastors have current degree level theological qualifications in their area of ministry. The survey results are self evident.

Theological Degree	6%
No Theological Degree	94%

This figure is similar to Strommen's 1996 survey of 7,500 youth leaders which found that only 9% of AOG youth leaders had a seminary education.[17] This may well point to an idea that youth ministry is not taken seriously as a theological task, or a more general anti-intellectualism in the Assemblies of God. Further research will be required to disentangle these factors. Although positive attitudes prevail towards specialised and ministry training; therefore, we can conclude that youth ministers as a whole do not connect this with

16 As opposed to ministry specific training the study also inquires into the level of academic education that currently serving youth leaders have attained. 24% of youth leaders currently hold degrees in the field of higher education, leaving the remaining 76% holding a HSC or Diploma level educational attainment. It must then be assumed that 43% out of the 76% of youth leaders that have HSC or Diploma level education still have had no specialised training in the area of their ministry.
17 M. P. Strommen, K. Jones, and D. Rahn, (eds.), *Youth Ministry that Transforms: a comprehensive analysis of the hopes, frustrations, and effectiveness of today's youth workers.* (Grand Rapids: MI: Zondervan, 2001), 9, 240.

academic formation and higher learning (only 16% of respondents acknowledged that academic training would benefit them in youth ministry). This trend is further supported by 76% of youth leaders clearly acknowledging that training in the areas of academic and knowledge skills was not what they required most to be 'more effective' in youth ministry.[18]

Significantly, despite these attitudes towards academic training, when asked whether they have a good grasp of theological concepts, some 74% of youth leaders either agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (14%). It may well be (and the data trends promote this) that VYLs are confident in the biblical concepts they currently understand and have seen acceptable levels of success from their ministry endeavours. This would indicate that their denominational setting protects them from realising that there are other and broader sources of ideas which might contribute to their theological understanding. Further, when asked whether they feel competent when teaching the Bible, 88% of respondents either agreed (63%) or strongly agreed (25%). These are predominantly youth leaders who view themselves as VYLs, who have had specific training in this area of ministry, and report themselves to be confident in this area of learning and ministering.[19] Inevitably, however, this closing down of educational horizons affects expectations with regard to further training and education.

Some 86% of youth leaders report confidence in their ability to teach and preach biblical truths in the context of their ministry setting. When asked whether they felt confident in their knowledge of Scripture, 76% agreed or strongly agreed. There is no doubt that what youth leaders feel they understand, they have had to learn from direct praxis, and therefore feel confident in their profession. The confidence

18 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) Chart 16,.19.

19 It certainly seems from the data that though youth leaders may not have had the academic training in the specific area of their involvement in youth ministry, they seem to feel more than confident when teaching and preaching theological concepts from the Bible. It appears that a youth leader begins to gain confidence when they feel that something has been revealed to them by God from the Scriptures. When combined with personal experience and others methods of relational learning, such insights act to shape their theological concept and youth ministry.

that they exude in their ability to grasp biblical concepts to teach and preach from Scripture correlate strongly with their perceived level of self-effectiveness as a VYL, which may well be a key motivating component in being active in their approach to being a 'self directed learner'.[20]

Though the data supports a trend for VYLs to be motivated in their learning, many respondents acknowledge that their pursuit of ongoing learning and education has a 'God factor' associated with it. This essentially is the purpose and aim of all theological study. Smart, in his educational research on the need for leaders to be continually learning, says, "It is God who educates, and this is an ongoing process."[21] The challenge of ongoing education -- especially in this area of how youth ministry and theology interact -- continues. Kesler notes the importance of this when he states that "Your personal theology will have an effect on everything you do in youth work, In short all we do relates to what we actually believe."[22] There certainly is a need for youth leaders to be appropriately skilled and trained for their calling and vocation so as to avoid leaving "critical gaps in their theological knowledge."[23]

One of the key areas of the focus of this research was to discover those areas in which youth leaders feel they most need support, and those areas that are the sources of inadequacy in the performance of their ministry task. An interesting correlation is that nearly double the amount of respondents said they needed training in the practical skills of ministry as opposed to the pursuit of academic and knowledge skills for their ministry.[24] This may again be pointing to the pressure that youth leaders face by needing to value skills that get the job done

20 These VYLs are quite distinct from someone who is seeking out a more long term academic and theological training pathway as a way to further professional development. These kinds of learning cycles should be further analysed and researched to further ascertain areas that youth leaders can continue to not only to grow in their biblical understanding of Scripture, but in their ability to enlarge other leadership skills needed to be an effective youth leader.
21 J. Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Philadelphia:Westminster Press, 1954), 107.
22 J. Kesler, *The Youth Leaders Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1983), 23.
23 D. Rahn, *"The Scary prospect of a professional youth Minister: Response to Lamports "The State of the profession of Youth Ministry"* (Christian Education Journal. 1992), 101-103.
24 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) Chart 26b. 25

rather than looking at ways to train and develop themselves so they can be better leaders over a longer period of time. From the previous responses we can note that 76% of youth leaders don't feel they need any further academic and knowledge skills. Some 84% declined the need to expand their value approach to their ministry and only 14% felt they needed help in all three key categories that were deemed areas to be continually improving in as a leader in the church. Interestingly, the 'no' answers to these 'training most needed' questions always outnumbered the 'yes' answers. This highlights the fact that a sizable number of youth leaders may not exactly see need of such training and knowledge at this point in their vocation.

So what learning tools does the survey data indicate that youth leaders most value? Such data helps us to determine how a VYL tends to learn and what they feel helps bring value to their ministry efforts. The top four categories are ranked from the highest to lowest.

Q: As a youth leader, on what learning tool do you place the highest value?

Ranking 1: Revelation from God
Ranking 2: Relationships with others
Ranking 3: Real life experiences
Ranking 4: Reading materials

Reliance upon a revelation from God is a primary concern to the VYL, with 76% of youth leaders reporting that revelation from God is their most valued learning tool (it would be interesting to do further work in terms of common spiritual disciplines, in order to determine what constitutes 'revelation' for this cohort). Noticeably, in that same question, most youth leaders valued training or knowledge based materials well down the list. This points to a generalised belief in Pentecostal circles that God will reveal the answers through revelation for most things as we need them. This is both a hermeneutic, and an ecclesiology. 'The leader' in Pentecostal churches is a charismatic individual, identified precisely with the ability to hear from and work for God. The place of 'natural' knowledge and skills is thereby

relativised. Such a high dependence on revelation as the primary ministry tool of choice for VYLs may also reflect a defacto pragmatism, a tendency (attractive for harried youth leaders) to receive a quick answer from God. Given the models of leadership in their tradition, this has considerably more appeal (from a practical perspective) than the discipline of pouring over texts and reading materials (the least preferred option by VYLs) and other perceived laborious study and self learning activities. This is another area where useful research could well be conducted.

The reported need of youth ministers to be 'relationally dependent' is fundamental to how they learn and grow and gain ministry confidence within an organisation. No doubt this is the channel by which they pick up such attitudes towards learning strategies. The relational aspect of ministry is the second most preferred learning approach. This reflects the culture of dependence among VYLs, whose marginality in 'apostolic' organisations forces them to fall back on strong relational links with those they interact with in ministry. In many cases VYLs focus on key relationships to help bolster a sense of greater ministerial and organisational acknowledgment (especially in smaller churches), a factor viewed as essential to the establishment of their ministry and leadership effectiveness. The age old relationship adage, 'it's not what you know but who you know," seems to ring true of the VYL in the ministry context of the Assemblies of God. Relationships and knowledge combined make for a more effective leader, but the trend data shows that VYLs may well find it naturally easier and of greater ministry effect to build relationships before pursuing ministry related knowledge.

The top 5 responses to learning style and approaches to new ideas and principles were as follows;

Q: What are the ways you find easiest to learn new ideas and principles?
Ranking 1: Learning from your own experience
Ranking 2: Listening to others via sermon or conversation
Ranking 3: Trusting God to reveal things to you
Ranking 4: Undertaking short courses

Ranking 5: Undertaking formal study

Again the trend shows that VYLs learn and grow through reflection on practical life and experiences. They tend to learn 'as they go' through people they meet, the sermons they hear, and conversations they have. In the light of contemporary thinking about leadership training and development, this almost exclusive emphasis on personal experience is far from an ideal learning philosophy for Christian leadership. This raises important questions for the Assemblies of God. What, for instance, are the ministry dynamics of youth leaders as a result of experiential learning (either good or bad)? To what degree are their experiences in ministry informing and shaping their theological and attitudinal frameworks? Perhaps some answer to these questions may be seen in the tendency for 27% of all youth leaders to leave this area of ministry within a two year period. Lamport notes similar statistics with alarm, in his chapter on the 'Significance of Calling'. He states that:

> One of the most discouraging realities of the profession is the startling dropout rate for this career. Some estimates indicate an average ministry of less than five years, some youth ministers staying as short as two years in a given location.[25]

It would be worth further research to see if these high 'churn' rates (amidst which one might expect to find levels of burnout) could be restrained by greater levels and varieties of training. The least preferred option for respondents (as a way to learning new ideas and principles for youth ministry) is some form of formal study in the area of youth ministry. As noted, VYLs learn essentially 'on the go' in an interactive manner; and swimming in a culture which holds that formal study does not make you any better prepared for youth ministry and may even be a hindrance. This is a combination of Pentecostal doubt about the value of intellectual formation and personal doubts about the value of investing in lengthy and expensive formal approaches to a ministry which may be short lived and volatile. The influence of this on the data

---

25 M. Lamport, "What is Youth Ministry?", *Christian Educational Journal*, Vol. 16:3 (Spring, 1996): 61-70.

set is self evident; the overwhelming majority (82%) of respondents are not convinced, or not fully persuaded (19%) that academic training makes any difference to the effectiveness of a youth leader. This flies in the face of other research, which indicates that "the most highly trained ministers experience the greatest satisfaction and fulfillment of professional ministry goals."[26] Strommen, Jones and Rahn also note that "It just makes sense that the more training one has received for a task or profession, the more qualified that person will feel."[27] While this may not indicate effectiveness, it will certainly have an impact upon indices of longevity and self perception.

Reflecting on the confidence and sense of personal adequacy displayed here among VYLs, it seems logical that churches would try and develop appropriate learning pathways. Jagelman has also strongly stated that organisations and senior leaders need to be able to "provide a pathway they can take to make that development possible."[28] It stands to reason that one of the key advantages of strategic vocational and ministerial education for the youth leader is a heightened sense of job and leadership competence. Pazdan's synopsis (though not easily applied) suggests that the real challenges at the heart of educating leaders lies in the essentials of rigorous intellectual effort as well as a deepening and expanding the faith of individuals that will bring about ecclesial growth and integrity[29] to the life of the church.

The reality is that youth ministers face many challenging and sometimes very vulnerable situations during their ministry tenure. They desire to minister to adolescents in a variety of contexts but often have little information to work with apart from opinion, conjecture, and experience. While many youth leaders are in their early to mid-twenties, continual learning is important for the VYL but may well - given the nature of time restraints and ministry pressures - remain a perpetual challenge. Moran highlights (on the basis of Thorndike's research on adult learning) that between the ages of 25 - 45 there is

26 M.P.Strommen, K. Jones, and D. Rahn, p. 244.

27 Loc. cit.

28 I. Jagelman, *Identifying and Developing Christian Leaders* (Australia: Open Book, 2002), 96.

29 M. M. Pazdan, "Wisdom Communities: Models for Christian Formation and Pedagogy" Theological Education (1998): 142.

a decline in learning ability.[30] The need for the VYL to be growing in their ministry and theological capacity from an early stage is thus essential to longevity of ministry tenure in VYLs. Burghardt notes that what is really needed in teaching youth leaders theology is "a man or a woman who not only knows a theology of God but more importantly knows the God of theology".[31] Narrow theologies interact with narrow spiritualities, and it would be another item for further research to indicate how each contributes to ministerial longevity.

Contextual Concerns for Today's Youth Leader

Using self perception in relating to calling, this paper has distinguished between VYLs ('vocational youth leaders') and non-VYLs (self perceived 'non vocational youth leaders'). The remaining comments will continue to look at and analyze survey research results between these two categories. It is by comparing these two categories that we can extract contextual concerns for today's youth leader.

As noted above, the strongest indicator delivered by the data of a person oriented to formal education is the well-situated VYL, someone whose primary sense of calling is to youth ministry, and whose primary skill is flexibility both in learning patterns and organisational responsiveness. Such people are well situated within defined role definitions – they are confident in teaching scripture, confident with other people in the organisation and about their own function within it, are proactive learners with regard to culture and scripture, and involved in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their youth ministry. These people may well choose formal education as one of their sources of personal improvement, but are also actively engaging with a variety of sources for such improvement.

Again, it falls outside the ambit of this study, but the high covariance of data in this area indicates the importance of role definition and leadership in shaping effective youth ministers.

---

30 G. Moran, *Education Toward Adulthood: Religion and Lifelong Learning* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 109-111. Quoted from the original work of E. L.Thorndike. *Adult Learning* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1928).

31 W. Burghardt, *This World Desperately Needs Theologians* (Catholic Mind, March, 1981), 136.

Those who report themselves to be most proactive in improving the effectiveness of their youth ministries are those who are actively supportive of the leadership in their own church, and most engaged with assessing changes in youth culture as opportunities for ministry. It may well be worth investigating as to whether (as seems likely) the supportive relations noted are shaped by the leadership culture which flows down from senior ministry and which shapes the expectations of VYLs towards expectations of longevity and productivity within the organisation. It is observed that the interaction between effective youth ministry and good leadership is essential. One might almost predict, therefore, that there is an effect on openness to formal training from the internal cultures of churches established by the senior leadership. As M. J. Anthony has recognised, it is a common facet of contemporary church leaders that most learning is done via "identification and observational learning or imitation which involves patterning ones thoughts, feelings, and actions after a model."[32] This is where the value of the pastoral team relationship seems important in this group of results, and an open attitude to change in youth culture seems to predict a sense of effectiveness in the role. Detonni notes that VYLs tend to "instinctively analyse, interpret and predict youth culture thus allowing them to live and minister harmoniously within that cultural framework".[33] It is this sense of accomplishment with regard to both the people and the organisation they serve that gives a heightened sense of fulfilment of call and personal self motivation to VYLs.

Again, longevity in ministry results from and bears upon organisational commitment and integration. But it is also linked to VYLs having a strong ministry commitment to young people, something which becomes the defining factor as to whether they perceive themselves as VYLs or not. Banks notes as the basis for successful Christian ministry and praxis the foundational need for the leader to "clarify vocational identity."[34] Longevity in ministry for

32 M. J. Anthony, Foundations of Ministry: An Introduction to Christian Education for a New Generation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1992), 118.
33 J. M. Detonni, *Introduction to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1993), 38-40.
34 R. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring A Missional Alternative To*

VYLs is strongly reinforced by their ability to mentor others around them and to then delegate and provide opportunities. This brings a heightened sense of calling and perceived vocational success and status to the VYL.

A 'people' rather than a 'program' focus seems to be interactive with a commitment to a longer (rather than a shorter, more hierarchy climbing, incremental) perspective on the nature of ministry. These people (VYLs) are more flexible, more personable, more personally responsible, and more spiritually oriented than others in the survey.[35] It is this sensitivity to people and youth culture and the ability to initiate change for the betterment of people and the good of the organisation that sets VYLs apart from Non VYLs. VYLs perceive themselves as effective if they are seeing the effects of their leadership influence others by the active involvement of those to whom they minister. VYLs are inspired by being able to provide opportunities for those they are currently mentoring, and perceive the involvement (taking personal ownership) of their young people as a critical key to why they have been called to youth ministry.[36] Personal interaction for the VYL is highly structured – mentoring is an outflow of the need to engage for the sake of ministry effectiveness, and for building the relational networks which will help make their ministry effective. They are goal setters for a divine cause, and their relationships are thus purposeful and structured - even when educational experiences are not. Indeed, as noted above, the two are not mutually exclusive -- relationship is a form of education for the existing crop of VYLs.

The Model & Its Consequences For Today's Youth Leader.

The diagram below outlines the learning/educational model consisting of 5 leadership dimensions, (Circles) and 3 stages of development (Squares). The recommendation is to allow the model to serve as the first step in developing a curriculum designed to teach
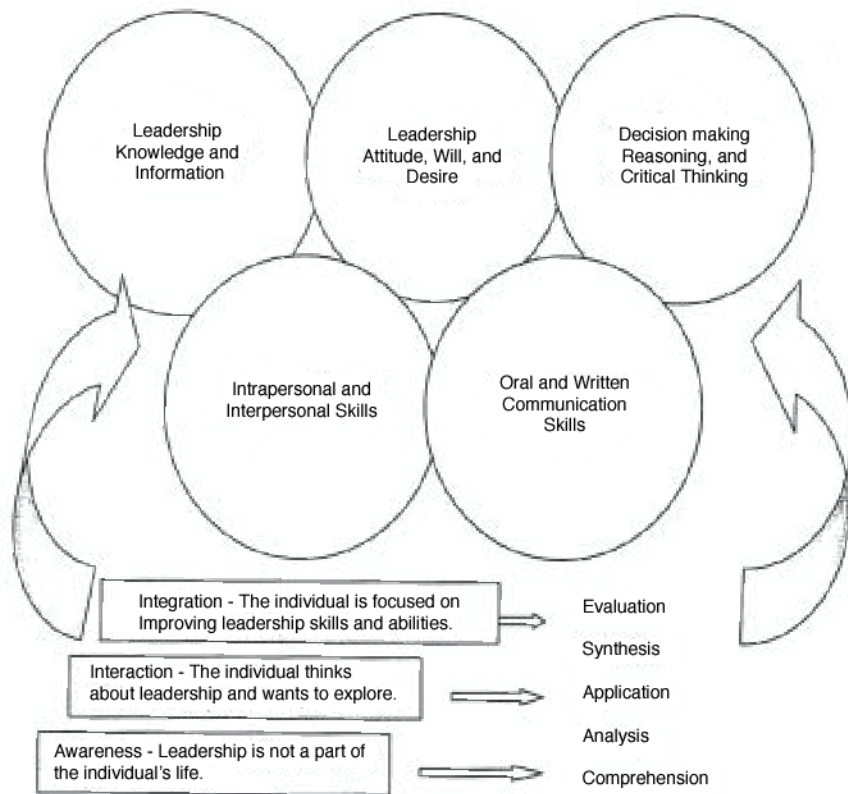

Current Models (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 36.
35 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) Data Set 9, 34
36 Ibid, 34

leadership principles to youth leaders. Each stage represents a construct of leadership development as found in a learning organisation. The conceptual model is heavily influenced by the research of Fertman and Long[37], Fertman and Chubb[38], Long, Wald, and Graff[39], and Bloom[40].

VYL Educational Model:

Leadership Knowledge and Information

Leadership Attitude, Will, and Desire

Decision making Reasoning, and Critical Thinking

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills

Oral and Written Communication Skills

Integration - The individual is focused on Improving leadership skills and abilities.

Interaction - The individual thinks about leadership and wants to explore.

Awareness - Leadership is not a part of the individual's life.

Evaluation

Synthesis

Application

Analysis

Comprehension

---

37 C. L. Fertman, & J. A. Long, "All Students are Leaders". *School Counselor*, Vol. 37:5 (1990): 391-396.

38 C. I. Fertman, & N. H. Chubb,."The Effects of a Psychoeducational Program on Adolescents' Activity Involvement, Self-esteem, and Locus of Control". *Adolescence,* Vol. 27: 107 (1993): 517-526.

39 J. A. Long, H. P. Wald, & O. Graf, "Student leadership". *Keystone Leader,* Vol. 29:1 (1996): 21-24.

40 B. S. Bloom. (Ed.) *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals,* Handbook 1, Cognitive Domain. (New York. Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1956)

The ability for youth leaders to take these 5 leadership dimensions and be able to process these through the 3 learning processes (Integration, Interaction, Awareness) to become competent VYLs, is the basis we will use in determining sense of adequacy.

There is a clear hierarchy of skills (5 dimensions) that must be developed for long term youth ministry effectiveness. Vocationally-focused youth leaders are aware of this need and reported that they were actively involved in efforts to improve the effectiveness of their youth ministry. This commitment to self improvement in the VYL promotes new initiatives and fosters a positive and self-motivating work ethic, and proves to be a vital indicator in identifying those who will and won't remain in youth ministry over a longer period of time.[41] The areas where youth leaders most need specific ministry training and skill based knowledge have been identified, but the imperative remains for youth leaders to receive specific training to help them grasp a greater contextual awareness[42] of their role, rather than relying on generic leadership roles and expectations that they may be required to fulfill.

Clinton's statement is pertinent to this process: "Leaders must develop a ministry philosophy that simultaneously honours biblical leadership values, embraces the challenges of the times in which we live, and fits their unique gifts and personal development if they expect to be productive over a lifetime."[43] This can be approached positively (through the educational model) – which recognises that VYLs clearly acknowledge their need for continued growth and development if they are going to be successful and remain in youth ministry. It is in the simultaneous attainment of greater training and skills development and personal alignment to the learning process that the VYL will potentially be viewed and accepted by the organisation in a greater capacity allowing for redefinition of position and credentialing etc.

Each of these factors impacts on the Non VYLs orientation to receiving ministry training, and impacts on their engagement,

---

41 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) Table 3 (BR & AP), 39

42 Ibid., See VYL Educational Model; (Learning Stage 3; Awareness)

43 R. J. Clinton, *"The Making of a Leader"* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1988), 180.

satisfaction and effectiveness in their ministry. Much responsibility lies with senior leaders and the wider church community (including colleges and training organisations) to work together to provide opportunities that address the issues of Non VYLs. These opportunities help provide a sense of confidence in the youth leader (that they are valued and of worth) and helps overall in the performance of their ministry tasks. Jagelman in his book *Identifying and Developing Christian Leaders* highlights the importance of the local church to participate in this area when he notes that "local churches should provide consistent opportunities for members to be exposed to sound theological education."[44] Obviously, how youth ministry is constructed in the local church (as vocation, as a transitory stage, as central to the church curriculum or as appendage) will affect whether youth ministers take their callings seriously (or rather, whether they identify their roles with their sense of calling) and so seek training to prepare themselves for it.

DesMaria, Yang, and Farzenhkia point towards what they consider to be necessary elements in the development of youth leadership. As noted in the model underpinning this research, they listed the critical elements as: "youth/adult partnerships, granting young people decision making power and responsibility for consequences, a broad context for learning and service, recognition of young people's experience, knowledge and skills".[45] The data has indicated a strong tendency for VYLs, linking a good relationship with their senior leader to their ability to learn and grow and thus be viewed as effective by the organisation. Recognition by both senior minister and congregation play a vital role in the way a youth leader sees themselves and views their ministry. This again reinforces the sustained need for relational cohesion between youth leader and senior minister which tends to elicit longevity in ministry and a sense of adequacy for the youth leader.

Conclusion & Future Projections

There is no doubt that this generation of teenagers are in need of

44 Jagelman.*"Identifying and Developing Christian Leaders",* 31.
45 J. DesMarais, T. Yang and F. Farzanehkia, *"Service-learning leadership development for youths".* (Phi Delta Kappan. 81 vol. 9, 2000), 3.

spiritually inspired and well trained youth leaders who see themselves as called to be VYLs. In conjunction with spiritual leaders, colleges, training institutions and local churches, there needs to be a focused effort to bring youth leaders into a new confidence and efficiency in their ministries in the conundrums elucidated by this research data. As Professor of Youth Studies, David Rahn, notes, there are three key areas which underpinned effective education for youth ministry, "Christian maturity, youth ministry understanding, and youth ministry competencies"[46]. All of these are based on the personal growth and understanding of the youth leader. Essential to this taking place, Rahn also notes that "we must lead youth leaders into a love of learning that will compel them on a self-directed lifetime of continuous improvement".[47]

VYLs need both relational and learning pathways to succeed. The tests of difference[48] between VYLs and Non VYLs is where much of the conclusive data lies. Importantly the research data points out that if stakeholders can identify key ministry traits within the Non VYL at an early stage and train and coach them through these issues, it may well be that we can lengthen the tenure of youth leaders, building experienced and confident VYLs who view themselves as successful in their ministry efforts. There is more research and modeling required, and not merely for research alone. After all, the future leadership of the AOG/ACC lies in those who are now leading a youth ministry or are involved in one.

VYLs should be encouraged to actively seek professional help and assistance in designing a 'vocational development pathway' that helps them to pursue their plans for further study, growth and development, thus creating a solid theological foundation that will support them in ministry and life. Jack & McRay note that the ideal youth minister should know "How to plan, design, and carry-out an

---

46 D. D. Rahn, "What Kind of Education do Youth Ministers Need"? *Christian Education Journal V*ol.16:3 (1996): 81-89.

47 D. Rahn. Ph.D, *"Tension or Slack? Identifying the Professor's Role in Youth Ministry's Future"* The Journal of Youth Ministry *(*Fall 2000).

48 W. Harrison, *"Youth Leadership: trends and research issues relating to educational background, attainment and sense of adequacy of active youth leaders in NSW AOG Churches"* (2009) 40

educational objective."49 If this were to be a goal of youth leaders, obviously it would help for them to have had formational experience with educational objectives in expert settings.   Dunn and Senter reinforce the reality that this type of development involves "a long term process of focusing theological, developmental, and sociocultural lenses"50 Dave Livermore's statement is compelling, "I long to see youth ministry education lead the way in forging a new paradigm of developing future ministry leaders." 51 It seems imperative in the light of this paper that we continue to work towards initiating vocational development pathways for as many youth leaders as possible in the understanding that in so doing we are building bigger and better leaders for the church of the present and Church leaders for the immediate and long term future.

> *"I pray that more and more godly men and women would answer the call to full time youth ministry as a life long, professional vocation that is worth investing your life in!"52*
>
> *"Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace" (Ps. 144:12)*

49 A. S. Jack, and B. W. McRay, "Tassel Flipping: A Portrait of the Well educated Youth Ministry Graduate" *The Journal of Youth Ministry* Vol.4:1 (Fall, 2005): 60.

50 G. A. Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press, 1988).

51 D. Livermore. Ph.D, "Youth Ministry Education: Impractical or Praxical?" Prepared for *Youth Ministry Educators' Forum: Teaching Youth Ministry in the Midst of Change*. (October 29, 2001), 8.

52 D. Matty, "Youth Workers Over 30: Effective or Obsolete?" in *The Enrichment Journal,* (April, 2006) Online http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200604/200604_workers_over30.cfm. Accessed April 2007.

Book Reviews:

Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbor*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2008.

Review by Shane Clifton

I have long been a fan of the work of Amos Yong, who is fast becoming *the* preeminent global Pentecostal scholar. *Hospitality and the Other* is a book that will further enhance his reputation, taking him beyond the category of "Pentecostal" academic, and placing him as one of the foremost Christian contributors to theologies of inter-religious encounter.

In light of this 'high praise', I should confess to having felt a certain degree of surprise and even scepticism when this book first landed on my desk. Yong had previously published two books specifically addressing the topic - *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (JPT SS, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 200) and *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003) - and had written numerous journal articles and book chapters covering seemingly similar ground. But my initial concern that this new book might simply restate previously published ideas proved unfounded. What I discovered, as I worked my way with increasing excitement through *Hospitality and the Other*, was that Yong's thinking about the logic of inter-religious engagement has taken a new direction. This is not to suggest he contradicts his previous work, but it is to highlight that Yong has set out a complementary argument, one that is compelling and that should challenge Christians (even those of a more conservative persuasion) to rethink their predominately hostile attitude to people of other faiths.

The book is set in the context of a postmodern, pluralistic and multi-religious global society, one that is in urgent need of religious harmony. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks notes:

> Religion can be a source of discord. It can also be a form of

conflict resolution. We are familiar with the former; the second is far too little tried. Yet it is here, if anywhere, that hope must lie if we are to create a human solidarity strong enough to bear the strains that lie ahead. The great faiths must now become an active force for peace and for the justice and compassion on which peace ultimately depends. That will require great courage, and perhaps something more than courage: a candid admission that, more than at any time in the past, we need to search – each faith in its own way – for a way of living with, and acknowledging the integrity of, those who are not of our faith. Can we make space for difference? Can we hear the voice of God in a language, a sensibility, a culture not our own? Can we see the presence of God in the face of a stranger? Religion is no longer marginal to international politics. After a long period of eclipse, it has reemerged with immense and sometimes destructive force.[1]

The need for inter-religious peace is increasingly obvious, but the way to go about achieving that peace is not as clear, especially since the particularity of religious faith tends to work against the possibility of making space for difference. Sack's suggestion, 'that each faith in its own way' needs to find a way of engaging positively with those of another faith, is precisely what has been missing in too much of the literature framing inter-religious dialogue. In contrast Yong, while locating his work in the context of multi-religious pluralism, develops an argument for inter-religious practices that is explicitly Christian. Indeed, his book builds toward the conclusion that it is the gracious hospitality of God, exemplified in Jesus Christ, that frames the mission of the Church, a mission that includes inter-religious practices. As Yong notes:

> For Christians, Jesus Christ is not only the paradigmatic host representing and offering the redemptive hospitality of God, but he does so as the exemplary guest who went out in the far country…. Christian life enacts the hospitality of God precisely through our embodying, paradoxically, both the exclusively

---

1 Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Continuum, 2002), 5.

christomorphic shape of the *ecclesia*, on the one hand, and, on
the other, the inclusively incarnational *koinonia* of God at work
in aliens in a strange land (p.126).

He goes on to spell out the way in which this mission is framed
by the Spirit of hospitality, connecting this book to his earlier
published arguments for a pneumatological framing of inter-religious
engagement. Inter-religious encounter, therefore, is located in the
very Trinitarian nature of God. That is to say, it is the unmeasurable
hospitality of the grace of God, expressed in the life and ministry of
Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, that demands that the
witness of the church is embodied in hospitable practices – as we live
both as conduits of hospitality and, at one and the same time, as aliens
and strangers in a foreign land. We should therefore be, according to
Yong, both givers and receivers of hospitable welcome.

As I have already suggested, this book is not narrowly Pentecostal,
although Pentecostals will recognise Yong's pneumatological
orientation, as well as his emphasis on praxis – on the practical nature
of theological reflection. This emphasis on "inter-religious practices"
lies at the heart of the book. This is apparent right from the start,
as his first chapter provides a series of case studies highlighting
examples of Christian encounter with other faiths, vividly illustrating
the ways in which Christian practices are having both positive and
negative effects, i.e. generating instances of peace and harmony and,
at the same time, inter-religious violence. In his second chapter, he
establishes the method that will underpin his argument, demonstrating
the inter-relationship between beliefs and practices, and setting out
an understanding of theology as 'dramatic performance' or, more
particularly, 'pneumatological performance'. With this in place,
his third chapter is devoted to an analysis of traditional Christian
approaches to other religions, assessing exclusivist, inclusivist and
pluralistic theologies primarily on the basis of their impact upon
Christian practices. Of particular concern is the seeming paradox
between the evangelistic priority of exclusivists, the dialogical but
potentially imperialistic attitude of inclusivists, and the exploratory,
open and potentially syncretistic practices of pluralists. Indeed, while
he recognises that the three traditional approaches to inter-religious

encounter are theologically and theoretically incompatible, he asks whether it may be possible to redeem the positive dimensions of the inter-religious practices of the three dominant positions, critically assessing the claims of each. (p.98)

As already noted, he finds this point of connection in a theology of performative hospitality, which he sets out in chapter 4. Since such a theology is derived from the unique revelation of the triune God through Jesus in the power of the Spirit, it encourages diverse practices, which Yong explores in chapter 5. This includes practices of evangelism – the priority of inviting others to experience the redemptive hospitality of God through the salvific work of Jesus. It also includes a willingness to be hosted by others – to open ourselves to "the risk of our being vulnerable to and with them." This is not a syncretistic conversion of Christians to other faiths, since it is driven by the good news of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus. It is, nevertheless, an openness to the move of the Spirit in and through others, and a spiritual discernment that looks for opportunities to mediate peace and justice and confront the evil of violence – especially violence generated by religion.

No doubt, this all sounds terribly idealistic, yet Yong is not unaware of the challenges of hospitality, which he describes as an "eschatological ideal." Such ideals need to be adjudicated in the reality of the historical situation, a fact that reminds us of the need for spiritual discernment. Yong's final chapter is thus a very practical one, reflecting not only on inter-religious practices that work toward justice in society (p.143-146), but also on the important and challenging question of interfaith prayer (p148-150), an activity that needs careful delineation if it is not to become either idolatrous or vacuous.

To conclude, this is an important text, one that I hope is widely read. It is not an easy book, but neither is it unapproachable. Indeed, it is a well-written and logical book that should be accessible to people from diverse backgrounds. Scholars will learn much from Yong's arguments, but students and thoughtful lay Christians will also be inspired and challenged by this book. I commend it wholeheartedly.

Andrew J Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War,* New York: Oxford University Press, first edition: 2005; updated with afterword, 2008.

Review by Mark Hutchinson

One of the advantages of being the centre of the world's wealth is the ability to be endlessly introspective. Whatever attitude one wants to find about America, there will be a literature to support it – and a counter-position to oppose it. Andrew Bacevich's recently re-released book is a deliberate attempt to provide balance in one of the most polarising settings in intellectual life. Most non-Americans visiting the USA quickly remark on how militarised this uniquely powerful country is. That this should be considered a surprising thing – something requiring the sort of 'brilliant, abrasive [and] important' comment for which some reviewers have praised this book – is an index as to the self-referential nature of American public thought.

The book has much in it which is worthwhile – it provides a good understanding of the various trends which converged to make the seemingly incredible (ie. post-9/11 American unilateral action leading to the decline of its moral suasion) plausible (at least to Americans). Bacevich properly points out that this was not the result of a single elite cabal – but rather the confluence of the interests of a variety of elites running together along lines permitted by themes deeply embedded in American culture. For a foreigner such as myself, his account of the rise of neo-conservatism (including its conflicted nature) provides a worrying insight into the influence of the press – left and right – in advanced democratic societies, both for good and bad. The role of journals, universities and intellectuals in the formation of the American malaise is a chilling reminder of the need for public ethics and an engaged and mutual, rather than conflictual and ghettoised, public conversation. The New Left convinced the world of the importance of ideas, writes Bacevich, and the New Right read their script. The result was the influence of Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and Walter Laqueur, among others in the first generation, through journals such

as *Commentary*, laying the basis for the second, activist generation who filled the ranks of George W. Bush's cabinets. Ideas are dangerous things – even (or perhaps especially) ideas that are true.

Bacevich doesn't really seem to have much of an idea as to the role of ideas, and how they should be understood. His strong suit is his knowledge of the actors and the minutiae of American public debate. His weak suit is in sustaining the necessary public 'rage' which would justify a book which is long on description, and short on analysis and a substantive ethics. The book repeatedly resorts to a weak doctrine of the fallen humanity as an explanation of why the best intentions fly apart – an approach satisfactory to neither those who believe in such a doctrine, nor to those who don't. Good public debate needs to be well framed, both in terms of content and method. This book has good content – but its methodological assumptions leave much to be desired.

The reason is that Bacevich is himself captured by the nation state. While, as foreigners, those of us reading this text a long way away are pleased that he notices something which is so obvious to external observers, it is clear that he is writing for Americans alone. Key to his argument is Woodrow Wilson's interventionism, based on an assumption that American principles of national self-determination were universal and sufficient. Bacevich – like Wilson himself – does not see the problem of the nation state itself under the pressure of globalisation. As Arnold Toynbee once noted with regard to nation states, as soon as a line is drawn on the map, it becomes necessary to defend it with the sword. Universalising states are supported and legitimised by universalising religions – and the American religion is not, and never really has been, Christianity per se. Rather, the saints in the American pantheon are the signatories of the Constitution, its early heroes (such as Washington), its mythological figures. The reason why Bacevich's Catholicism is so remarkably suppressed (except, as I will note below, in the negative) is that in addressing an American public, he has to use the founding civil religion of 'self-evident' truths. For this reason, one critic notes:

> The author's solutions also disappoint. If American militarism is the result of fundamental social currents resulting

from the humiliation of Vietnam and the unrest of the 1960s and 70s, then remedies should also address changing social and strategic outlooks, not urging Congress to change itself or to suggest greater inducements to enlist.[1]

The argument – undermined by its lack of method – glides to an end without much to say. It lacks the strength of its own convictions, and like much American public debate spoils a good argument with the appearance of being inflated (genuflecting at the shrine of Washington, pp. 224-5) and/or self-serving (proposing, for instance, increased engagement with civilian universities – such as his own – as part of the panacea, p. 223). The solution cannot, in the end, be (as Bacevich proposes) simply a reinforcement of the American sense of national propriety by such moves as paying attention to the nation's founders and bolstering the separation of powers between the Executive and the Congress. In a global setting, the nation state is not in itself the solution – indeed, in cutting across more (or less) mobile forms of identity, and in defining itself in modernist terms as purely political and economic in form, it is part of the problem.

Bacevich's book also misconstrues another key theme, that of an assumed core democratic norm in countries based on the American model. 'Representative' democracies, however, depend enormously on their representatives – and the sort of disengagements which Bacevich describes in this book indicate profound issues in this regard. If films such as *The Hunt for Red October* are sufficient indicators of a shaping of American culture, then the same might be said for *Evan Almighty*, *Wag the Dog*, or the many other standard presentations of corruption in high places. If the American military is disconnected from the American people, then the American people are disconnected from the lobby-ocracy which typifies the American nation. As the latter remains unexplored in the book, the obvious question (whether the two disconnections have common causes which differ from those proposed for the merely military end) remains likewise unexplored. Is this a crisis of democracy, or of the nation state as a form, or both? We

1 Robert B. Killebrew, 'Review: The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War. By Andrew J. Bacevich', *Parameters: US Army War College*, Vol. 35, Issue 4 (Winter 2005-2006), p.128.

never find out.

Of particular interest is Bacevich's treatment of the evangelical contribution to American militarism. His general argument is that – in emerging from isolation after (and because of) World War II – neo-evangelicals engaged American militarism uncritically, responding to a perceived slide in American public/ private values by coopting the Puritan 'city on a hill' themes inherent to American foundations, and contributing both mass mobilisation, effective organisational ability (through lobby groups and chaplaincy services), and a fairly scary Zionist millennial perspective to the rise of the 'new American militarism'. Abandoning their traditional pacifism, evangelical leaders 'articulated a highly permissive interpretation of the just war tradition, the cornerstone of Christian thinking about warfare.' (p. 123) In a sense, they bought a 'devil's bargain' – selling their souls for entry into the mainstream and political suasion. It is a powerful argument, and one which needs to be taken seriously. As Bellah, Linder, Pierard et al. have shown, American civil religion is a powerful force which has been steered (corrupted?) evangelical priorities for centuries. There are some problems with the analysis in this case, however. First, while 69% of white evangelicals generally voted Republican at the time the book was released (now down to 62% at the time of writing), 40% of evangelicals (black and white) don't.[2] As schisms in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1990s demonstrated, American evangelicals are not a homogenous group and are likely – as they did in the recent election of Barack Obama – to vote generationally, and

2 Even in the recent election, with all its tension, ¼ of evangelicals didn't vote for McCain, and 'A Barna Group poll found that 40 percent of evangelicals chose their presidential candidate based on his position on "moral issues" such as abortion and gay rights, as compared with 9 percent of other voters.' B Buckner, 'With the Obama election, evangelicals seek a role as faith in politics enters historic era,' *Anniston Star*, 29 Nov 2008. 'President Bush's approval ratings among evangelicals, for example, dropped from 75 percent in 2001 to 47 percent, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. But Pew surveys also found that evangelicals' views on social issues like abortion, and the priority evangelicals say they give to those issues in deciding their vote, have remained stable.' S Pulliam, 'Evangelical Moderates', *Christianity Today*, November 2008, Vol. 52, No. 11. Gushee asserts that evangelicals are to be found in almost equal parts on the left, in the centre, and on the right. David P. Gushee, *The Future of Faith in American Politics: The Public Witness of the Evangelical Center*, Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008, pp 199ff.

on a conscience basis, in ways which make the potential vote far less decisive. The tendency to divide evangelicals simplistically into the 'left' and the 'right' ignores their tendency to organise around issues rather parties, and also ignores 'the evangelical center'. Secondly, while Bacevich holds up the standard of a just war tradition, that too is a non-homogenous intellectual tradition, which is not sufficiently explored in the book so as to make an adequate criterion for judgement. Most of Bacevich's sources are mainline Protestant or secular sources, a critical secondary literature which does not provide him with sufficient counterbalance to his own Catholic presumptions as to the monolithic nature of 'correct' theology. The issue, notes Gushee, is not that evangelicals universally justify war, or that they simply roll along with the Republican band-wagon, but rather that evangelicals are drawn (like most Americans) by an uncritical patriotism which leads them to support 'the president, the troops and the country'. The issue, again, is not the religion so much as the underlying consensus on which American nationhood is founded, and the pragmatist civil religion (which Bacevich himself seems to accept) which binds it all together.

The analysis is also a form of pop-intellectualism – cherry picking a prominent issue – rather than good history. While pointing out the role of evangelicalism and its putative role in entangling the USA in the Middle East, Bacevich ignores the role of other religious traditions and their contribution to American adventurism in the past. While hardly Zionists or millennialists, for example, Episcopalians during the 1910s and 1920s contributed to American involvement in Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, and helped frame much of the internationalism which underpinned post-war Wilsonian doctrine. (Secretary of State Dean Acheson, for instance, was the son of an Episcopalian bishop, and carried many 'British Empire' values into repositioning American relationships during his term, 1949-1953).[3] Remarkably, Bacevich also has little to say about the influence of post-Spanish Civil War Catholic anti-Communism in influencing American foreign policy, particularly

3 Dean Acheson. *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department*. New York: Norton, 1969, pp. 355-358; and also James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 16.

as relates to the American involvement in Vietnam which forms such a cornerstone of his book. The claims of balance should have suggested to him some treatment of the well-documented involvement of the Catholic Church (especially Cardinal Spellman, the American Friends of Vietnam and journals such as *America*) in supporting Ngo Dinh Diem, both before and after the election of the Kennedy presidency.[4] Indeed, this Democrat-oriented constituency supports Bacevich's key point – that support for militarism arises across the spectrum in the USA, not merely on the Right. It is short sighted, as John Anderson has pointed out, to write off the Catholic contribution to 'third wave democratisation' in places as separated as Brazil, Chile, Eastern Europe, South Africa and the Philippines, simply because religion is not permitted as an explanatory category in much liberal/ secularist literature. Indeed, without this contribution, it is doubtful that neo-cons could have pointed to the 'success' of the Reagan years as the touchstone for their further expansion.[5] As one Catholic commentator has pointed out, Reagan in his post-Hinckley period was heavily influenced by the Catholic cadre which surround him (from CIA Director, William Casey, to key advisor, William P Clark, to the writer of his famous 'march of liberty' speech at Westminster, Tony Dolan), and by his contacts with leading Catholic luminaries such as John Paul II and Cardinal Terence Cook.[6]

These shortcomings arise largely as a result of the book's methodological assumptions. Empiricist, anti-theoretical, personalist and a little too fond of 'great man theory' assumptions about the nature of history, Bacevich in a sense writes the history of US militarism through his own eyes. A Vietnam vet, Catholic and public university academic oriented towards a uniquely American audience, Bacevich necessarily produces a book which is circular in showing that, in the end, one can only sustain an argument in American life if one shares

4 See for example, Christopher J. Kauffman, 'Politics, Programs and Protests: Catholic Relief Services in Vietnam, 1954-1975', *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 2 (April 2005), pp.223-250.
5 See John Anderson, 'Religion, politics and international relations: The Catholic contribution to democratisation's 'third wave': altruism, hegemony or self-interest?', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Sept. 2007), pp. 383-399
6 Paul Kengor, 'Catholic ties helped Reagan triumph over USSR', *National Catholic Reporter*, 7/2/2004, vol. 40, no. 33, p. 22.

its presuppositions. The picture, however, is too big for its frame. American militarism is not purely driven by domestic interests, or the grand ideas of limited men – it is also drawn into the global realities of which it is necessarily part. As Harold James points out, it is 'the rules of international order which create the politics of empire'.[7] In our current setting, the rule of internationalism are not Wilsonian – global realities make isolation and the sort of pragmatic solutions such as those proposed by Bacevich unworkable over the longer term. The nation state, and its unchallenged civil religion, itself must be changed. Moreover, a framework adequate to the task is still in formation – but at the very least, a book such as this needs to overcome its simplistic empiricism and engage with contemporary theory (particularly globalisation theory). The book, for instance, hangs on cultural analysis in order to make the key point that:

In explaining the origins of the new American militarism, this account has not sought to assign or to impute blame. None of the protagonists in this story sat down after the none and consciously plotted to propagate diverse attitudes toward military power anymore than Andrew Carnegie or John D. Rockefeller plotted to despoil the 19th century American landscape. The clamour after Vietnam to rebuild the American arsenal and to restore American self-confidence, the celebration of soldierly values, the search for ways to make force more usable: all of these came about because groups of Americans thought that they glimpsed in the realm of military affairs the solution to vexing problems. The soldiers who sought to rehabilitate their profession, the intellectuals who feared that America might share the fate of one, the strategists wrestling with the implications of nuclear weapons, the conservative Christians appalled by the apparent collapse of traditional morality: none of these were acting out of motives that were inherently dishonourable. To the extent that we may find fault with the results of their efforts, the fault is more appropriately attributable to human fallibility than to malicious intent. [p. 207]

Of course this is not true -- the book does depict its protagonists in a poor light, and does try to judge from the perspective of history

7 Harold James, *The Roman Predicament: How the Rules of International Order Create the Politics of Empire*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.

when in fact the perspective of history is not available. In this case, it was necessary to turn to some other methodology -- but for this, the reader looks in vain. In short, the author participates in all the faults of his protagonists -- using commonsense in place of satisfactory explanations. The fact that the religious element is not properly tied into the overall argument, and depends rather on much of the scaremongering popular amongst the American intellectual elite with regard to the religious right, is a further indicator of the overall lack of a framework. Likewise, the assertion that it was the commitment to ever increasing abundance which bought the American public's compliance to the culture of militarisation, is shortsighted. These 'Fables of Abundance' are well rooted in the American 19th century, just as American militarism is rooted in the 18th century origins to which Bacevich ultimately appeals as a solution to his thematic problem.[8] The sort of methodology required here not only needs to take into account global realities, but the sort of methodological approach pioneered by Haydn White or even Robert Bellah in order to be able to identify the deep tropes and movements of American life. The advantages are patent. If the first war (1914-1945) was political (ie. around the concept of the nation state), and the second (the Cold War, 1945-1989) was economic, this third phase (or 'World War IV' as it is being touted in the US) could be explored in globalisation terms as 'cultural'. It is a war being fought internally, as well as externally, and explains the centrality of religion in ways which Bacevich does not do convincingly.

As noted at the outset of this review, visitors to America are readily confronted by the degree of militarisation on display. It makes sense that there should be some form of militar*ism* underpinning its development. Andrew Bacevich's book rehearses the major players, but does not have the equipment required to turn case studies into cultural analysis, and cultural analysis into a coherent theory. It is an interesting book – we can only assume that because of its contributions, it will give rise to better ones down the track.

---

8 Viz. T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of abundance: a cultural history of advertising in America,* New York: Basic Books, 1994.

Anthony Kelly*, Eschatology and Hope,* Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006.

Review by Kate Tennikoff

Anthony Kelly's Eschatology and Hope is, from start to finish, a well constructed, systematic, engaging, and delicately handled delineation of Christian hope. Covering traditional areas of eschatological reflection, such as death, heaven, and hell, Kelly also explores concepts such as purgatory and the Christian expression and experience of hope in and through the Eucharist.

In his initial chapter, Kelly rightly locates the question of hope within contemporary consciousness, speaking of the growing sense of powerlessness to affect change in the world. (p.2) From this position, having outlined the context within which he speaks, Kelly goes on to detail what hope is not. He stresses that hope is not mere optimism(p.5); rather, it is a "patient openness to what is and must be 'otherwise.'" (p.6) What is more, hope "is not a mere wishing for something more. It is a conduct of life. It is a mode of living and acting." (p.6) By defining hope in this manner, Kelly skilfully averts any charges of naïve, utopic daydreaming, as he anchors hope within the concrete reality of life experienced in the here and now, highlighting the necessary practical out-workings of such a disposition.

In a comparative exercise, exploring the disposition of a society devoid of hope, Kelly proceeds to describe such a community as lacking expectation for "anything beyond itself." (p.8) He goes on to note that such a culture "manifests the symptoms of depression" and exhibits "a generalized apathy and incapacity to act." (p.8) However, in taking the analogy further Kelly verges on, what I would perhaps consider, a somewhat simplistic and ultimately problematic description of depression itself. In his employment of the analogy, it did seem that Kelly would end up placing sole blame for an individual's depressive illness on an egoistic regard for self and a propensity for childish impatience. All of this to say, that I felt the use of this analogy might have been handled a bit more carefully.

On a more positive note, Kelly goes on, in chapter two, to link

the virtue of hope to the rich tradition of Christian reflection on eschatological matters. In doing so he is thoroughly ecumenical, relying on scholars from traditions beyond his own, including Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann, as well as key scholars within Catholicism such as Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. What is more, Kelly does not avoid touching on the real challenge of presenting Christian hope in dialogue with modern science. (p.37) Additionally, with similar courage, Kelly tackles head–on, the language of traditional Christian anthropology. He handles brilliantly the affirmation of the spiritual dimension of human existence without capitulating to a neo–Platonic dualism, which would want to set spirit and matter in antagonistic opposition. In laying this foundation, he sets the stage well for subsequent chapters that deal with the Paschal mystery, the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ and the renewal of all creation. In fact, Kelly's explication of the Paschal mystery was particularly helpful, as he worked 'backwards' from Jesus' resurrection to the empty tomb, then, from Holy Saturday to the crucifixion on 'Good Friday'. By discussing the Paschal mystery in this order, the centrality of the resurrection was brought to the fore – an accent that is too often overshadowed in other works by deliberations which focus primarily on the significance of the crucifixion. Whilst not denying the importance of Christ's death, the events at Calvary are viewed through the dual lenses of the resurrected Christ and God's saving purpose in sending his Son.

In subsequent chapters, as Kelly moves on to discuss the more morbid topics of 'death' and 'hell,' the reader has the advantage of having just contemplated the Paschal mystery, which provides them with their ultimate reference point. Whilst highlighting the need for humans to accept their own mortality, with a "genuine creaturely consciousness,"(p.100) Kelly takes care to explicate the biblical notion of death, described as the 'wages of sin.' He rightly notes that, "the seemingly natural fact of death… looms through life as 'the last enemy' (1 Cor 15:26)." (p.106) Further, he points out that the reason why death is even more threatening for the "self–assertive ego" is because it represents the end of everything that has any meaning to that person. Agreeing with Kelly's conclusions at this point, I did

wonder if his chapter on 'death' might have also benefited from some deliberation on the pain associated with the termination of earthly relationships, perhaps tying this idea into a relational understanding of the imago dei. Although Kelly does go on to mention the 'image of God' in humanity, he does not call attention to this possible connection.

In chapters six and seven, Kelly reflects on purgatory and hell, and, does so with a precision, authenticity and rigour that does not always accompany such dissertations. These chapters were, for me, inarguably the most insightful and helpful. The problem of evil was handled with great fortitude and the need for such evil to be judged was made absolutely clear. In making his conclusions Kelly also took great care to place all responsibility for any such judgment in the hands of God alone. Further, his reliance, in this section, on authors such as Dostoevsky and C.S Lewis only contributed to its brilliance.

In the latter half of the book, the foundations that Kelly had laid helped bring a coherence and clarity to the final topics of heaven, the eucharist and conversion. Clearly relying on Lonerganian categories, Kelly makes skilful use of them in structuring his discussion. His explanation of the beatific vision drew wisely from Bernard Lonergan's notion that 'knowing' is not the same as 'looking' and, in doing so, highlighted the incomprehensible depth of the ultimate 'face–to–face' experience with God. In clear Lonerganian style Kelly notes, in regards this face–to–face encounter, that "the more we know, the more we love; and the more we love, the more intimate is our knowing. Being–in–love is experienced as being–in–truth. Both the self and the other are disclosed in their fullest lived reality." (p.173) Furthermore, the care that Kelly takes in handling this topic is evident in his clarification that "Even though God is 'seen' and 'possessed' in the glory of heaven, God does not cease to be absolute and inexhaustible mystery." (p.173) That is to say, "to see God face to face is finally to see that God is the limitless, all–surpassing, and all–giving mystery of true life."(p.173) In all of this Kelly notes the cosmic scope of Christian hope and the ultimate embodiment of those in Christ, who will be raised 'imperishable.' This idea of what Kelly refers to as the 'transfiguration' of the current material realm, informs his discussion on the Eucharist, providing a refreshing take on the traditional notion

of transubstantiation. He writes, "In its eucharistic setting, hope can inhale the Spirit as the atmosphere of the new creation. It touches and handles the tokens of the transfigured creation. And, so, as hope eats, drinks, hears, touches, and tastes its 'real food and real drink' (Jn 6:55), it anticipates the festivity of the heavenly banquet."(p.198-199) From here, relying on Lonergan once again, Kelly shows that "Hope, then, lives at the intersection of two vectors, the gift of God from above and our spiritual searching from below." (p.207) Hope is not passively awaiting the return of Christ, but actively living in this hope, which will not disappoint.

Overall this book is well worth the read. Providing a broad overview on the subject of Christian hope, it handles each sub–topic with precision and does so, all the while, against the background of contemporary culture. Indeed, I would highly recommend this text, which is not only systematic but also thoroughly poetic. Throughout his work Kelly's writing style complements the sensitivity of his subject matter.

Barbara Roberts, *Not Under Bondage: Biblical Divorce for Abuse, Adultery & Desertion*, Ballarat: Maschil Press, 2008.

Review by David M. Parker

Barbara Roberts is a 'survivor' of domestic abuse. After her daughter was born the marriage gradually became abusive until Barbara left her husband in 1994. Following this time, her husband made a profession of faith and subsequently the marriage was reconciled. Even so, the abuse recurred, leading to a final separation in 1999 and a divorce a few years later. From this personal history the key concepts of her book "*Not Under Bondage: Biblical Divorce for Abuse, Adultery & Desertion" arose.* It aimed to distinguish between Biblically condemned 'treacherous divorce' and Biblically sanctioned 'disciplinary divorce' for the reasons of abuse, adultery and desertion whereupon the non-offending partner is Biblically allowed to remarry (p.7). The cover, a collage depicting an institutional corridor rotated by ninety degrees with an overlapping fuzzy duplicate and white cage, suggests a new way to viewing both the facts and proffered answers to this tragic reality. Five sections and eleven appendices are followed by a further reading list, bibliography, subject and scripture indices.

Part A carries the title 'Setting the scene,' and after an introduction surveying the confusing variegation of positions on divorce and remarriage, addresses the topics 'What is abuse?' and 'Biblical action steps.' Along with chapter 3 this provides an investigation into the 'Biblical legitimacy' of divorce for marital abuse. Although this is the special focus of the book, Roberts suggests those interested in the Bible's position on divorce and remarriage, such as friends, counsellors, pastors or theologians will also find help (p. 15). She, correctly in my opinion, notes that scripture is interpreted through the grid of our and society's experience, experience that until the "last decades of the twentieth century" did not appreciate the dynamics of marital abuse. The corrective she proposes is to consider "how Jesus' hearers would have understood his teachings" (p. 15). Plausible as this approach might appear, it is naïve and does not embrace the majority

of her scriptural investigation which ranges through both OT and Pauline texts (e.g., p. 17). I will have more to say on this below.

Chapter 1, 'What is abuse?' offers the definition, "an abuser abuses power in a relationship at the expense of the victim… domestic abuse can include emotional, social, financial and other types of mistreatment and may not even involve physical violence" (p. 18). These various forms of abuse are then examined. While the documentation, both American and Australian, concerning physical abuse is copious and from excellent resources, there is little if any for the remaining categories. It is this disparity which may cause some to fear that Roberts is opening "the floodgates of excuses for divorce" (back cover), but she counters;

> It is wrong to present the idea that we can cry "abuse" at any and every slight, but it is also wrong (*sic*) suggest that we have not been abused unless we have been beaten up…Fair-minded thinking will allow that many kinds of non-physical behavior, especially when persistent and repeated, can so undermine a person's well-being that the result is abuse… Some of the behaviors might not be abuse if they are isolated incidents, just committed carelessly, as part of the occasional ups and downs of personal interaction. However, when these behaviors demonstrate a pattern of conduct designed to obtain and maintain ungodly control over another, they become serious (p. 20).

Within Chapter 2, 'Biblical action steps', I specifically encountered some problems. Roberts recognises the problem of applying regulative principles from one domain (ecclesiastical) to another (spousal; p. 32) but does not elucidate how to overcome this. Her examination of Scripture on such things as discipline, defence and separation may be legitimate, once an ethical strategy is established.[1] But given the nature of the work, recourse to the mere similarity of idea or parallel word/idea betrays a failure to inform the implied reader of such intricacies. I find her guilty of the very thing she accuses those who misuse Heb 13:4 to sanction any sexual activity (p. 22). That is the neglect of the

---

1 E.g. Hays, Richard B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996).

specific contextual, sociological and rhetorical function of the texts. This concern is evident again in chapter 3 where in support of the idea that 1 Cor 7:15 could be rendered 'if the unbeliever caused the separation', Roberts invokes David's leaving Saul as a response to Saul's abuse. While English law correctly provided for 'Constructive Desertion,' parallel ideas or Puritan quotations (see p. 117-118) do not constitute argument. I believe she has a much stronger case in the distinction between 'treacherous' (without biblical grounds) and 'disciplinary' divorce with 1 Cor 7:15 appropriate to the latter (p. 39-40).

Further, Roberts' (e.g., p. 41) understanding of what constitutes a word study is naïve at best. A word's meaning is the net result of grammatical semantics, lexeme, and context,[2] not simply a dictionary (lexicon) entry, even if it is BDAG! But her focus on syneudokeo could yield the outcomes she argues for, yet this was not satisfactorily accomplished. If a thorough investigation of the biblical and Hellenistic use of this term, using Campbell's paradigm, was undertaken I am confident a case can be made for believer initiated divorce for the kinds of abuse Roberts' highlights. Roberts' (p. 44) appraisal of 1 Cor 7:16 (and thus 14) is dismissive and is in need of much greater attention if she is to defend her position. Chapter 4, 'May I remarry if I have suffered divorce?' however, is handled well and demonstrates both exegetical skill and sage counsel.

At chapter 5 Roberts believes she has established that 1 Cor 7:15 permits divorce for abuse and moves to address, in the remainder of the book, those arguments/texts ('giants') which would appear to challenge this position. However, I am not convinced she has successfully proved the claim. In fact, it is Instone-Brewer,[3] whom she quotes so frequently, who has convincingly provided the necessary argumentation. Given the case is made by Instone-Brewer I conclude her resolution of Rom 7:1-4, 1 Cor 7:39, Eph 5, Gen 2:24, 1 Tim

2 Campbell, Constantine R. *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 63.

3 Instone-Brewer, David. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). Also Instone-Brewer, David. *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church: Biblical Solutions for Pastoral Realities*. (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

3:2, 12, Titus 1:6 (Chapter 5), Exod 21:7-11, Deut 21:10-14, 24:1-4 (Chapter 6), are adequate and in some cases, excellent. Although where Instone-Brewer addresses the identical issue the result is more rigorous.

Chapter 7 addresses the issue of the marriage contract and concludes it is not unilateral and unconditional. Instead it is violated by the abuses described earlier and thus can be biblically terminated. This is followed by what I consider one of the best chapters in the book dealing with the wounding phrase 'God hates divorce' (Mal 2:16). Exampling good exegesis and surveying excellent scholarship (p. 127-131: Appendix 7) I concur that a better translation, correctly rendering the third person 'he' as the husband, is the ESV, 'For the man who hates and divorces, says the Lord, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts.' She (p. 75) correctly advises;

> God did not say "I hate divorce", nor did he condemn all divorce. We should therefore stop using the slogan "God hates divorce". If we still need a slogan, it would be better to say, "God hates treacherous divorce, but he does not hate disciplinary divorce."

Finally Roberts investigates the words of Jesus beginning with Mt 19. A quick survey of the footnotes reveals her indebtedness again to Instone-Brewer, and since I have already revealed my avid support for his rigorous scholarship, I find her conclusion that Jesus is not addressing divorce *per se*, but answering the implicit question put to him as to which of the Pharisaic schools (Hillel or Shammai) he advocated, as correct. Jesus agreed with both schools. That is with Exodus 21 which allowed divorce for abuse and neglect and, with correction (p. 86 and 132-135: Appendix 8), Jesus agreed with the Shammaite interpretation of Deut 24 which restricted *erwat daba*r to *porneia*, that is, sexual infidelity. Noting that Mt 19:9 is a 'pronouncement story,' she again correctly translates 'is guilty of adultery,' rather than emphasising the continuous 'is committing adultery,' thus avoiding needless speculation as to whether the new marriage should be terminated to end the adultery (p. 87-88). Chapters 10 and 11 display exemplary redactional exegetical sensitivity to the synoptic parallels of Mk and Lk with cognisance of the situation

specificity of each and their rhetorical intent.

A concluding chapter (12) summarises all the material presented with a final plea to teachers and speakers to change the damaging words 'God hates divorce;'

> It takes only eleven words to say "God hates treacherous divorce, but he does not hate disciplinary divorce." (p. 113)

While I have problems with some parts of Roberts' book, I am in agreement with the larger whole and the sage counsel this monograph presents. However, the title could be misleading. The majority of the book has to do with divorce and remarriage in general or *porneia* in particular, not, as the sub title reads, 'for Abuse, Adultery & Desertion.' Since she herself is a 'victim' of divorce by abuse, fellow victims would find in her an identifiable resonance. Rather than re-present the excellent works she cites, such as Adams (1980), Duty (1983), Murray (1961) and particularly Instone-Brewer (2002, 2003), I believe the Christian community would have benefited from a greater focus on the abuse issue. Having said this, many who would never read such scholars (as listed previously), will read Roberts and gain enormously from her faithful 'popularising' of their scholarship.

Roberts is obviously working with a (soft/complementarian) patriarchal model of marriage e.g., 'his headship' (p. 23, 25, 57, 160 n. 138) where she cites the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood with approval, and especially "God created woman with a submissive and responsive nature (Gen 2:18)…man's nature is to lead rather than to respond" Roberts 2008, 99). I am persuaded her work will be enhanced by a "complementarity without hierarchy" model.[4]

---

4 See, for example, Groothuis, Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill. *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without hierarchy*. Edited by Gordon D. Fee. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004).

Keith Warrington, Discovering Jesus in the New Testament.
Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009.

Review by Chris Baker

Keith Warrington has previously published a work on the Spirit in the NT, entitled, *Discovering the Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005). Warrington has now written a new volume which aims at producing a portrait of Jesus. *Discovering Jesus in the New Testament* is a bold attempt to articulate and arrange the complexities associated with a study of Jesus through a general survey of Christological and Soteriological themes identified in the NT. Warrington has set himself a difficult task yet addresses the topic in an admirable fashion by highlighting the converging themes that are common throughout the NT whilst also emphasising particular themes that emerge as unique within the perspectives of the NT authors. This methodology enables Warrington to navigate through the detailed and complex ideas produced by the NT witness to Christ as a whole by identifying and giving focus to such themes as they emerge in each particular NT book. Warrington's text is structured in a simple fashion with an introduction and postscript that frame short individual chapters devoted to each book of the NT as they appear in canonical form (including a brief summary chapter that helpfully ties the varied Pauline Christological themes together prior to discussing each individual letter). This structure is designed to make the text a source of reference for one interested in a particular NT book, rather than designed to be read from cover to cover or according to a thematic scheme, consequently many themes are repeated as they occur from context to context (e.g. the titles given to Jesus - 'Lord' and 'Son of God'). Whilst this may potentially frustrate a reader who broadly wishes to understand, for example, Paul's view of Christ as saviour in one self-contained section, it nonetheless enables Warrington to develop each theme as it emerges in its literary context.

Warrington's text is an excellent study for that which it aims to

achieve. It is deliberately aimed to be read by a more general readership since it is written in a non-complicated and engaging manner, is more a summary of ideas rather than a critical argument, contains many theological assumptions (e.g. deity of Christ, incarnation, bodily resurrection), and has only minimal instances of engagement with contemporary specialised Christological scholarship (noteworthy exclusions include R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* and J. Dunn's earlier *Christology in the Making*. Noteworthy inclusions include L. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ* and Warrington's Pentecostal peer G. Fee, *Pauline Christology*). On occasion, theological arguments appear to be unexplained (e.g. Warrington argues, in the context of Phil 2 and kenosis theology, that the Gospels 'do not reflect Jesus emptying himself of divinity,' p. 129, but how Mk 13:32 relates to this generalisation is not stated), important Christological parallels omitted (e.g. Wisdom language and ideas utilised in a Christological direction in 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17, Heb 1:1-4 and John 1:1-5), and no attention is given to the debate surrounding the development of Christological ideas in the NT itself (e.g. a comparison of the early Christology of the Pauline letters with the much later Gospel of John). But such detailed discussion is beyond the focus of the text itself or the implied readers. The prescribed readers of this text dictate how it should be read. In this regard this text shines as a useful introductory resource for those readers interested in accessing the broad parameters of Christological material in the NT without being weighed down by overtly detailed (and thus potentially distracting!) discussion. Notwithstanding this, readers can also trust the theological framework within its pages.

For such prescribed readers, it is a shame the text did not include a more developed synthesising chapter with the intent of drawing the complex Christological threads together in summary form. The work covers many themes across a wide variety of books, which themselves contain different literary genres. Such diverse material naturally must be drawn together, and the reader would have benefited from this process. Warrington's post-script, a mere page and a half, unfortunately leaves the reader without a more comprehensive sense of the unifying vision of who Jesus was, and still is, at the larger NT picture. Notwithstanding this, Warrington has produced a fresh survey

of Jesus as reflected in the writings of the NT. Discovering Jesus in the New Testament is an engaging study and will surely inspire a more profound understanding of Jesus in our contemporary context.

Mark Evans, *Open Up The Doors: Music in the Modern Church* (Studies in Popular Music)**. Equinox: London, 2006.**

Review by Tanya Riches

> Indescribable, uncontainable,
> You put the stars in the sky and you know them by name.
> You are amazing God!
> All powerful, unchangeable,
> Awestruck we fall to our knees and we humbly proclaim
> You are amazing God, you are amazing God.

Recently, a friend recounted to me a conversation regarding the popular worship song *Indescribable,* made famous by Chris Tomlin and subsequently in Louie Giglio's 'Indescribable Tour' around the USA, praising 'God the star-breather', aided with beautiful pictures of the universe. The question was posed to her "…Is this actually a Christian song, as opposed to Jewish? …Isn't it able to be sung from multiple faith perspectives?" Without really saying much on this song, as a songwriter, it highlights for me the inherent dangers and perhaps deficiencies of contemporary worship songwriting – the risk of communicating certain concepts while losing others. For example, Creator God is also the same God who chose to reveal Himself through the incarnational and saving work of Jesus Christ.

In his book *Open up the Doors: Music for the Modern Church,* Dr Mark Evans poses some excellent questions, "...to what extent should the congregation be aware of the music around them, that is, focused on those creating it and the quality or attributes of it? Similarly, how does the music team of a church distinguish their functionality, being simultaneously performer desirous of quality, consumer of worship, and, ideally, humble servant leader of the congregation?" (p.13). Seeking to bring God a worthy offering is central to the Christian faith, and nothing is more passionate than discussions about worship. This book is concerned with assisting in guiding these discussions, in the hope that through them we may be empowered to choose the best

possible vehicles for our praise.

Evans has taken a greatly needed step (through years of research, analysis and personal involvement in church music teams) in writing a book on contemporary 'congregational song'. But Evans' intention is not only to inform the Church, but also to present its music to the world, and in this, expose it to the academic analysis of 'secular' institutions. He states:

Christian music used to occupy a central place in the music culture of society. Now it has become a bottom feeder in the near endless escalation of sub-genres and popular music forms. It is time to expose congregational song to outside forces. Not only am I speaking of the performance and dissemination of contemporary congregational song; it is time that the music also opens itself to academic critique and rigour. Our music has a spiritual purpose, to be sure, but that does not excuse mediocrity... those of us involved in practicing modern church music should be ever seeking to enhance and craft those gifts bestowed upon us; that our art be the best we can offer to the congregation, and to God. In that sense we 'fling wide the heavenly gates, prepare the way of the risen Lord[1] (p.3).

Developed from his PhD thesis, and as the Head of Contemporary Music studies at Macquarie University, Evans' scholarly approach to worship music is encouraging. As a text-book for students interested in contemporary worship music, it is probably more useful than others such as Wilson – Dickson[2], particularly to Australians. The book synthesises both the theological and musical perspectives (suggesting the bounds of a theomusicology informed by both these disciplines). Setting worship music within the 'vernacular[3]', Evans provides a

1 Evan's title refers to a popular anthem by Christian rock band Delirious which encourages us to *'...Fling wide those heavenly gates /Prepare the way of the risen Lord /Open up the doors and let the music play /let the streets be filled with singing /Songs that bring new hope and songs that bring your joy /dancers who dance upon injustice."* from *Did You Feel The Mountains Tremble* © Martin Smith UK: Curious? Music (1995).

2 Wilson-Dickson, Andrew. *The History of Christian Music: An Illustrated Guide to All The Major Traditions of Music in Worship*. UK: Lion Publishing (2003). This book excludes Pentecostal music.

3 The 'Vernacular' is a genre of music "…largely generated at the local level and expresses the sense of immediate, lived experience, of individual and collective regional identity" (Johnson in Evans p.11)

biblical and historical background (ch 1 and 2) and covers topical issues such as hymns vs choruses (ch 3), the challenges of the production of worship music (ch 8) and creation of Christian celebrities or 'star texts' (ch 5). Given that "…for classically trained church musicians and traditional hymn lovers, Hillsong is like the proverbial elephant in the room apparent to all, but totally ignored or dismissed"[4], it is an excellent sign that Pentecostal music (and churches such as Hillsong, CCC and Planetshakers) are included in Evan's book, especially considering their influence on Australian worship.

The book is worth buying for its appendixes alone, charting the presence of words such as 'Lord', 'Jesus', 'Holy Spirit' and 'God' across eleven pages of contemporary songs. In the vein of Marva Dawn, Evans has worked to provide thematic categories for analysing contemporary song[5]. However his descriptive categories use language somewhat foreign to the average Pentecostal (his 'confessional songs' would probably translate as 'repentance songs', 'Spirit testimony' songs would probably form two different categories rather than one, and so on). Some more work needs to be done in this area, particularly to determine whether types such as 'masculine' and 'feminine' are helpful in understanding worship and its place in our communities.

Evans brings his unquestionable strength of musicology to the book, stating "…congregational song is not produced in isolation; it is a consequence of numerous factors: denominational, national, economic and cultural - to name but a few... dealing only with the notes, or solely the lyrics, is a disservice to the discipline and the researcher alike". Given that criticisms of contemporary music often separate the lyrics from the music, and/or fail to take into account the cultural meaning of certain songs, Evans' comments deserve commendation in explaining the psyche of the recording songwriter. Perhaps in educating the buying (or perhaps more appropriately, singing) public, we are also empowering them to make better song choices for their local church given the largely global nature of the music industry.

Complaint against musicians and songwriters providing the songs

---

4 C. Michael Hawn, *Congregational Singing from Down Under: Experiencing Hillsong's "Shout to the Lord". The Hymn* 57, no. 2 (Spring 2006) p1.

5 Dawn, Marva J., *A Royal Waste of Time: The Splendor of Worshipping God and Being Church for the World.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1999).

sung in church seems to be growing[6]. Every frustrated theologian attending a contemporary Pentecostal church is most probably burning to ask '… will my worship pastor, our church songwriters and publishing executives read this book?' Well, critique unwittingly places itself on the other side of the production process, but academics need to read this book and inform their critique of the songs delivered each Sunday, and perhaps that is more to the point. If theomusicology as a discipline improves, perhaps there will be less banal lyrics and unimaginative musicality in church. Every worshipper seeking more inspiring songs should be encouraged, but change may be a long journey rather than a short sprint.

---

6 Chant,Barry. *Retuning the Church*, The Messenger, March 2001, 39:1; June 2001, 39:2. Chant objects, "…Whereas until half a century ago, Christians sang songs in which there were disciplined rhythms and rhymes, and both melody and lyrics followed an obvious orderly pattern, today's rhythms are more likely to be disruptive and disjointed. Gaps occur unexpectedly between words which logically should flow together. Lyrics are untidy and undisciplined, too often without the hard polishing they need and too often loaded with cliches which have passed their use-by date. Theology may be sacrificed on the altar of experientialism — 'feeling' is what matters. So the pulsating rhythms throb through our beings, the compelling beat makes our bodies respond and the intellectual or biblical content only needs to be sufficient to justify calling what we are singing 'Christian'."(p6)

Denise Austin, *The Man from Little River - The Story of George McArdle* (Sydney: Ark House, 2009)

Notice of Publication

George McArdle was the bass player in the Little River Band (LRB), one of the most highly acclaimed rock music bands of all time and the first Australian group to make the top ten charts in the United States, achieving gold status. It is the only band of any nationality to have scored a top ten hit in the United States for six consecutive years. George came from a violent, abusive background and eventually he dived headlong into alcohol, fighting, theft, spiritualism and rock music. After playing with several minor bands, at the age of 21, he joined LRB and carved out his niche as one of the greatest bass players ever to come out of Australia. While a member of LRB, he underwent a profound spiritual conversion to Christianity. He then had to struggle through issues of baptism, new relationships, balancing religion and rock music and becoming a celebrity speaker on the church circuit. George left his successful music career, gave all his material riches away, and enrolled in Bible College. However, more challenges lay ahead when he married, became a pastor and then transitioned into post-ministry, post-celebrity life.

Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia* (The Netherlands: Brill, 2009)

Notice of Publication

The global growth of Pentecostal movements during the course of the twentieth century has been widely documented although, to date, there has been little written on their developing ecclesiology. After making the case for a concrete rather than idealised approach to ecclesiology, this book describes and analyses the transitions that have framed the ways in which Australian Pentecostals have understood church life and mission. From a loosely knit faith missions movement, to congregational free church structures, to the so-called apostolic models of mega-churches, Australian pentecostalism stands as a microcosmos of ecclesial developments that have occurred throughout the world. This book, therefore, provides a means of reflecting upon what has been gained and lost in the process of ecclesiological change.

Shane Clifton and Jacqueline Grey (eds), *Raising Women Leaders: Perspectives on Liberating Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Contexts* (Sydney: APS, 2009)

Notice of Publication

Pentecostal & charismatic churches should be at the vanguard of raising female leaders. They share a history grounded in the pioneering ministry of Spirited filled women. They have formal structures of ordination based in giftedness rather than gender. And they develop their theology out of a shared spiritual experience that overcomes the barriers of class, race & sex. Despite these potential forces for equality, women in many churches still experience sexism, & find it much harder than men to rise to senior positions of leadership. This book responds to this situation. It is driven by a passion to reclaim the tradition of empowering women. It seeks to provide the next generation with theological & practical tools that will help them follow the leading of the Spirit in the pursuit of their goals & dreams. Raising Women Leaders brings together the expertise of authors from various scholarly disciplines, exegetes, theologians, historians & philosophers, along with leadership theorists & practitioners, all from diverse denominational backgrounds. Together, they share the belief that the gospel facilitates liberation from oppression & encourages all people, women & men alike, to flourish in life & ministry.

Neil Ormerod and Shane Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2009)

Notice of Publication

Various social, political, economic and cultural commentators are presently arguing that human history is reaching a decisive stage in its development, a stage marked by increased interconnection between peoples, the compression of space and time, a sharing of ideas at unprecedented levels, global trade and finance, and so on. The shorthand word used to encompass these phenomena is "globalization". Some embrace it, others reject it, while still others dispute its existence. But with the abundance of literature and debate that it generates, the topic cannot be ignored. From its inception in the missionary mandate of Jesus (Matthew 28), Christianity has had a global dimension to its mission. Christianity is not a spectator to globalization but one of its agents, one of the forces at work which have extended interconnection between peoples, shared ideas and promoted social, political and cultural links.

The purpose of the present work is not to provide a complete response to the question of the mission of the church in a globalizing world, but to establish a framework within which answers may be sought. Grounded in the writings of Bernard Lonergan and Robert Doran, it develops a theology of history and addresses the churches response to the impact of globalization on vital, social, cultural, personal and religious values. The project brings together the perspectives of Catholicism and Pentecostalism, the former providing a depth of wisdom and tradition, the latter drawing on the insight of a newly emerging movement that has taken root in every continent with remarkable energy and enthusiasm.