

The Uniqueness of Spirit-Filled Preaching

Lee Roy Martin¹

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word (Acts 10:44).²

One Sunday after church, I ate lunch with a group of college students from various denominations and backgrounds, one of whom was my nephew who had gathered this group together. One young man asked another if he would be going to hear a certain preacher, and he replied, “No, I’m not going. I don’t really like his style of preaching. He’s too loud, he yells a lot, and I just don’t care for it.” His answer intrigued me so I inquired, “What kind of preaching do you like?” He explained that he enjoys listening to preachers who are more refined, and whose sermons are more like a lecture.

A lively discussion ensued, with several other students throwing in their comments. A young man from the Bahamas talked about the great preaching in his home country, and he shared how the people would take delight in sermons that lasted as much as one or two hours. He said that in the Bahamas they love exciting, passionate preaching.

When I left that little luncheon where these young people had shared their opinions about preaching, I felt that something had been missing in the conversation, but I could not put my finger on it. We had talked about preaching only in terms of externals, things like the length of the sermon and the style of delivery, but surely there is more to preaching than those things. As I drove home, I reflected upon Pentecostal preaching, and I wondered if we Pentecostals can claim anything distinctive in our preaching. As I began to think and pray about this concern, the Lord showed me that there is an element of Pentecostal preaching that we had omitted from our discussion that afternoon. At that moment, I felt something deep in my soul, a fire burning in my heart that exem-

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² All quotations of Scripture are from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

plifies Pentecostal preaching. The Spirit of the Lord came down in my car and the Spirit spoke to me these words from the book of Acts: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word” (Acts 10:44). I cried out “Hallelujah!” Yes, that is the answer. The distinctiveness of Pentecostal preaching is not a matter of style or manner of delivery. It is not a matter of sermon type, sermon length, or the number of Scriptures that are quoted. The distinctiveness of Pentecostal preaching is something deeper and more fundamental than externals. It is a hunger and thirst for the life-giving, transforming presence of God. The goal of Pentecostal preaching is that God Himself will come down in the midst of the congregation. Daniel Albrecht argues that for Pentecostals, the entire worship service “is aimed toward an *encounter*” with God.³ In his article on ‘Community and Worship’, Jerome Boone argues that the ‘single most important goal of any Pentecostal worship service is a personal encounter with the Spirit of God’.⁴ The Holy Spirit will break into the service, and something wonderful, something powerful, something apostolic will happen when the Word of God is preached. The goal of Spirit-filled preaching is that every hearer will be filled with the same Spirit that fills the preacher.

When I preached my first sermon in 1973, the ministry of Pentecostal preaching was clearcut and well-defined. Young preachers faced few variables and entertained few options. The most difficult choice in those days was whether we would emulate Ray H. Hughes, T. L. Lowery, or Paul L. Walker in our style of preaching. There were no YouTube videos to introduce the sermon, and there were no PowerPoint slides with which to highlight important points. Churches had no spotlights, sound effects, or projectors. Preachers rarely considered the possibility of using creative arts or objects as illustrations. Today, however, the choices are endless, and the opportunities for creative preaching are limited only by our imagination. Preaching is more challeng-

³ Daniel E. Albrecht, “Pentecostal Spirituality: Looking through the Lens of Ritual,” *Pneuma* 14.2 (1992): 110 (emphasis in the original).

⁴ R. Jerome Boone, “Community and Worship: The Key Components of Pentecostal Christian Formation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 137.

ing today than ever before, and we must take advantage of these new methods and approaches if we are to remain effective in the 21st century. It is hoped that this book will encourage every preacher to declare the gospel with creative enthusiasm, innovation, and integrity.

However, while we open our hearts and minds to new and exciting methods of preaching, we must also take care to remember the essence and heart of Pentecostal preaching. Our creative methods must not become a substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit; rather, we must pray and believe that the Holy Spirit will use every method for his glory. In this chapter, I suggest that *the goal of Pentecostal preaching is that the hearers will be transformed by the Holy Spirit*. No matter what preaching method we decide to use, we must keep the ultimate goal before our eyes, in our minds, and in our prayers.

As we examine Peter's sermon from Acts 10, we will discover four important characteristics of Pentecostal preaching. The first characteristic relates to the genesis or beginning of the sermon.

First, Pentecostal Preaching Is Unique in Origins.

In order for Pentecostal preaching to reach its goal of divine encounter and transformation, *the sermon must be birthed in prayer*. According to Acts 10, Peter went up to the housetop about noon time. Why did he go up on the housetop? Was he reading his Bible commentaries? Was he surfing the internet for illustrations? Was he checking the news for current events? No, Peter went up to the housetop to pray. The preparation for a Pentecostal sermon is the prayer closet.

While study is necessary in building an effective sermon, and knowledge of the times is essential for making the sermon relevant, neither study nor insight can give birth to a Pentecostal sermon. In order to bring ourselves to the spiritual place where the Spirit will fall when we preach, we must get on top of the house and begin with prayer. The message must be born out of a heart of prayer, because when we are in prayer, we receive more than an exposition—we receive a burden from the Lord. When we are in prayer, we get more than just a sermon, we receive a message from God. In Pentecostal preaching, the sermon

is a prophetic message, a burden (Malachi 1:1). Pentecostal preaching is passionate, it is the release of the Word, which is like a fire shut up in our bones (Jeremiah 20:9). This burden cannot be obtained anyway except by prayer fasting, devotion, and times of testing.

But that is not my main point. Let me move on.

Second, Pentecostal Preaching is Unique in Its Content.

While Peter was on the housetop praying, God gave him some content for his sermon. It came in the form of a vision. God reached down and spoke to him. He saw

heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. (Act 10:11-16)

Peter knew that God had given him a vision, but he did not quite understand it. He had to think about it a lot, meditate on it, reflect on it, and his reflections resulted in a prophetic message from God.

While he was pondering the vision, three men arrived from the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. They requested that Peter come and speak to a group of people gathered at Cornelius' house. Later, as Peter preached the gospel to this assembly of prayerful Gentiles, he referred to his vision, explaining that God had revealed to him that he should call no one, not even a Gentile, "common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). A Pentecostal sermon begins where the prayers of the people (e.g., Cornelius), the vision of the preacher, and the purposes of God intersect.

Later on in his sermon, he expounded on what has become a classic verse for Pentecostals: "... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Act 10:38). Peter's preaching is an example

of sound Pentecostal theology. We believe that just as Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, so also we are anointed to preach deliverance to this world.

The heart of Pentecostal theology is the Five-fold Gospel. We believe that Jesus is our savior, sanctifier, Spirit-baptizer, and soon coming King, and we must preach accordingly. The preaching of this gospel of Christ is the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). People are hurting. They are facing unprecedented challenges. They need salvation. They need deliverance. They need healing. They need the power of the Holy Spirit for daily living, and they need hope for the future. It is the preaching of this Full Gospel that has transformed the Pentecostal movement from its small and humble beginnings into the greatest revival in Christian history. Pentecostals now number over 500 million worldwide.⁵ The phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism is a direct result of sound Pentecostal preaching and the life-changing effects of that preaching. Light weight, shallow sermons that only gloss over the hurts and put Band-aids on the wounds are not sufficient to change lives. A Pentecostal sermon will have Pentecostal content.

I encourage you to read good sermons—read as many as you have time to read. We should read the sermons of great preachers of the past and the present because “iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17), and we should adapt and use their material. However, we should not attempt to preach someone else’s message unless the Holy Spirit makes it our own. We must seek God for a Spirit-filled burden from the Lord.

Peter received a revelation from God, and that revealed word became his sermon at Cornelius’ house. A Pentecostal sermon should emerge from moments of revelation, and those revelations will exalt Christ and minister to people. At times we are tempted to preach other kinds of revelation—revelation of our intellect, our cleverness, and our ability to manipulate people. Revelations of our own gifts and abilities are not helpful and will not save the lost. We need more than a neatly arranged argument and exposition; we need a message from God. Pentecostal preaching will

⁵ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

speak of dreams and visions and testimonies and the acts of God and the power of God. If we preach Pentecostal sermons, people will hear from our hearts. They will feel our burden. They will feel our passion, because if we are excited about serving God, it will be evident in our preaching.

But that is not my main point. Let me move on.

Third, Pentecostal Preaching is Unique in Its Delivery.

To say that Pentecostal preaching is unique in its delivery does not mean that every preacher must utilize the same type of delivery. Every preacher must develop a style that matches his or her gifts, callings, and ministry context. Furthermore, if we are to be effective, we should modify our preaching style so that it is appropriate for the audience. We would not speak to children in the same manner that we speak to teenagers. We must learn how to communicate within our particular cultural context. Peter's sermon in Acts 10 is a good example of contextual preaching. His sermon in Cornelius' house was very different from his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, because he was addressing a different audience. Sometimes our context will include both church members and the unchurched (who know nothing about the Bible). Sometimes our context will include people not only from our own culture but also people from a variety of cultures and ethnic groups. On any given day our preaching context may include women and men, the young and the old, the educated and the illiterate, the poor and the rich. It is a colossal challenge to preach effectively to the diverse audience that faces us today.

Although Pentecostal preachers will adopt an infinite variety of individual styles, we can identify traits that are common to all Pentecostal preaching. These unique traits of Pentecostal preaching are generated by the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, Pentecostal preaching is unique in its delivery because *the sermon is delivered with passion*. The burden of the Lord will produce a passion. When we have a burden from the Lord, we will appeal to more than just the minds of our hearers—we will appeal to their hearts. We will appeal to the whole person. The entire person will be addressed in a Pentecostal sermon.

Pentecostal preaching is unique in its delivery because *the sermon will be preached with divine unction*. Too often we preach what is a weak excuse for a sermon, and then we justify ourselves and say, “I did my best.” However, our best is not what God wants. God never asked that we do our best. He asked us to pray, fast, and immerse ourselves in the Word of God until we are filled with the Holy Spirit and filled with the message that God wants us to proclaim. God does not ask for our ability, neither does he ask for our skillfulness. He wants to divinely enable us. He doesn’t want our best, he wants more than our best. He wants us to believe for the impossible. Paul admitted that we are not “sufficient of ourselves ... but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5). He also declared, “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). God wants more than our best.

Pentecostal preaching is unique in its delivery because *it includes the gifts of the Holy Spirit*. A Pentecostal preacher will preach with charismatic gifts, with words of wisdom and knowledge, with healings and miracles, and with discernment. After Jesus arose from the dead and commissioned his followers to spread the gospel, “they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20 KJV).

Those signs, wonders, and spiritual gifts are evident throughout the book of Acts. In Acts 2, the multitude was astounded when they witnessed the sign of tongues. They marveled and said, “...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” (Act 2:10). In Acts 3 and 4, it was the healing of the lame man that opened the door for Peter to preach to the crowd and see about 5,000 people converted. Even the Jewish authorities admitted reluctantly, “For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it” (Act 4:16). In Acts 5, “a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed” (Act 5:16). Afterwards, the apostles were thrown into prison, but that night an angel appeared miraculously and delivered them from prison (Acts 5:19). Many other examples from the book of Acts could be included here, but let con-

clude this point with the following summary statement: "... through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people" (Act 5:12).

When the crowds saw the boldness of Peter and the disciples, they realized that "they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The people also said of the Apostles, "Those who have turned the world upside down have come here" (Acts 17:6). Like the Apostles, a Pentecostal preacher may turn things upside down. Pentecostal preaching is not always smooth. Sometimes it can be a little harsh and rough around the edges, but it is the kind of preaching that will touch people's hearts.

Pentecostal preaching is unique in its delivery because *Pentecostal preaching is worship*. Both the preacher and the congregation worship God during the act of preaching. Jeremiah testified, "Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16); and David exclaimed, "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure" (Psalm 119:162). Pentecostal preaching is not a lecture in which the speaker is speaking only to the listeners and the listeners are hearing only the speaker. In a Pentecostal sermon, the preacher sees not only the people, but the preacher sees God also. The act of preaching is an act of worship, in which the preacher stands in God's holy presence, with one eye on God and the other eye on the congregation, with one foot on earth and the other foot in heaven, with one hand reaching up to God and the other hand stretched out to the people. The people also worship—they look both to the preacher and to God as they yield to the Holy Spirit.⁶ God Almighty participates in the service as well. He is looking down, and saying, "Amen, amen."

This is Pentecostal preaching. The delivery is a worship experience.

But that is not my main point. Let me move on.

Fourth, Pentecostal Preaching is Unique in Its Expectation.

What do we expect in good preaching? Most of us would be quite satisfied with a sermon that achieves the Three I's (informative, interesting, and inspirational), the three C's (captivating, charming, creative), the three R's (rich, real, and relevant), the three P's

⁶ See Boone, "Community and Worship," 129-42.

(purposeful, productive, and profound), the three M's (meaningful, masterful, motivational), or the three E's (engaging, entertaining, and eloquent). Let us read about Peter's sermon from a new translation that I call the CRV, the Contemporary Religion Version. It says,

While Peter preached, the people sat quietly, occasionally laughing at his subtle humor and jotting down his clever points and closely following the printed outline. When he finished, they all affirmed that they would put into practice the relevant principles that had been expounded so insightfully in his excellent sermon. They shook his hand and they said they had enjoyed his sermon immensely. Peter, after he had collected his offering, congratulated himself on a job well done. And he and a group of friends went out to Olive Garden for lunch. They discussed how far the Church had progressed in these last few years. By Monday morning they had forgotten the excellent sermon, except for the jokes, and once again they fought the same demons they had wrestled with the week before. The clever sermon had not delivered them from depression, anger, fear, hatred, lust, self-righteousness, pride, envy, or strife.

This tongue-in-cheek version of Peter's preaching is not meant to offend those of us who take notes or those who eat at Olive Garden. It is meant to critique our low expectations. Too often we are satisfied with sermons that are entertaining, informative, and inspirational, but Peter's sermon accomplished much more. His sermon produced changed lives. Let us go back and review what the Bible tells us about Peter's preaching. Peter opened his mouth and proclaimed:

The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ ... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him ... To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And ...

they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. (Act 10:36-46)

While Peter preached the word, the Holy Spirit fell on all those that heard the word! The Holy Spirit interrupted Peter's sermon!

To say that the Holy Spirit *fell* on them suggests suddenness and forcefulness. Without warning and without planning the Holy Spirit descended upon the people in a miraculous way. We cannot schedule the moving of the Holy Spirit, but we can pray for it and expect it. I have heard someone say that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman, but here the Spirit moved in with violence. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will knock us down (Revelation 1:17). Sometimes he will lift us up on our feet (Ezekiel 3:12). Sometimes he will fall upon us (Ezekiel 11:5). Sometimes he will unsettle us and shake us and we will feel an overpowering presence of God, an awesome display of the power of God (Isaiah 6).

Suddenly, without warning, the Holy Spirit falls and we forget who we are, because we see who God is. We forget where we are, because God has said, "Come up here" (Revelation 4:1). We forget what time it is, because we are "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10). We forget about the circumstances all around us, because like Isaiah we begin to see that the whole earth is full of the glory of God (Isaiah 6:3).

The longing for God's presence is described repeatedly in early Pentecostal literature. For example, Alice Flower writes, "All I seemed to sense was a deep craving for the overflowing of His love in my heart. At that moment it seemed I wanted Jesus more than anything in all the world."⁷ Reflecting on her passion for God, Zelma E. Argue recalls, "my whole heart seemed to just one big vacuum craving and crying for God."⁸ Chris Green insists that 'Pentecostal spirituality is nothing if not a *personal* engage-

⁷ Alice Reynolds Flower, "My Pentecost," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 20 (Winter 1997-98): 17-20; excerpted from her *Grace for Grace: Some Highlights of God's Grace in the Daily Life of the Flower Family* (Springfield, MO: privately published, 1961).

⁸ Cited by Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, "Pentecost in My Soul": *Explorations in the Meaning of Pentecostal Experience in the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1989), 159.

ment' with God.⁹ Rebecca Jaichandran and B. D. Madhav agree: "the Pentecostal is not satisfied until he or she has had an experience with God ... A person is not satisfied by hearing about someone else's experience with God; they must experience God themselves."¹⁰

Yes, this is my main point. This is what makes Pentecostal preaching unique. This is what makes it distinct from all other preaching. We should feel free to utilize any style of delivery; we should feel the liberty to preach with a manuscript or without one; and we should use the latest technology. All of these methods are vital to 21st-century communication. However, our effectiveness will be judged by the transformation of our listeners, and that transformation can be accomplished only by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

As Pentecostals, we expect that God will transform our lives during the worship service in a way that cannot be achieved through sermons that address only the mind. God is alive and active, and he will come down in our midst. We read in Hebrew 4:12 that God's word is "living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword." God spoke through Isaiah the prophet saying, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). From Azusa Street until now, Pentecostals everywhere have insisted upon the present reality of God's presence to save, sanctify, fill with the Holy Spirit, heal, and reign as coming king.¹¹

We have a right to expect that God will move when we preach His Word. Pentecostal theologian Keith Warrington writes, "Two pertinent words when referring to Pentecostal spirituality are 'expectancy' and 'encounter'. Pentecostals expect to encounter God.

⁹ Chris E.W. Green, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of the Lord's Supper: Foretasting the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012), 289 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁰ Rebecca Jaichandran and B. D. Madhav, "Pentecostal Spirituality in a Postmodern World," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6.1 (2003), 55.

¹¹ *The Apostolic Faith* 1.1 (Sept. 1906), p. 1 and *passim*. Writing in the first issue of *Pneuma*, William MacDonald, "Temple Theology," *Pneuma* 1.1 (Spring 1979), insists, "Unless we dare claim that Christianity was fossilized in the first century, we must contend that the Spirit is still speaking to the churches" (48). Cf. Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006), 132.

It undergirds much of their worship and theology and may even be identified as another way of defining worship.”¹² The Gospel of Mark tells us that when the disciples “went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). Paul the apostle explained we are ministers “not of the letter, but of the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:6). Of his own preaching, he testified saying, “my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Reading these powerful texts from Scripture makes me want more than a relevant sermon; I want a revolution. I want more than motivation; I want transformation. I want empowering. I want the prophetic. I expect to see people saved, delivered, and healed. I expect that God will be in the midst of his Church.

I must admit that I have preached some dead sermons where nothing amazing happened, but I still expect God to honor his Word. No matter how badly we fail, we should pick ourselves up and go back to our prayer closet. If we will be faithful to pray and fast, God will surprise us with revival. We cannot even begin to imagine what God can do. God can change lives right in the midst of our preaching.

Pentecostal preaching is unique in its expectations. We encounter God, and this encounter will often include the manifestation of spiritual gifts and the worshipers will experience ‘the Spirit as transformational power’.¹³ Thus we expect that when we preach and prophesy, the dead bones will to rise up again (Ezekiel 37). We believe that when we preach, we will hear a sound from heaven, like a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house (Acts 2). When we begin to preach the burden of the Lord, the demons will run for cover, and the Devil himself will look for the nearest exit. Every time we step into the pulpit to preach, we

¹² Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 219. Cf. Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (JPTSUP, 17; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 226, 38-39.

¹³ Boone, “Community and Worship,” 138.

should expect to see “the Lord high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1). We should expect that the heavens will open and we will see visions of God (Ezekiel 1:1). When we say to the sick, “Arise, take up your bed” (John 5:8), we should expect them to rise up. When we say to the afflicted, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you” (Acts 3:6), we should expect them to receive from God. The Lord has anointed us to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent us to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18). We should trust that, every time we get in the pulpit, the Lord God of Israel is walking in the midst of the camp to deliver us (Deuteronomy 23:14). Every time we preach, we should anticipate the fulfillment of God’s promise: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). Every time we preach we should believe that that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). We should anticipate that the hungry will be filled, and thirsty will be satisfied. We should be confident in God’s Word that says, “I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring” (Isaiah 44:3).

When we preach, we must expect sick people to be healed, burdens to be lifted, sins to be forgiven, and lives to be changed. Let us expect God to be glorified. Let us expect weeping, mourning, shouting, praising, and people pouring out their souls before God. Let us expect the fire to come down and consume us as we have laid ourselves on the altar of sacrifice (1 Kings 18:38). We must expect it to happen. We must expect the walls of doubt and fear to crumble (Joshua 6:20). We must expect our sons and our daughters to prophesy (Acts 2:17). We must expect to see God’s power and glory in the sanctuary (Psalm 63:2).¹⁴ This is what we should expect in Pentecostal preaching.

¹⁴ See Lee Roy Martin, “Longing for God: Psalm 63 and Pentecostal Spirituality”, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22.1 (April 2013), 54-76.

Conclusion

In a recent article, pastor Johnathan Alvarado elaborates on the distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal worship. He writes, ‘Spirit-filled worship is marked and characterized by a vivid awareness of the presence of God and the activity of the Holy Spirit within the lives of the saints and within the context of the worship experience’.¹⁵ If we cease to anticipate the outpouring of God’s Spirit, we will shake ourselves one day like Samson, and we will not even realize that the Lord has departed from us. We must not model ourselves after anything less than the example of the apostles. We must not become entertainers who continually try to outdo one another. Hungry souls need more than entertainment. They do not need to be pacified. They do not need to be petted and placated. They do not need an experience of gratification and ecstasy. What they need is intimacy with God and with one another in the house of God. What they need is a refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19). With God’s help, our preaching can open the door to that refreshing. Let it be said of us, “While they were preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the Word!”

¹⁵ Johnathan E. Alvarado, “Worship in the Spirit: Pentecostal Perspectives on Liturgical Theology and Praxis,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21.1 (2012), 143.