

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CONTEXTUALIZATION<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is characterized by adaptability to different cultures: it is a “religion made to travel,” to quote Harvey Cox.<sup>2</sup> But despite this observation little has been done to analyse this process of adaptation. Much research on missiology in recent decades has been done in the area of contextualization which encompasses this process of adaption, but little of this has been applied to the Pentecostal experience and no distinctively Pentecostal contribution has been made to the debate. The aim of this article is to outline some contributions that Pentecostal theology can make to the task of contextualization, focused on an understanding of the Holy Spirit.

It is now widely recognized that the Christian faith is always culturally mediated. It can only be expressed in terms of culture, and has been done so in a variety of ways during the history of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> For

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a paper presented to the Anglican Charismatic Theological Seminar, Nottingham, July 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 102. This is further studied in a recent collection of papers edited by Murray W. Dempster, Bryon D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999). For the remainder of this article I will use the term “Pentecostal” to include “Charismatic” in line with W. J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See the examination of six phases of Christian history, Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), pp. 16-25. Also Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 137-63. One definition of culture given by C. Geertz is, “A set

many centuries, however, it has been assumed that there was predominately one orthodox expression of faith, even if different groups held to different understandings of what was orthodox. It was not until the nineteenth century that the influence of culture on theology was recognized, and even later in the twentieth century that the influence was examined in detail.<sup>4</sup> The key to greater debate has been the move towards independence seen by many Third World countries through the last century. Given the rise of Pentecostalism over the same century, it is surprising that their experience and reflections have not been drawn into the debate in a significant way. The term *contextualization* first appeared in the 1970s in the context of theological education and since then it has become a blanket term for a variety of theological models. Different people prefer different terms but I prefer to follow Bosch and keep the general term “contextualization” for the task of bringing together Christian faith and contemporary culture. Bosch divides contextualization into liberation and inculturation models although the distinction is not explored in this paper.<sup>5</sup>

The role of the Spirit has received limited treatment in the literature on contextualization. It is not mentioned in the summaries of Bosch or Kirk.<sup>6</sup> For Schreiter the role of the Holy Spirit in the task of contextualization is not defined, but appears to be one of a background worker of grace in the church: “One cannot speak of a community developing a local theology without its being filled with the Spirit and working under the power of the gospel.”<sup>7</sup> Bevans mentions the links between the Spirit and life in the African spiritual world understanding in reviewing an example of an anthropological model of contextualization. He also mentions briefly an inward revelation of the Spirit contributing to

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of symbols, stories, myths and norms for conduct that orient a society or group cognitively, affectively and behaviourally to the world in which it lives,” quoted in Shorter, *Toward a Theology*, p. 5. There are other definitions, but this understanding is what is assumed in this article.

<sup>4</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), pp. 422-23.

<sup>5</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 432-57.

<sup>6</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 432-57; Andrew J. Kirk, *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: DLT, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York: Orbis, 1985), p. 24.

transcendental models.<sup>8</sup> But the Spirit is not seen as a central issue in contextualization.

This article starts by drawing on Pentecostal missiology to understand how contextualization is generally understood to work within that tradition. My own particular experience is rooted within the Anglican Charismatic tradition and so I outline some developments from this tradition. These observations are then brought together to suggest distinctively Pentecostal contributions to the contextualization debate. In particular I want to stress the need to see the Spirit as essentially the contextualizing Spirit.

## 2. Pentecostal Contributions to Contextualization

Pentecostal missiology is inspired by a literal understanding of the scriptures with McClung arguing that an emphasis on “Scripture-Spirit” as the basis for developing a mission theology.<sup>9</sup> Hence the dynamic work of the Spirit within the church takes primacy over cultural concerns. One of the first and most influential Pentecostals to articulate a mission theology, Melvin Hodges, focused on indigenous church principles. His emphasis was on gospel and the Spirit: “There is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church. The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another.”<sup>10</sup> This is a precursor to Pomerville’s “spirit translation” model of contextualization in which there is an unchanged gospel combined with the dynamics of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that produces in individual believers “unusual zeal and power” that causes them to testify to Christ, provides leadership to the church and enables the church to grow.<sup>11</sup> For

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis, 1992), pp. 54-57, 99.

<sup>9</sup> L. Grant McClung, Jr., “‘Try to Get People Saved’: Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 30-51 (38-40); L. Grant McClung, Jr., “Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives on a Missiology for the Twenty-First Century,” *Pneuma* 16 (Spring 1994), pp. 11-21 (13). See also the approach taken by Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, p. 132.

Hodges, the focus of the Spirit is within the church, while directing the church outwards in testimony.

This outward dynamic is clearly related to an eschatological urgency that characterizes Pentecostal mission. McClung considers the missiology of William Seymour, the early founder of Pentecostalism,<sup>12</sup> as centred on “eschatology-experience-evangelism.”<sup>13</sup> Early Pentecostal eschatology led to an understanding of history whereby the church was being restored through a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, experienced by the Pentecostal movement, prior to the return of Christ.<sup>14</sup> The church is forced outwards into the world by the Spirit so that people might believe in Christ and the end come.<sup>15</sup> More recently the eschatological urgency has waned in places as Pentecostalism has moved from the poor to the middle-classes, but is still characteristic of the movement.<sup>16</sup>

As the Spirit drives ordinary church members outwards to share the gospel, so the gospel message becomes contextualized. This contextualization, in part, happens due to the emphasis on experience—linking personal experience and experience of God, the Spirit. This contextualization sometimes contrasts with the official church teaching. Macchia draws a distinction between the abstract doctrinal guides produced by early Pentecostal denominations and the contextual preaching. The “irregular” theology of Pentecostal preachers was creative and in touch with everyday experience in contrast to the more abstract doctrinal guides.<sup>17</sup> In the early days it was the experience of “speaking in tongues” that was seen as the key to contextualization, enabling witness in the language of people around the world.<sup>18</sup> Experience, enlightened

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<sup>12</sup> I am here not entering the debate over the relative merits of Seymour and Parham as founders of the movement, see Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, pp. 18-24.

<sup>13</sup> McClung, “‘Try to Get People Saved,’” p. 36. See also McClung, “Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives,” p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 36-41.

<sup>15</sup> Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 219-27.

<sup>16</sup> Frank D. Macchia, “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 8-29 (23).

<sup>17</sup> Macchia, “The Struggle for Global Witness,” pp. 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> Macchia, “The Struggle for Global Witness,” p. 17.

and empowered by the Spirit, is still at the heart of Pentecostal missiology.

The danger with this “irregular” contextualization is that although it can lead to a theology more in touch with people, it can also lead to cultural misunderstandings and insensitivity, as detailed by Anderson.<sup>19</sup> There is a temptation, in not analyzing culture, to assume that the culture of the preacher is without fault. Harvey Cox sees a tendency for Pentecostals to say “yes” to culture more than they say “no.”<sup>20</sup> However, perhaps the tendency is rather to not critique the Pentecostal community in terms of its cultural influences, and over-critique the “world” as unduly negative. This is being overcome through a deeper appreciation of social justice issues in Pentecostal missiology.<sup>21</sup> McGee suggests that the gift of prophecy has relevance “to the plight of the poor and [as a] witness against injustice in a world victimized by individual and corporate evils.”<sup>22</sup> However, it still seems the case that behind most approaches lies a negative view of culture whereby it brings only social problems to be challenged and overcome through the gospel. This view is backed up by a recent survey of European Pentecostal-Charismatic theologians who perceived a danger in mission of “uncritically importing specific aspects of the evangelizer’s culture to accomplish the task.”<sup>23</sup> What is still needed is a greater analysis of culture within the Pentecostal contextualization process.

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<sup>19</sup> Allan Anderson, “Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at ‘Home and Abroad’ in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 2:2 (2000), pp. 193-210.

<sup>20</sup> Harvey Cox, “Pentecostalism and Global Market Culture,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 386-96 (394-95).

<sup>21</sup> One example of an approach taking social involvement seriously is Douglas Peterson, “Missions in the Twenty-First Century: Toward a Methodology of Pentecostal Compassion,” *Transformation* 16:2 (1999), pp. 54-59.

<sup>22</sup> Gary B. McGee, “Pentecostal Missiology: Moving beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues,” *Pneuma* 16:2 (1994), pp. 275-81 (281).

<sup>23</sup> Jean-Daniel Plüss, “Globalization of Pentecostalism or Globalization of Individualism? A European Perspective,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 170-82 (175). See also McClung’s conclusion about the negative encroachment of culture on the church and its mission, McClung, “Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives,” p. 20.

### 3. Anglican Charismatic Contributions to Contextualization

Graham Cray, an Anglican Charismatic leader on contextualization issues is interested in the development of a theology of culture. He emphasizes the current cultural transition from a “modern” to “post-modern” worldview. In this he takes a neutral view of culture: “It is not that the emerging culture is more or less friendly to the Gospel, in different ways it is both.”<sup>24</sup> Picking out consumerism and tribalism he outlines possible Christian responses in mission.<sup>25</sup> This may seem to put the emphasis on culture, but for Cray there is a unalterable core of the gospel, a “seed” that is planted. We need to let the Holy Spirit grow this into something called the church.<sup>26</sup> “The challenge to the Church is how to express the eternal truth of the Christian faith in and through this culture.”<sup>27</sup> There will be many forms of church in a post-modern culture: “A plural society must have culturally plural expressions of Christian faith.”<sup>28</sup> Cray retains an emphasis on an unchanging gospel and on the work of the Spirit in enabling contextualization to happen. Cray represents a translation model of contextualization, but it is one that takes the culture more seriously than the Pentecostal approaches so far outlined.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast, Robert Warren starts with the need to contextualize what we understand by “gospel.” He suggests that to do so “involves the work of prophets, those who can discern the times and know how to speak into a culture.”<sup>30</sup> In contemporary western culture Warren suggests that the gospel is about “God’s way of being human.” From this understanding he develops a process to help construct new models of church life. Central to this process is a listening dialogue between church and culture in which

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<sup>24</sup> Graham Cray, *From Here to Where?—The Culture of the Nineties*, Board of Mission Occasional Paper 3 (London: Board of Mission, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Graham Cray, “New Churches for a New Millennium,” *Anglicans for Renewal* 78 (1999), pp. 15-18 (16-17).

<sup>26</sup> Cray, “New Churches for a New Millennium,” pp. 15-16.

<sup>27</sup> Cray, *From Here to Where?*, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Cray, *From Here to Where?*, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Cray particularly values Sanneh Lamin, *Translating the Message* (New York: Orbis, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> Robert Warren, *Being Human, Being Church* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), p. 108.

culture is allowed to critique the church as well as *vice versa*. Part of this listening may involve lamentation, “a form of prophetic insight that leads on to hope rooted in the coming of God’s kingdom.”<sup>31</sup> This listening gives rise to an “earthed spirituality” which is then expressed in every aspect of the church’s life, particularly in its worship, community, and mission. The listening dialogue needs to be maintained in order to sustain the life of a church.<sup>32</sup>

Ray Simpson, with others, is pioneering a Celtic spirituality from a Charismatic Evangelical perspective.<sup>33</sup> His approach is to identify key aspects of contemporary culture, alongside some biblical reflection, and see what issues these raise for Christians and the church. These issues are then addressed by drawing on insights from the Celtic tradition. I have suggested that Simpson’s understanding of gospel has been shaped by the Celtic tradition and contemporary culture and is that “healing is possible for individuals, communities and creation through Christ.”<sup>34</sup> Another approach that seeks to link personal experience of the Spirit with scriptural understanding is suggested by Mark Stibbe.<sup>35</sup> He focuses more on the “community of faith” than on the surrounding culture although he has written on what he sees as a western culture of “addiction” and the need for a Christian response.

In addition to recent Anglican contributions to Pentecostal missiology, two figures deserve mention even if they could not be categorized as strictly “Pentecostal”: Roland Allen and John V. Taylor. Roland Allen was a High Church Anglican missionary in China at the turn of last century. Writing in the 1910s about the state of mission in the world he concluded, “We have not yet succeeded in so planting [Christianity] in any heathen land that it has become indigenous.”<sup>36</sup> He saw an answer to this in the missionary methods of St Paul and in a

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<sup>31</sup> Warren, *Being Human*, pp. 110, 148.

<sup>32</sup> Warren, *Being Human*, p. 158.

<sup>33</sup> Ray Simpson, *Exploring Celtic Spirituality: Historic Roots for Our Future* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995).

<sup>34</sup> Andrew M. Lord, “Contextualization in Britain: Insights from a Celtic Spirituality” (MA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1999), p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Stibbe, “This Is That: Some Thoughts Concerning Charismatic Hermeneutics,” *Anvil* 15:3 (1998), pp. 181-94.

<sup>36</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1912), p. 141.

particular emphasis on the work of the Spirit. The doctrine of the Spirit given to all Christians challenges the temptation for missionaries to keep control and so prevent indigenization. The Spirit gives gifts to all people and guides and directs them in mission—we need to trust the Spirit in mission.<sup>37</sup> Allen's insights have been very influential in shaping a Pentecostal missiology.<sup>38</sup>

John V. Taylor, a former leader of the Church Mission Society, wrote an influential book in the 1970s on the Holy Spirit and mission, *The Go-Between God*. He contended that we cannot separate mission from the work of the Spirit: "The chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church is the Holy Spirit. He is the director of the whole enterprise. The mission consists of the things he is doing in the world."<sup>39</sup> Taylor recognized a divide in contemporary thought between an objective, abstract God and a God seen exclusively through experiences. This divide is similar in some ways to that in the contextualization debate between church and culture, revelation and experience. Taylor sees this divide overcome when the Holy Spirit becomes central to our thinking. He starts by examining our experience, not of life in general, but of times when we experience something beyond ourselves, the "numinous." He calls these moments of "annunciation" which might be linked with something otherwise quite everyday.<sup>40</sup> These experiences contain a sense of communion between people and God, and this communion is the Holy Spirit, the "go-between." The Holy Spirit links us with God and enables communication in both directions. He opens the eyes of people to Christ and so is essential to mission.<sup>41</sup> It is also the Spirit that opens our eyes to other people, enabling us to see them as they uniquely are, and this forms the basis for approaching the task of contextualization.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Allen, *Missionary Methods*, pp. 142-48.

<sup>38</sup> Gary B. McGee, "Missions, Overseas (North American)," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. S. M. Burgess, G. B. McGee, and P. H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 610-25.

<sup>39</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM, 1972), p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, pp. 8-19.

<sup>41</sup> Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Here I am developing Taylor's thoughts, *The Go-Between God*, p. 20. This is in line with his approach in, say, John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision* (London: SCM, 1963).

#### 4. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Contextualization

The task of contextualization involves spanning the gap between church and culture. Various methods and models for this task have been proposed. From the brief review above, it is clear that Pentecostal/Charismatic missiology can particularly contribute to the contextualization debate through its understanding in three areas: the work of the Holy Spirit, eschatology, and experience. The work of the Holy Spirit deserves further attention as this is usually neglected in discussions on contextualization, and because this also seems the key to broadening the Pentecostal appreciation of contextualization.

I want to briefly suggest that the key to any process of contextualization is an understanding of the Holy Spirit as *life giver*, *sender*, *revealer* and *gift-giver*. It has been noted that there is often a gap between theory and practice in contextualization. What I believe is needed is a greater understanding of and entrance into the motivation that comes from God.<sup>43</sup> Such motivation seems to spring naturally out of a Pentecostal outlook which, I want to suggest, is based on an understanding of the Holy Spirit as *life giver* and *sender*. I have already commented on how Pentecostal contextualization often happens without being planned, simply as an experience of the Spirit interacts with the life experience of those who share the gospel. Pentecostal reflection on this process has begun to develop in debate with Moltmann's *The Spirit of Life*.<sup>44</sup> Without exploring all the details here, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is involved in creation (Gen 1:2) and is the breath of life, *ruach*, giving and sustaining life (Job 33:4; John 6:63). The Nicene Creed states, the Spirit is the "Lord and giver of life." Hence creation and experience are places in which we can discover God at work by his Spirit. Culture relates to the interactions of experiences of different groups of people. An

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<sup>43</sup> Darrell L. Whiteman, "Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21:1 (January 1997), pp. 2-7.

<sup>44</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (London: SCM, 1992). The debate was initiated in the *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4. A further significant contribution to the debate is Frank D. Macchia, "The Spirit and Life: A Further Response to Jürgen Moltmann," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 5 (1994), pp. 121-27.

understanding of the Spirit as the “go-between” God indicates something of how God is involved in culture.

Yet in a fallen world, culture is also part of the “world” that goes against the gospel (2 Cor 4:4). Hence this deeper involvement in culture comes with a longing for things once more to be made whole, for redemption, and for re-creation. The Spirit is always moving creation towards God as revealed in Christ: creation is “oriented towards the Son.”<sup>45</sup> Creation and redemption need to be held together as we get involved in culture,<sup>46</sup> and this implies a present groaning in the Spirit because culture falls short of what is to come (Rom 8:18-25). A greater experience of the Spirit, therefore, forces us to a greater appreciation and involvement in culture. It also increases our longing to overcome cultural failings. This dynamic is essential to motivate the task of contextualization.

At the church end of the contextualization spectrum, Pentecost marked the inauguration of the church in the Spirit (Acts 2). The Spirit is involved with appointing leaders in the church (Acts 20:28) and sustains the life of the church by mediating the presence and gifts of God.<sup>47</sup> Yet the church is not static, but dynamically *sent* in mission (Acts 1:8): the church is “commissioned [by Spirit] to serve the kingdom in the world” and the “goal is world transformation.”<sup>48</sup> An experience of the Spirit both sustains the church in faith and yet drives it out in mission: a dynamic that reflects the more general dynamic of the Spirit in creation. Hence, the Spirit is involved in both sustaining culture and church, and yet also bringing them together in Christ. An experience of the Spirit will therefore naturally motivate the task of contextualization and is perhaps the missing link in many approaches to the task.

Given the motivation for contextualization, different approaches have been proposed as to how the task is undertaken. Bevans, for example, suggests that these approaches fall into one of five general models: translation, synthetic, praxis, transcendental, or anthropological. These models are differentiated by their closeness to either the church or

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<sup>45</sup> Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), p. 58.

<sup>46</sup> See the discussion in Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, pp. 49-58.

<sup>47</sup> See Pinnock’s development of a Spirit ecclesiology, *Flame of Love*, pp. 113-47.

<sup>48</sup> Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, pp. 142-43.

culture end of the contextualization spectrum.<sup>49</sup> At some point within each model, issues of church and culture are brought together and reflected upon in order to build a new contextualization. At this point it is important to bring an openness to the Spirit as *revealer*. It is the Spirit who speaks to us, reveals God to us, leads us into truth and guides us morally and in mission (John 14:26; Rev 2:7; Eph 1:17; John 16:13; Rom 8). The Spirit's leading should be viewed broadly to include spiritual gifts, for example, prophecy and visions (Luke 1:67; Acts 10:19). From within the Pentecostal tradition there appear three particular spiritual gifts that are relevant to contextualization: wisdom, prophecy, and tongues.<sup>50</sup> These need to be sought in prayer alongside the rational understandings of church and culture, and will be essential to a post-modern approach to contextualization.<sup>51</sup>

The gift of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8) helps us gain God's perspective on the issues we wrestle with, bringing rational insights from a divine source to add to our intellectual wisdom.<sup>52</sup> Stibbe suggests that the gift of wisdom also gives a revelation into God's secret, redemptive purposes in history, and it is vital to have such insight if our contextualization is to be in line with God's will.<sup>53</sup> Prophecy originates with the work of the Spirit in the church, but links the church with specific cultural and social situations. As Penny states, "The overarching context of Luke's presentation of the Spirit of prophecy is mission."<sup>54</sup> The church as a prophetic community should reveal Christ within particular cultures, and specific prophetic insights should direct the churches involvement in the world and its process of contextualization. Such prophetic insights

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<sup>49</sup> Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*.

<sup>50</sup> There may be others that are relevant, but I am restricting myself to these three here.

<sup>51</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1989), p. 43 notes the importance of "the Spirit" within the post-modern worldview. A more general correlation between Pentecostal and post-modern worldviews can be found in Jackie David Johns, "Pentecostalism and the Postmodern Worldview," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995), pp. 73-96.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Stibbe, *Know Your Spiritual Gifts* (London: Harper Collins, Marshall Pickering, 1997), pp. 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> Stibbe, *Know Your Spiritual Gifts*, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> John Penney, "The Testing of New Testament Prophecy," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10 (1997), pp. 35-84 (56).

include the lamentation and witness against injustice recognized by Warren and McGee.<sup>55</sup> Speaking in tongues is a vehicle for individual worship and, through interpretation, a way God speaks into situations. In addition Bertone has suggested a link between tongues and the groaning of creation as found in Romans 8.<sup>56</sup> Through tongues we can feel something of the pain in culture that is felt within God's heart, and sense something of the longing to overcome the evils in the world and bring wholeness in Christ. This can root our contextualization in the realities and emotions of life, and in the reality and emotion of the "crucified God."

The Spirit as *gift-giver* reminds us that the task of contextualization should never be limited to the "professionals." Contextualization will happen only when ordinary, Spirit-inspired Christians are enabled to grapple together with the issues before God. Pentecostalism has grown and become contextualized through the spreading of the gospel by lay people, often without much theological training.<sup>57</sup> The experience of such people needs to be captured in any approach to contextualization.

To encounter the Holy Spirit is to be driven deeper into an experience of culture, to be given a deeper awareness of God in Christ, and a longing and a gifting to bring these together. Revelation and guidance is given by the Spirit to enable this to happen, and this is the task of contextualization.

## 5. Conclusion

The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has spread dramatically around the world over the last century and is marked by its adaptability into a wide range of cultures. I have argued that this is a result of an emphasis on the Holy Spirit, who by nature forces contextualization to

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<sup>55</sup> McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology," p. 281; Warren, *Being Human*, p. 148.

<sup>56</sup> Gordon D. Fee, "Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 24-37. John A. Bertone, "The Function of the Spirit in the Dialectic between God's Soteriological Plan Enacted but Not Yet Culminated: Romans 8.1-27," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15 (1999), pp. 75-97.

<sup>57</sup> L. Grant McClung Jr., "Missiology," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pp. 607-609 (608).

happen—he can be seen as the *contextualizing Spirit*. I have outlined an understanding of the Spirit that illustrates the particular Pentecostal contribution to the contextualization debate as well as challenging Pentecostals to a greater involvement in this debate. May we commit ourselves in a deeper way to the working of the Spirit in order that the good news of Jesus may be better spread throughout the world.