

Pentecostal Hermeneutics – Worth a Second Look?

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Pentecostals have sometimes puzzled and occasionally disappointed other evangelicals, not least in relation to how they have handled the Bible. The purpose of this article is to offer some discussion of evangelical observations concerning Pentecostal appropriation of Scripture. In particular, some of the specific criticisms that have been made by the broader evangelical world will be considered, and a response offered. The concern of this article will be the sorts of hermeneutics which are employed by the Pentecostal ‘in the pew’. The subject of academic Pentecostal hermeneutics has been much discussed in the scholarly literature during the 1990’s.¹ For a survey of some key issues and trends, see Veli-Matti Karkkainen’s article, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Making: On the Way From Fundamentalism to Postmodernism”.²

The article’s title uses the term ‘Pentecostal Hermeneutics’. It would be wrong to assume, though, that there is one just hermeneutical approach common to all Pentecostals, or that Pentecostals typically use hermeneutics which are unique to them. There are, rather, tendencies which are common among Pentecostals. This is often due to a common experience of the Spirit, and to relatively uniform doctrines of the Spirit and the Bible. It has, though, also been affected by other factors, such as relatively similar social and educational backgrounds among Pentecostals.

The article will consider the ways that evangelical Christians have viewed Pentecostal hermeneutics one at a time, in no particular order. Some of the criticisms, such as the first, have partly arisen from within Pentecostalism, but for the main part, they have come from without.

Pentecostals Have No Developed Hermeneutics

Gordon Fee, himself a Pentecostal, has written of his fellow Pentecostals,

Their attitude towards Scripture regularly has included a general disregard for scientific exegesis and carefully thought-out hermeneutics. In fact, hermeneutics has simply not been a Pentecostal thing. Scripture is the Word of God and is to be obeyed. In place of scientific hermeneutics there developed a kind of pragmatic hermeneutics – obey what should be taken literally; spiritualise, allegorise, or devotionalize the rest.³

¹ Particularly in *Pneuma* and *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*.

² *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 18 (1998), 76-115.

³ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 85-86. This material was actually published much earlier, in slightly different form, in 1976. He maintains his criticism of this hermeneutic in his recent *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 8, though without specific reference to Pentecostals as the culprits.

In somewhat similar vein is the complaint that Pentecostals merely ‘proof-text’. They have, it is claimed, no regard for context. MacArthur lists four proof texts that, in his opinion, Pentecostals and charismatics commonly misinterpret, largely through their ignorance of context. They are: Matthew 12:22-31; Hebrews 13:8; Mark 16:17-18; 1 Peter 2:24.⁴

In response, it must first be recognised that ‘proof-texting’ is an easy trap for any Christian to fall into. Whether Pentecostals have been any more guilty of this over the years than any other Christian group would probably be impossible to ascertain. It would nevertheless be easy to parade a list of Pentecostal blunders of this type – such must be admitted. However, while it is wrong to claim that Pentecostals have never indulged in using proof-texts, does Pentecostal doctrine stand or fall on these texts, and this use of them, alone? Or is it in fact possible to offer an apologetic for Pentecostal beliefs that stands on more rigorous exegesis of important passages? There are plenty of worthy Bible exegetes who have decided the latter.

In more general terms, whether or not criticisms of simplistic naivety are true of Pentecostals alone, they probably are fair, at least of some sections of the Pentecostal community. A greater proportion of Pentecostals than of non-Pentecostals, over the twentieth century as a whole, came from less educated backgrounds, and Pentecostal church leaders did not traditionally have the access to academic training that was available in other Protestant denominations.⁵ This would explain a greater tendency to take a pragmatic and personal approach to the words of Scripture.

However, this must not be taken to imply that any rigorous application of ‘scientific hermeneutics’ suddenly sweeps away the foundation stones of Pentecostal doctrine. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, plenty of careful exegesis flowed from Pentecostal pens,⁶ rigorously defending its doctrine by means of thorough work at Masters and Doctorate level. Notable examples were the work of Roger Stronstad,⁷ James Shelton⁸ and Robert Menzies.⁹ So, while perhaps a greater proportion of Pentecostals than non-Pentecostals, including those engaging in preaching, are not ‘trained’ exegetes,

⁴ John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 97ff.

⁵ “The majority of currently serving clergy among classical Pentecostals have little or no formal theological education at even the undergraduate level.” (Timothy B. Cargal, “Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age”, *Pneuma* 15:2 (1993), 169. Cf. Jerry W. Shepperd, “Sociology of Pentecostalism”, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* eds. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1988), 794-799 e.g. 797: “poor rural residents, they experienced the uncomfortable reality that they were outsiders in the political process ... The leaders of the Pentecostal movement had a somewhat limited social and professional experience” – commenting on the social under-privilege of early American Pentecostals.

⁶ Cf. French L. Arrington, “Hermeneutics”, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 376-389, e.g. 379, where he writes of “...a new wave of Pentecostal scholarship that continues to affirm the prevailing Pentecostal doctrines but that provides a sounder hermeneutical footing for these doctrines...”

⁷ *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984).

⁸ *Mighty in Word and Deed* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991).

⁹ *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: SAP, 1994).

Pentecostalism is nevertheless able to point to its academic apologists, and in increasing numbers.¹⁰

Pentecostals put personal experience above Scripture

This is another observation that is often made, both within and beyond the evangelical world.¹¹ The criticism is first made at a broad level. So Carson suggests that many non-charismatics see charismatics¹² as having “succumbed to the modern love of ‘experience’, even at the expense of truth.”¹³ The charge is also levelled in the more focussed area of hermeneutics. Experience, it is argued, is allowed to carry too much weight in interpretation, and Scripture is then understood in the light of experience, rather than the other way around. “Pentecostals’ experience has preceded their hermeneutics. In a sense, the Pentecostal tends to exegete his or her experience.”¹⁴

While Pentecostals undoubtedly did seek to understand the objective data of the New Testament, especially Acts and 1 Corinthians, inevitably perhaps they read back into the Scriptures contemporary patterns of Evangelical and Holiness experience ... Pentecostal use of the term ‘baptism in the Spirit’ was ... an interpretation of contemporary experience in the light of the Scriptures rather than exegesis of the Scriptures illuminated by present circumstances.¹⁵

This is an argument which requires careful analysis. The position put forward by those who criticise this aspect of Pentecostal hermeneutics is that Scripture should be used to interpret experience, not experience to interpret Scripture. But the ‘either/or’ implied by the view is too simplistic. While not swallowing whole all the conclusions of Postmodernism, a thorough and honest hermeneutic has to accept that there is no such thing as totally objective and impersonal exegesis. We all come to Scripture, as to any other document or piece of communication, with presuppositions, or at least what can be called a pre-understanding, and those presuppositions are governed by the sum total of all our previous experience, which may of course include previous readings of that Scripture.¹⁶ It may also include religious experience that seems to the interpreter to mirror the religious experience being enjoyed or endured by the characters described in a Bible passage. No evangelicals, Pentecostal or non-Pentecostal, are going to deny that they have read the psalms and recognised that David has already felt about God what they now feel about God. David’s description of his experience ought to govern our analysis of how we feel, if we are to talk of Scripture being authoritative, but it is also impossible

¹⁰ Cf. Kenneth J. Archer: “Pentecostal scholarship has demonstrated its ability to defend its doctrinal distinction with scholarly sophistication.” (“Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect”, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 8 [1996], 73).

¹¹ Archer observes that this is a “common complaint against Pentecostals” (in “Pentecostal Hermeneutics”, 76). Stronstad writes that, “it is precisely here – Pentecostal experience and theology – that ... Pentecostals run afoul of their critics.” (in “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics”, *Paraclete*, Winter 1992, 15).

¹² Of course, not all charismatics are Pentecostals, at least in the sense of being *classical* Pentecostals, but all Pentecostals are charismatic in their pneumatology; so observations made about charismatics in general will apply to Pentecostals in particular.

¹³ D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit* (Grand Rapids Baker, 1987), 12.

¹⁴ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, 86.

¹⁵ Peter Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame* (Guildford: Eagle, 1994), 46.

¹⁶ On the role of experience in interpretation, cf., e.g., Stronstad, “Pentecostal Experience”, 16-26.

to deny that how we are feeling will colour, accurately or inaccurately, how we read David's words.

The example just used is suitably non-contentious, because it is common ground – the stuff of all our Christian lives. But what of a rarer religious experience? The Bible describes people who have seen angels. Most of us have not seen angels – but some claim they have. Whether their claims are true or they are self-deluded, it is obvious that they will come to a Bible passage about angels with their personal experience on board, and that experience will be one of the 'tools' with which they interpret the passage. They will not be able to prevent themselves.

Is this a harmful process? It probably will be if they are deluded, and have never seen an angel in their lives! Even if they have genuinely seen an angel it may be unhelpful, because they may assume that the biblical character's experience must have been identical to their own. However, if an awareness can prevail that there could be differences, then surely their experience may serve to enrich their Bible reading. Now let us take speaking in tongues as an example. Do Pentecostals merely, and invalidly, interpret Scripture in the light of their own tongues-speaking? Early Pentecostals spoke in tongues, understood from Acts 2 that these tongues were diverse human languages, and went overseas on Christian mission expecting to be able to speak, by a miracle, the language of the nation to which they travelled.¹⁷ They were sorely disappointed. Their tongues were not human languages, at least not the right ones! This is surely an example of unhelpful 'parallelising' between then and now. But has Pentecostalism been destroyed by this mistake? No. And the argument can be 'swung both ways'. Lack of experience must not determine biblical exegesis, either. A lack of experience of contemporary miracles is no good reason for reading into Scripture a doctrine that they were meant by God to die out with the apostles.¹⁸ Personal experience should never set the limits on what a person allows the Bible to mean, but neither can experience be left out of the equation. It will always colour our reading of Scripture, and can do so creatively and helpfully.

So, has personal experience aided or impeded Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture overall? Surely, if Pentecostal experience is experience of God,¹⁹ then the experience itself should only aid interpretation, for if Scripture is anything it is a record of people's experience of God. Therefore, it is inherently likely that there will be genuine parallels between what a Pentecostal has experienced and what he or she reads about in Scripture. As Turner puts it,

¹⁷ "When 'tongues speech' broke out at the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, virtually all involved thought it was the gift of foreign languages granted for evangelistic purposes..." Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts Then And Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 307.

¹⁸ A decreasing viewpoint but still held by, e.g., MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, and criticised helpfully by Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1994), ch.5., and by Stronstad, "Pentecostal Experience", *passim*.

¹⁹ Few, or none, would now side with the claims of some critics early in the twentieth century that Pentecostal spirituality was demonically inspired.

Pentecostalism has rightly pointed to the fact that contemporary ‘experiences’ of God may resonate with the biblical revelation in such a way as to open the believer’s eyes to aspects of that revelation to which more traditional and ‘rational’ forms of Christianity have often simply been blind.²⁰

What has been likely to impede accurate handling of the Bible will not have been religious experience as such, but Pentecostal naivety.

Pentecostals Teach Doctrine from Historical Books, Ignoring Didactic Works

This criticism relates to the well-known Pentecostal predilection for Luke-Acts as a biblical source for its more distinctive doctrines of the Spirit. Dayton offers us an example of this observation, referring to:

. . . a distinct hermeneutic, a distinctively Pentecostal manner of appropriating the Scriptures. In contrast to magisterial Protestantism, which tends to read the New Testament through Pauline eyes, Pentecostalism reads the rest of the New Testament through Lukan eyes, especially with the lenses provided by the book of Acts.²¹

Deere, too, makes reference to this point, “Above all, we cannot draw doctrine from the book of Acts – or so the argument goes. Doctrine for the church is to be drawn from the epistles of Paul.”²²

This argument, many agree, fails to do justice to the evident purpose with which Luke wrote his works (Lk. 1:1-4). Luke was a discerning historian, who wrote with a clear didactic and pastoral purpose. He has of course been increasingly recognised in recent years to be a theologian with a distinctive theological message to draw out from his historical works.²³ For instance, Acts contains not just an account of events that occurred in the life of the apostolic church, but also records the teaching of those apostles. To say that one cannot learn Christian doctrine from the sermons recorded in Acts is actually analogous to arguing that we cannot find doctrine in Christ’s teaching in the gospels!

To understand Pentecostals’ fondness for Acts, we must also note the relevance of its material to Christian initiation. This, after all, is the chief domain of Pentecostalism’s distinctive and controversial doctrines. As Pawson points out,²⁴ the gospels record events too early historically to be of direct relevance to Christian initiation, except by analogy or prediction. Similarly, the epistles, written entirely to people who were already believers, are so to speak too ‘late’. Only in Acts are there repeated records both of apostolic

²⁰ Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts Then and Now*, 358.

²¹ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson), 23. Cf. Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), 336.

²² Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, 111 (not, of course, expressing his own view. His response is to comment, “people who use this argument are actually employing an antisupernatural hermeneutic when they read the book of Acts.”).

²³ Note the recent works: *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, by Joel B. Green (Cambridge: CUP, 1995) and *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, edited by I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998).

²⁴ David Pawson, *The Normal Christian Birth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 13-15.

appeals for people to become Christians, and of a positive response to those appeals. Only in Acts is there repeated material about what was actually observed when people received the Spirit. Acts has a unique message to all those trying to understand the fulness of Christian initiation. Pentecostals are surely justified in appealing specifically to Acts to defend their distinctive views.

However, the argument against Pentecostals goes further. It is not just a criticism of the attempt to learn theology from historical books, but of the tendency, therefore, to ignore passages in the didactic books that seem to contradict their theological conclusions from Acts, so that they end up with a lop-sided theology, untrue to the New Testament as a whole. How fair is this criticism? Some Pentecostals at least do seem to have fallen into this trap.

A classic example is the embarrassment caused to certain Pentecostals by the apostle Paul's use of the phrase, 'baptised by/with one Spirit' at 1 Corinthians 12:13. Forgetting that Paul could simply have been using the phrase in a different way from how Luke used it, they impose Luke's meaning on Paul's text, and try to squeeze out of the verse a reference to post-conversion empowering, when a straightforward exegesis of Paul's words, viewed in their own context, would lead an 'independent observer' to conclude that Paul was using the phrase to refer to incorporation into Christ's body the church. This is, for Paul, a divine action (the construction is a 'divine passive'), of which the divinely chosen instrument for this unifying act is the Holy Spirit himself. He was simply not talking about 'baptism in the Spirit' as Pentecostals use the term.

However, by no means all Pentecostals make this mistake. Rather, they recognise the distinctive approaches and vocabulary of, say, Luke and Paul, allowing each to speak in his own right, and building up their New Testament theology from a fair synthesis of these distinctives.²⁵ And this does not stop them being Pentecostals! Interestingly, these same Pentecostals turn the argument against them on its head, and accuse some non-Pentecostals of ignoring Acts, and building up a theology of, say, Christian initiation from Paul's letters alone.²⁶ It is again an argument that swings both ways.

The Pentecostal Approach to the Bible Is Fundamentalist

This observation would also stand as a criticism in the minds of some evangelicals, who, like Wright, regard fundamentalist interpretation of the bible as "literalist and wooden".²⁷ But is it accurate? There is indeed a link between Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism, both historically and hermeneutically. Historically, Pentecostalism emerged when Fundamentalism was strong, and provided one of its roots. Pentecostalism was "the synthesis of late nineteenth century fundamentalist, dispensational and holiness theology."²⁸ Because much Fundamentalism was dispensationalist, and therefore cessationist, the World's Christian Fundamentals Association actually disfellowshipped

²⁵ E.g. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*.

²⁶ E.g. Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 9, commenting on the famous *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by James D. G. Dunn (London: SCM, 1970).

²⁷ Nigel Wright, *The Radical Evangelical: Seeking a Place to Stand* (London: SPCK, 1996), 9.

²⁸ Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, 1.

Pentecostals in 1928.²⁹ However, the hermeneutical legacy lived on in Pentecostalism, enabling the fact that “in many minds the Pentecostals were and continue to be falsely thought of as the hyperfundamentalists.”³⁰

It is perhaps true that the fundamentalist legacy has provided Pentecostalism with both a strength and a weakness hermeneutically. The weakness is dispensationalism. At first sight it seems astonishing that Pentecostals should accept a dispensationalist grid of reference through which to understand the Bible, when dispensationalists in general were denying that any miracles had occurred since the age of the apostles. However, the attractive feature of dispensationalist teaching was its advocacy of an immanent pretribulational premillennial return of Christ to His church. Dispensationalist thought shone through much Pentecostalist eschatology for much of the twentieth century, to the consternation of those who could not see the rightness of its system. However, this influence is less apparent at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and dispensationalism has itself evolved, drawing away from some of the extremes of its parent movement. For instance, dispensationalists ceased to hold, during the 1950’s and 1960’s, the unusual doctrine that for all eternity there would be two totally different classes of redeemed peoples, one group occupying heaven and the other group occupying the earth.³¹

On the other hand, what many Pentecostals would see as a strength in the legacy left by fundamentalism is an adherence to the doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of Scripture. While charismatics are for the most part evangelical, Pentecostals are almost without exception fundamentalist in this particular regard. Wright offers the following description of a fundamentalist approach to Scripture, gained with reference to the work of Gabriel Fackre:

Fundamentalist evangelicals hold unswervingly to ‘biblical inerrancy’, the belief that the biblical text, being inspired by God, participates in the quality of divine life to the extent that it is without ‘errors’ of any type. The Bible is not only theologically true therefore, but literally true at every point on whatever subject it deals with, whether nature, history, or doctrine. By mutual comparison, certain statements can be seen to be metaphorical in force, for instance, because ‘God is Spirit’ anthropomorphic references to God are not taken literally. But the Bible can never be subjected to criticism from points outside itself, for instance modern science or understandings of history, since this would be to surrender its authority to earthly authorities, thereby denying its supremacy.³²

This approach to understanding the nature of Scripture is valued by many Pentecostals, partly because it has encouraged them to retain doctrines they regard as basic to the gospel, while others in the broader evangelical community are reappraising and sometimes rejecting these beliefs. An example of this shift is in the various understandings now expressed of how God’s punishment of the impenitent will be experienced. Many evangelicals are questioning the traditional understanding of eternal

²⁹ H. Vinson Synan, “Fundamentalism”, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 326.

³⁰ Synan, “Fundamentalism”, 326-327.

³¹ Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, (Wheaton: Bridgepoint, 1993), ch.1, “The Extent of Varieties of Dispensationalism”.

³² Wright, *Radical Evangelical*, 6.

punishment, moving towards positions of conditional immortality and annihilationism. These arguments can be fought as much on philosophical as exegetical grounds: while certain texts might accurately be exegeted to indicate eternal torment, are they not products of a world view, and of a view of punishment, now regarded as erroneous? Pentecostals have been noticeably resistant to any moves to reappraise this doctrine. This resistance may partly be put down to their commitment to inerrancy.

But is Pentecostal exegesis too woodenly literal? Archer has observed:

The early Pentecostals' "operative principle of interpretation was the conviction that exegesis is best when it is as rigidly literal as credibility can stand." An extreme example of literal interpretation is to handle snakes and drink deadly poisons based on a literal reading of Mark 16.³³

Would this observation still hold true today? Two comments can be offered. The first is that whether one regards Pentecostal hermeneutics as 'too' literalist depends on the stance from which one is appraising it. It is of course true that many other evangelicals also regard literal interpretation highly. It is perhaps simply the case that there is a spectrum of Pentecostal handling of Scripture, from a highly literal approach to a more flexible one, as there is a similar spectrum discernible within the whole evangelical world. A second comment which appertains to this subject is that distinctive Pentecostal doctrines do not rest on a 'too literal' reading of certain texts. Those who have carefully criticised such doctrines³⁴ have not done so on the grounds that Pentecostals have taken their favourite texts too literally. Their arguments have lain elsewhere.

Pentecostals, by Appeal to the Spirit, Insulate Their Interpretations from Correction

MacArthur writes of people, including charismatics, who "misinterpret Scripture as they simply open their Bibles and 'let the Holy Spirit tell them what it means.' That attitude has led many into error..."³⁵ Many evangelicals would be unhappy (as indeed would many Pentecostals) with the approach, common in Pentecostal circles, that leads to statements such as, "Last night, I had a revelation from the Holy Spirit about what this passage means..." This approach often appeals to the human spirit as well as the divine Spirit. The spirit, or heart, is then pitched against the mind: "Don't try to reason with your head ... just accept it in your heart!"

Criticism of such approaches is of course well justified. However, concepts of 'pneumatic exegesis', variously understood, have occupied much scholarly Pentecostal debate. Many Pentecostals do not want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water' by accepting a reductionist hermeneutic which prioritises grammatico-historical exegesis to the detriment of immediate Spirit-enabled awareness of meaning.

³³ Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics", 65, quoting G. Wacker, "The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism".

³⁴ Note especially Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, and, more recently, Max Turner's *Power from on High* (Sheffield: SAP, 1996).

³⁵ MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 96.

Perhaps the most controversial scholarly advocate of pneumatic exegesis was Ervin, who offered of Scripture the much quoted, and criticised, opinion:

It is a word for which *there are no categories endemic to human understanding*. It is a word for which, in fact, there is no hermeneutic unless and until the divine *hermeneutes* (the Holy Spirit) mediates an understanding.³⁶

Although a few Pentecostals appear to have welcomed this analysis, Cargal seems to speak for more commentators when he dismisses this view of Scripture as both “docetic” and “naïve”.³⁷ Perhaps, to be fair, some criticism of Ervin has been too outspoken, for the safeguards which have been suggested as ways of making pneumatic exegesis workable were in fact given due attention by Ervin himself.

These safeguards are simply that pneumatic exegesis must not be ‘cut free’ from careful grammatico-historical exegesis, and that the pneumatic exegesis suggested by an individual must be offered to the believing community for evaluation.³⁸ In these ways, the Pentecostal determination to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit while reading the pages of the Bible can, it is to be hoped, be protected from the dangers implied above.

Conclusion

The history of Pentecostal hermeneutics contains instances of interpretation which would simply embarrass most of today’s adherents. However, as Pentecostalism has ‘grown up’, its maturing approaches to Scripture have not caused it to reject its distinctive doctrines. Of course, some individuals who have been brought up or been converted in a Pentecostal environment have later rejected certain Pentecostal tenets. Such is the flow of ‘traffic’ within the evangelical world – but it is two-way traffic. For the greater part, though, Pentecostalism continues to stride forward, unashamed of how it understands the Bible.

It is hoped that this article will have helped evangelicals to understand more of how Pentecostals approach Scripture, and may have helped those with criticisms to appreciate the reasons Pentecostals have for interpreting the Bible as they do.

³⁶ Howard M. Ervin, “Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option” *Pneuma* 3:2 (1981), 16. Italics his.

³⁷ Cargal, “Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy”, 173, n. 30, and 174.

³⁸ See Ervin’s article; cf. J. Chris Thomas, “Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 5 (1994), 41-56; Archer, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics” *passim*.