

SOURCES FOR THE INITIAL EVIDENCE DISCUSSION:
A BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

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INTRODUCTION

Initial Evidence was the distinctive theology that was basic to a revival movement. At least that is the culture that I caught growing up.¹ It is a doctrine discussed throughout the 20th century. There have been times that the issue caused discussion within a denomination. Usually a flow of writing followed. In the Assemblies of God there has been a steady production of tracts, pamphlets, and articles on initial evidence. It will be clear that this study focuses on North American sources, particularly on material from the Assemblies of God, U.S.A.

This article is divided into three parts. The first part is a discussion of basic sources when starting a study on initial evidence. A bibliographic essay makes up the second part focusing on works that are not mentioned in the various articles or books cited in part one. The last part lists works on initial evidence with some annotations. The goal is to provide the most complete list in print. It is not meant to index the subject of initial evidence in all periodical literature. *Paraclete*, *Enrichment*, *Pneuma*, *Advance*, and *Pulpit* are indexed in the bibliography.²

¹ I am not the only one that sees the impact and influence of this distinctive doctrine. For example see William Menzies "Frontiers in Theology: Issues at the Close of the First Pentecostal Century," in *Asian Issues on Pentecostalism: Theological Symposium for Asian Church Leaders, 18th Pentecostal World Conference, Seoul, Korea* (Seoul: International Theological Institute, 1998), pp. 15-30 (16-17) and Watson Mills, *Glossolalia: A Guide to the Research* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 7.

² There are over 50 articles on the "Baptism" in the *Pentecostal Evangel*. An index is available on-line.

SOURCES TO START A STUDY³

A few sources are vital at the start. These would include *Initial Evidence* edited by Gary McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986); the July 1998 issue of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*,⁴ the articles by Klaude Kendrick and Ben Aker on initial evidence in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); and J. Gordon Melton's *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 3rd ed. (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1989) and the sister set *Religious Creeds*. Another work that makes hard-to-find documents available is *Readings on the Doctrine of Initial Evidence* compiled by Gary B. McGee (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 1996).⁵

There are a few historical studies of initial evidence in these sources. Harold Hunter's "Aspects of Initial-Evidence Dogma" in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1:2 (July 1998) is an overview that reveals issues that are still being dealt with today. The bibliographic data is sound and there is good breadth to the article. McGee covers a short span with "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts" in *Initial Evidence*. There are plenty of references to documents most researchers can only wish to see or handle. Other historical studies in these works are on Parham and Seymour by Goff and Robeck respectively.

The theological approaches to initial evidence are more complex and harder to manage in an article or a book. Aker's article in *Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* blends various stances. Both *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (July 1998) issue and *Initial Evidence* by McGee provide a platform for a number of interpretations. Society of Pentecostal Studies (SPS) papers and *Pneuma* have done the same.

There has been a vigorous exchange of writing in the area of Pentecostal hermeneutics and how it relates to initial evidence. Gordon

³ Details of references mentioned in this section can be found in the bibliographical section.

⁴ These two are also indexed in the bibliography.

⁵ McGee concentrates the selections on articles written prior to 1925 which are by far the hardest to locate. The majority of the articles cover the Bosworth-Kerr debate. Parham, Barratt, McPherson, and other key figures are included. Two articles from the mid-1980s debate hermeneutical stances within Pentecostalism. Two from the 1990s finish the readings.

Fee, Robert Menzies, William Menzies, and Roger Stronstad are well published as to their understanding of hermeneutics and initial evidence. Harold Hunter, Howard Ervin, and James Dunn are important outside the Assemblies of God. *Pneuma* and *Paraclete* also have a series of articles on Pentecostal hermeneutics. This article cannot interact with all of them, but lists some of the articles in the bibliography.

J. Gordon Melton provides excellent tools in *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* and *American Religious Creeds*. They are based on the methodology of Arthur Piepkorn's *Profiles in Belief: Holiness and Pentecostal*, vol. 3 (New York: Harper & Row, 1979). Melton expanded the coverage and included more information on official publications and statistics. Piepkorn gave better bibliographies. *Religious Creeds* brings together the source documents of a multitude of Pentecostal groups that are variously called creeds or articles of faith.

THE ESSAY

There are many bibliographies on Pentecostalism and the Holy Spirit. Only one (Schandorff) uses "Initial Evidence" as a subheading for "Baptism in the Holy Spirit." Because of this, bibliographies are useful only in pointing to a large body of literature leaving the sorting into those dealing with initial evidence as a second step. The best sources for keeping current are the *SPS Newsletter* and ATLA's indexes. There has yet to be a bibliography specifically reflecting Pentecostal interests. Such specific indexing of all works about, by, or on a group would necessitate a specific heading like initial evidence.

Two works by Edwin Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement*, 2 vols. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1983) and *The Charismatic Movement* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1995), are vital to those studying any aspect of Pentecostalism and I send him my gratitude for such work. Use this index to find the dozens of works on glossolalia and baptism in the Holy Spirit. There are also works under the denominational headings that can be directly related to initial evidence. The first major attempt at a bibliography of the Holy Spirit is the work by Esther Schandorff, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1995). There are sub-divisions under "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" entitled "Evidence." Browsing through the 10 pages on the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" will be beneficial as will going to the "Subject Analysis Index" in the back of vol. 2 and running down some of

the denominational studies. One needs to exercise caution, however, when consulting the bibliographies by Watson Mills.

The interesting survey by David Reed, "From Movement to Institution" in *Summary of Proceedings* (Toronto: American Theological Library Association, 1991) is often overlooked. By dealing with people in three groups (crisis experience, second crisis experience, and second crisis experience accompanied by tongues) he provides an interesting glimpse into behavior claims that were frequent in early Pentecostal circles. Other surveys of tongue-speakers have been done without terminology that would equate it as easily with initial evidence.⁶

The Th.D thesis by Wessels in 1966, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit among the Assemblies of God* seems to be overlooked in the footnotes of the books on initial evidence. His study came at a time when the argument for and against initial evidence may have crystallized. Since that study is over 30 years old, it might be time for a replication to see if the trends he notes and the conclusions Poloma drew in 1988 continue to be a part of the Assembly of God clergy worldview.⁷

One of the tracts that is not discussed in any work above is Donald Gee's *Speaking in Tongues: The Initial Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, Evangel Tract No. 961). This tract was also published in Canada and probably in Great Britain in the 1930s. Gee uses manifestation and evidence throughout and sign is used only once. Gee uses a classical Pentecostal hermeneutic when defending the doctrine. John R. Rice's *Speaking in Tongues* (Wheaton, IL: Sword of the Lord, n.d.) devoted a chapter entitled "Tongues Not the Bible Evidence" to refuting Gee's tract. In some ways reading these two tracts is a microcosm of the Pentecostal/non-Pentecostal monologue that still shows up occasionally, but was the rule until the early 1960s.

An example of oversimplification that can occur in this debate of initial evidence is the tract *The Baptism of the Spirit* by A. W. Kortkamp in "What the Bible Says About..." series put out by Gospel Publishing

⁶ For example Nancy Fields, *Pentecostal Charismatic Experiences* (Houston, TX: McGwinn, 1985) provides loads of data without the coherence of Reed.

⁷ Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1988), and also Roland Wessels, *The Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit among the Assemblies of God* (Berkeley, CA: Pacific School of Religion, 1966). It should be noted that the journal *Paraclete* started in this milieu of the crystalization and the beginnings of the Charismatic movement as well as the beginnings of a new generation of Pentecostals.

House. Even the title shows that the Assemblies of God had not learned from earlier experience that baptism *in, with* or *Spirit Baptism* was much more correct than baptism *of*.⁸

There are regular treatments of initial evidence in the curriculum of the Assemblies of God. The Teacher's Manuals entitled *Fundamentals of the Faith, Our Faith and Fellowship*, and *Holy Spirit* contain lessons or expansions of the shorter tracts and statements of the Assemblies of God. One lesson is entitled "Initial Evidence of the Baptism" from Frank M. Boyd's *Holy Spirit*. None are as thorough as Donald Gee's analysis. The latest addition to this official group of literature is a pamphlet written by Richard Dresselhaus with a title that fills the front page called *The Assemblies of God, Our Distinctive Doctrine: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

An important aspect of the early debate on the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the understanding that the Bible gives other names to the experience besides "the baptism." Many non-Pentecostals were brought into Pentecost when they were challenged by the biblical phrases like the "promise of the Father." One of P. C. Nelson's early writings that stayed in print for decades was *The Baptism that Christ Gives*. He closes with "you will receive just as they did, and have the same evidence." The influence of such tracts is hard to determine.⁹ They can still be found in the tract racks of Assemblies of God churches and in Bible schools around the world.

The Assemblies of God produced its official position in many formats, and so did its ministers. Some examples include *Be Filled with the Spirit* by C. M. Ward (Springfield, MO: Revivaltime, 1975); *Filled with the Spirit: What the Scriptures say about the Pentecostal Baptism* by Robert Cunningham (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1972); *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by Harold Horton (London: Assemblies of God Publishing House, n.d.); *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by Jimmy Swaggart (Baton Rouge, LA: Jimmy Swaggart Ministries, 1972); *The*

⁸ An example is Allan A. Swift's *The Spirit Within and Upon* (Green Lane, PA: Maranatha Park, n.d.), 31 pages all together. T. J. McCrossan argues a case I heard many times at Central Bible College in *Are All Christians Baptized with the Holy Ghost at Conversion?* (Seattle, WA: T. J. McCrossan, 1932). Of course, he leaves out tongues altogether and so does not discuss initial evidence, but he does state the *upon* argument. Using "baptism of" by Pentecostals is an on-going problem like the repeated articles on correct use of "Assemblies of God church".

⁹ My grandfather, Gerard John Flokstra, Sr., came into the Pentecostal experience after determining for himself that there was a baptism that Christ gives. He lost his Baptist pastorate in due course.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Speaking with God in the Unknown Tongue: What Is It? Is It for Everyone? What Is the Evidence? by Willard Cantelon (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1951; revised ed. Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1971); and *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Doctrine, the Experience, the Evidence* (various publishers and titles from 1939-1942) by P. C. Nelson.

These books followed the same format in dealing with the reception of the Spirit in Acts, followed by a discussion of the difference between fruit, gifts, and baptism. Then a warning that initial means at the beginning and that there should be on-going evidence of the Spirit. There is a universal pastoral and theological concern that gift might become more important than the Gift-Giver. The oral nature of Pentecostalism shines through these writings as various anecdotes, illustrations, analogies, and comparisons are applied to the arguments for initial evidence and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The healing evangelists in the fifties produced volumes of pamphlets. Many of these evangelists started in the Assemblies¹⁰ and for the most part, their theology of initial evidence shows their roots. Gordon Lindsay, A. A. Allen, Kenneth Hagin, Lester Sumrall, Kenneth Copeland, and others spent varying amounts of time as credential holders in the Assemblies of God.¹¹ These were very popular writers and their periodicals and pamphlets can be found in all parts of the globe. They seem to be ignored in most of the scholarly literature and in libraries. These writings were for the popular audience. And they were popular. Some titles were printed in the thousands and distributed wherever the mail went.

Overlapping this period was the productions of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International (FGBFI). Although the personal testimonies always speak of tongues, they do not promote the doctrine of initial evidence. Awareness of and publishing about the baptism in the Holy Spirit were hallmarks of the FGBFI. Twenty years later the same would hold true for Logos International publications that produced many titles on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. One of the most popular works was *The Holy Spirit and You* by Dennis and Rita Bennett (Plainfield, NJ:

¹⁰ See David Harrell, *All Things are Possible: The healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Loomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1975). He gives fairly good biographies of many of the "healing evangelists." For example, he does not mention that Lester Sumrall was with the Assemblies of God early in his life. The bibliographic essay (pp. 240-54) is complete.

¹¹ I list at least one pamphlet from each evangelist named in the bibliography.

Logos, 1971). A second work to reach the hundreds of thousands in print from this time period was Don Basham's *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*. Basham answers two questions on the evidence issue. One is pro and the other non-committal.

In the 1970s, classical Pentecostals were far enough removed from the strictures of denominational culture to rethink, review, and renew their stance on initial evidence.¹² There are a few articles in the SPS papers and *Pneuma* that are historical. Some of these are indexed in the bibliography portion of this article. Many of the histories of Pentecostalism or the Assemblies of God deal with some of the initial evidence controversies.¹³

The bibliography that follows is meant to provide a bridge from the past understanding of initial evidence to the present grappling with the same topic by pointing to articles in every decade of the 20th century. It is also meant to span scholarly writings and popular writings as both writers and readers are seeking biblical truths. Most of all it should make research on the topic a bit easier by providing author indexing to a portion of the works already produced on initial evidence.

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¹² Doug Oss points to Anthony Palma as the person that one re-thinking. See his article in *Enrichment*. Margaret Poloma contributes the re-stating to the maturing aspects of the denomination. Certainly, the transitions of the life of the denomination have caused a greater reflection on the distinctives and purposes of the denomination by a new generation. This is reflected in the flurry of writings on initial evidence and Pentecostal hermeneutics. There have also been a number of writings dealing with the beginnings of Pentecostalism. There has also been and some revisioning of the early history to the point of claiming that certain events are in reality myths.

¹³ Two bibliographic essays that are becoming dated, but would point to many historical works on Pentecostalism are Cecil Robeck's and David Faupel's *Guide to the Study of the American Pentecostal Movement*. Another short introduction to Pentecostal history is a chapter in *Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: A Guide to the Sources* (New York: Garland, 1990) by Edith Blumhofer and Joel A. Carpenter.

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