

DAVID A. ROOZEN & JAMES R. NIEMAN, EDITORS

CHURCH, IDENTITY, AND CHANGE

THEOLOGY AND DENOMINATIONAL
STRUCTURES IN UNSETTLED TIMES

“More Than Evangelical”: The Challenge of the Evolving Identity of the Assemblies of God

Gary B. McGee

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CHURCH, IDENTITY, and CHANGE

*Theology and Denominational Structures
in Unsettled Times*

Edited by

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“More Than Evangelical”: The Challenge of the Evolving Identity of the Assemblies of God

Gary B. McGee

In the cauldron of doctrinal controversy at the sixth national gathering of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, in 1918, the delegates announced as their “distinctive testimony” that speaking in tongues represents the uniform “initial physical sign” of the postconversion experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. In so doing, they voiced the sentiments of the large majority of Pentecostals who had insisted since the inception of the Pentecostal movement at the turn of the twentieth century, that glossolalic utterance marked the inauguration of the Spirit-filled Christian life. Eventually this became known as the doctrine of “initial physical evidence,” or simply “initial evidence.”

Pentecostals saw themselves as an end-times movement raised up by God to evangelize the world before the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Forming new denominations, like the ones they had left or been forced out of, was the last thing on their minds. Cold ritual, the “Social Gospel,” and arid discussions on theological issues had no place on their agenda. A common goal to proclaim the good news in the power of the Spirit knit them together. But despite the idealized sense of unity that prevailed, quarrels over correct doctrine quickly divided them, revealing how seriously they considered scriptural teaching and authority. As early as 1906, they parted ways over the absolute requirement of tongues for Spirit baptism. Four years later, in 1910, the house again divided over the nature of sanctification. Then, in 1913, a major dispute arose over the biblical understanding of the Godhead. An excessive use of biblical literalism mixed with the Jesus-centered piety of the Holiness Movement prompted a march of events that climaxed in a division between trinitarian and “Jesus’ Name” or “Oneness” Pentecostals. Hardest hit by the controversy was the Assemblies of God.

In order to affix the stamp of historic Christian belief (especially that of the Trinity) on the public perception of its name, the General Council approved the Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1916, just two years after its incorporation. The statement pledges allegiance to orthodox teachings to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the organization and avoid the charge of heresy from the wider Christian community. It maps out common ground shared with other conservative Christians, while the teachings on Spirit baptism, the availability of the charismatic gifts in the contemporary life and mission of the church (1 Cor. 12:7-11), and divine healing (usually referred to by outside observers as “faith healing”) explain the distance between them.¹ Even though the council adopted the creedal declaration with reluctance, the times demanded a forthright exposition of doctrine.² Hopefully, the trinitarian statement would also limit the further antagonizing of evangelical Christians whose opinions about Pentecostals had been stridently negative.³

Like the larger Pentecostal movement, the Assemblies of God finds its heritage in the family photo album of evangelical revivalism and the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement. The frames include the Trinity, the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, the lostness of humankind, redemption through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, justification by faith, the resurrection of Christ, Spirit baptism as an event in the believer’s life subsequent to conversion, and the premillennial version of the “Blessed Hope.” With other Pentecostals, Assemblies of God believers summed up their unique be-

1. Largely drafted by Daniel W. Kerr, a former pastor with the Christian and Missionary Alliance who joined the Assemblies of God, it reveals an almost wholesale borrowing of Alliance teachings and reflects the influence of the latter on first-generation Assemblies of God leaders. Charles W. Nienkirchen analyzes this legacy in *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992). See also Russell P. Spittler, “Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of These Categories,” in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, ed. Karla Poewe (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 103-16.

2. The disclaimer in the original preface to the Statement of Fundamental Truths contradicts its actual creedal function and immediate application at the time for the credentialing of ministers: “This . . . is not intended as a creed for the Church, nor as a basis of fellowship among Christians, but only as a basis of unity for the ministry alone (i.e., that we all speak the same thing 1 Cor. 1:10; Acts 2:42). The human phraseology employed in such statement is not inspired nor contended for, but the truth set forth in such phraseology is held to be essential to a full Gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all truth in the Bible, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental matters”; Combined Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1914-1917, p. 12.

3. Grant A. Wacker, “Travail of a Broken Family: Radical Evangelical Responses to the Emergence of Pentecostalism in America, 1906-1916,” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), pp. 23-49.

liefs with the term “full gospel” (Jesus Christ as Savior, Healer, Baptizer [in the Holy Spirit], and Coming King), which highlighted salvation by grace, divine healing, Spirit baptism (with tongues), and the soon return of Jesus Christ.⁴

This christocentric orientation had characterized teachings in various wings of the Holiness and healing movements. Well before the close of the century, the popularity of Wesleyan Holiness and the Reformed revivalist “Higher Life” teachings had generated interest in the baptism and gifts of the Spirit. Wesleyan Holiness preachers told their hearers that a crisis experience of sanctification, the “second blessing,” would instantaneously eradicate their sinful dispositions and elevate them to a new plateau of Christian living. Higher Life advocates, sharing the notion of a second work of grace but avoiding the “sinless perfection” of the Wesleyans, preferred to look at it as “full consecration” that empowered them for evangelism.⁵ By the end of the century, both camps chose to use Pentecostal imagery from the New Testament to describe the event. Thus the experience of “sinless perfection” and “full consecration” constituted the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believed to be identical to that received by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). In this way Holiness and Higher Life believers — “radical evangelicals” — regarded themselves as “Pentecostal” in spirituality.⁶

Another formative influence came in the latter part of the century as radical evangelicals in the Protestant missions movement, whose worldview resounded with actions of the Spirit, longed for the restoration of apostolic power in “signs and wonders” (Acts 5:12) to expedite gospel proclamation. Given the slow pace of conversions overseas and the nearness of Christ’s return, they wondered how the Great Commission could be achieved in such a short time. Desirous of preaching upon arrival at their respective mission fields, they became frustrated when several years of language study were required before sufficient fluency could be attained. Beginning at least by the 1880s, some speculated that with mustering enough faith, God might enable them to “speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17 AV) in order to avoid the nuisance of language school.⁷

Building on his Wesleyan Holiness theology, eschatological speculation, and passion for world evangelization, Kansas preacher Charles F. Parham con-

4. For the historical and theological background of the term “full gospel,” see Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987), pp. 19-23.

5. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, pp. 87-113.

6. “Radical evangelicals” refers to Wesleyan Holiness and Higher Life (Reformed revivalist) believers; for a discussion of the term, see Wacker, “Travail,” pp. 25-26.

7. Gary B. McGee, “Short-Cut to Language Preparation? Radical Evangelicals, Missions, and the Gift of Tongues,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25 (July 2001): 118-20, 122-23.

ceived the doctrine of initial evidence in the fall of 1900 and deserves credit for making it the chief distinctive of classical Pentecostal faith.⁸ His aspirations began to be realized with a revival at his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, in January 1901 that marked the beginning of the Pentecostal movement. Along with the students, he testified to speaking in unlearned human languages through the agency of the Holy Spirit. To Parham and his sometime student William J. Seymour, the best-known leader of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California (1906-9), and other pioneers, glossolalia signaled the predicted "outpouring" of the Spirit at the close of human history (Joel 2:28-29), verified the reception of Spirit baptism, and provided linguistic expertise for God's elite band of end-times missionaries. Such supernatural enablement would make formal language study an anachronism. Parham contended that "if Balaam's mule could stop in the middle of the road and give the first preacher that went out for money a *bawling out* in Arabic [then] anybody today ought to be able to preach in any language of the world if they had horse sense enough to let God use their tongue and throat."⁹ As a writer in the *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), the voice of the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street, put it, "God is solving the missionary problem, sending out new-tongued missionaries on the apostolic faith line."¹⁰

Pentecostals lamented that tongues had virtually disappeared after the apostolic age, including the doctrine of initial evidence. Not until the turn of the century did believers rediscover and reinstate the doctrine. From their perspective this paralleled Martin Luther's recovery of justification by faith, John Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection, and the divine provision for physical healing as taught by such faith healers as Charles C. Cullis, John Alexander Dowie, A. J. Gordon, and A. B. Simpson.¹¹

Nevertheless, as early as 1906 some began to have reservations about the function of tongues for missions. Reports from missionaries proved to be disappointing in this respect. A period of theological reflection then began in which Pentecostals sought for a better biblical understanding of the role of tongues. Most came to recognize that speaking in tongues, though still consid-

8. James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), pp. 74-75.

9. Charles F. Parham, quoted in Sarah E. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham* (Baxter Springs, Kans.: Apostolic Faith Bible College, 1930), pp. 51-52.

10. *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), November 1906, p. 2, col. 4.

11. D. W. Kerr, "The Basis of Our Distinctive Testimony," *Pentecostal Evangel*, September 2, 1922, p. 4; cf. Charles Nienkirchen, "Conflicting Visions of the Past: The Prophetic Use of History in the Early American Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements," in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, pp. 120-25.

ered recognizable languages and intrinsic to Spirit baptism, represented worship and prayerful intercession in the Spirit (Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor. 14:2). For the most part they seemed to accept the transition in the meaning of tongues from preaching to prayer since on either reading — glossolalia for functioning effectively in a foreign language, or for spiritual worship — the notion of receiving languages denoted zeal and empowerment for evangelism.¹² Hence, Pentecostalism cannot be accurately interpreted apart from its mission ethos.

Accordingly, tongues speech, now principally comprehended as a mystical operation of the Holy Spirit, would reveal and exalt Christ in the heart of the seeker, and inspire a deeper Christ-centered life and witness. It would also make the believer receptive to the exercise of the charismatic gifts in worship and evangelism.¹³ According to Simon Chan, it serves as "an essential part of a coherent schema of spiritual development in which one experiences growing intimacy with God and holiness of life."¹⁴ Some considered the possibility that tongues might not follow in every instance of Spirit baptism and allowed for the possibility of exceptions.¹⁵ However, all attested to its importance for the Spirit-filled life.

More than anything else, therefore, the uniqueness of Pentecostal identity among radical evangelicals rested primarily on tongues.¹⁶ When the issue of the indispensability of tongues resurfaced in the Assemblies of God in 1918, the council had to clarify yet another doctrinal stance. But to whom was the resolu-

12. Gary B. McGee, "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts," in *Initial Evidence: Biblical and Historical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 96-118.

13. For contemporary expositions on baptism in the Holy Spirit by Assemblies of God scholars, see William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); Frank D. Macchia, "Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15 (spring 1993): 61-76; Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Irvine, Calif.: Regnum Books International, 1999), pp. 8-29. For a recent study by a Pentecostal Assemblies of God scholar whose books have been highly influential in the American Assemblies of God, see Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

14. Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 64.

15. For example, F. F. Bosworth, *Do All Speak with Tongues?* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., n.d.).

16. A theme stated clearly on the cover page of the first issue of the *Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), "Pentecost Has Come," September 1906, p. 1, col. 1; also R. E. Massey, "Tongues, the Bible Evidence; the Great Issue," *Cloud of Witnesses to Pentecost in India*, August 1909, pp. 5-6.

tion about “our distinctive testimony” largely aimed? The membership of the General Council was the first audience. The resolution also spoke implicitly to other Pentecostals who questioned or hesitated about the connection of tongues with Spirit baptism. If the Statement of Fundamental Truths had certified general theological integrity to outsiders, the “distinctive testimony,” though carrying less weight in the hierarchy of truths than the pronouncement on the Trinity, protected the foundation of Pentecostal spirituality for insiders.

Through the years the Assemblies of God has postured itself between the poles of evangelical respectability and its restorationist Pentecostal heritage.¹⁷ The current general superintendent, Thomas E. Trask, has accurately expressed the long-standing tension: “The Assemblies of God was raised up to be a Pentecostal voice. I have great respect and love for evangelical churches, but we are more than evangelical; we are Pentecostal!”¹⁸ It is this ideal of being “more than evangelical” that presents the greatest challenge to the denomination as it enters the twenty-first century.

Within three decades of its founding in 1914, the Assemblies of God began to align itself with conservative evangelicals by joining the National Association of Evangelicals and its affiliate agencies, leading to what Russell P. Spittler has called “the evangelicalization of the Assemblies of God.”¹⁹ “More than evangelical” also suggests that the process has in part diminished the “testimony” and other restorationist teachings, particularly through the widespread attraction of Reformed evangelical scholarship with its objections to distinctive Pentecostal beliefs. Nowhere has the impact been greater than on the doctrine of initial evidence.²⁰ While earlier Pentecostals could appeal to the hermeneutical under-

17. On the restorationist impulse in Assemblies of God history, see Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Lewis Wilson explores the limitations of this hypothesis in his review of *Restoring the Faith*, by Edith L. Blumhofer, *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17 (spring 1995): 119-22. For a perceptive essay on the evolution of Assemblies of God theology during its middle period, consult Douglas Jacobsen, “Knowing the Doctrines of Pentecostals: The Scholastic Theology of the Assemblies of God, 1930-55,” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, pp. 90-107.

18. Thomas E. Trask and David A. Womack, *Back to the Altar: A Call to Spiritual Awakening* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1994), p. 25.

19. Russell P. Spittler, “A Celebration of Sovereignty,” *Agora* 5 (summer 1981): 13-14; see also his “Maintaining Distinctives: The Future of Pentecostalism,” in *Pentecostals from the Inside Out*, ed. Harold B. Smith (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1990), pp. 121-34.

20. Menzies and Menzies, *Spirit and Power*, pp. 33-34. Del Tarr speaks of the “curse of Reformed theology” in “Transcendence, Immanence, and the Emerging Pentecostal Academy,” in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 209-17.

pinning of Wesleyan Holiness and Higher Life teachings that upheld Spirit baptism as an experience of grace subsequent to conversion, the popularity of this school of thought gradually declined. Most evangelical theologians today, revealing the influence of classical Reformed theology, hold that the gift of salvation and Spirit baptism are one and the same, and without the necessity of glossolalic utterance.

In another crucial development in the last half-century, the tenet of divine healing, the second most distinguishing belief of early Pentecostalism and the Assemblies of God in particular, underwent a transformation. With unprecedented advances in medical science, church members began to consult doctors and take medicines for their ailments. As a result, the original antimedical tone of the doctrine gave way to a holistic view of healing in many quarters, one that balanced prayer for the sick with the care of physicians and seemed to better answer lingering theological questions.²¹ A pivotal change also came when Pentecostals and evangelicals alike experienced social and economic lift after World War II. Accompanied by the inculturation of middle-class values, it led to steady erosion of eschatological expectancy.²²

Just as the last sixty years have seen the “evangelicalization” of the denomination, so a parallel “Pentecostalization” of evangelicals has occurred with many now praying for the sick, reporting the restoration of the “charismatic gifts” in their churches (1 Cor. 12:7-11), and adopting charismatic modes of worship.²³ At the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the previous boundaries between evangelicals and Pentecostals now blurred, innovative “evangelical/Pentecostal” models of worship and mission have emerged in the United States and many parts of the world, ones that affirm the charismatic dimension of spirituality in various ways but do not require tongues.²⁴ Notwithstanding, the insistence on glossolalia with baptism in the Holy Spirit remains the hallmark of Assemblies of God belief and practice, even though some pastors and congregations have moved in the direction of these new patterns.

21. “Divine Healing: An Integral Part of the Gospel,” in *Where We Stand* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1990), p. 53.

22. Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), pp. 140-55; also Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, pp. 242-60.

23. Tim Stafford, “Testing the Wine from John Wimber’s Vineyard,” *Christianity Today*, August 8, 1986, pp. 17-22; Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Nelson, 2001), pp. 349-80.

24. Corwin E. Smidt et al., “The Spirit-Filled Movements in Contemporary America: A Survey Perspective,” and Helen Lee Turner, “Pentecostal Currents in the SBC: Divine Intervention, Prophetic Preachers, and Charismatic Worship,” both in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, pp. 111-30 and 209-25 respectively.

For General Council leaders the resurgence of Pentecostal revival in the ranks, enhanced by promoting the “distinctive testimony” as the desirable norm for believers, holds the key to jump-starting church planting and evangelism on a large scale. In turn, it is hoped that this will restore and surpass the level of momentum in growth that the Assemblies of God once enjoyed on the American scene, especially in the sector of its dominant white constituency.²⁵ Not surprisingly the expression “revival is our survival” has become a top priority.²⁶ Indeed, as Margaret M. Poloma noted: “The Assemblies of God cannot be understood apart from the stress it has placed on religious experience available through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Spirit baptism, the tangible sign of which is a recipient’s ability to speak in tongues, brings with it a host of other paranormally accepted phenomena.” Such happenings (“miracles, divine healing, and prophetic abilities”) constitute “the best indicator of evangelistic activities that would facilitate church growth.”²⁷

Officials, pastors, and missionaries in the AG have traditionally centered their energies on “doing” rather than “theorizing.” This activism stems from a strong commitment to missions, inspired by an eschatology that views the approaching end of the age with a sense of great urgency. This combination has sown a strong pragmatism, at times even risking the peril of an unreflective activism.²⁸ Along with the experiential nature of Pentecostal spirituality, these seeds have also inadvertently yielded a lingering anti-intellectualism and occasional fears of the academic study of the denomination’s history and theology.²⁹ Still, substantial funding for the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and other institutions of higher education, as well as the preservation of historical materials at the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, both located in Springfield, Missouri, with the latter now the foremost repository for such resources in North America, exhibit important and enduring commitments to Pentecostal scholarship. Certainly at no time in its pilgrimage has the Assemblies of God

25. George O. Wood, “From the General Secretary,” in “Assemblies of God Minister” (Exclusive Release to Assemblies of God Ministers), July 1, 2000, pp. 7-8.

26. Trask and Womack, *Back to the Altar*, p. 102.

27. Poloma, *Assemblies of God*, p. 232.

28. Grant Wacker analyzes the primitive and pragmatic impulses of Pentecostalism in *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 10-14.

29. James K. Bridges, “Assemblies of God Schools and Scholars for the Twenty-First Century,” *Enrichment*, fall 1999, pp. 94-97; Bridges, “The Full Consummation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” *Enrichment*, fall 2000, pp. 92-95; cf. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “An Emerging Magisterium? The Case of the Assemblies of God,” in *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Russell P. Spittler*, ed. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, forthcoming).

had greater need of its theologians, historians, missiologists, and educational specialists to interpret the spiritual legacy to the next generation. Yet, perhaps due to its activist focus and reluctance to relate to the larger church world, it is ironic that the Assemblies of God with its considerable size and multifarious programs remains an enigma to many outsiders.

The two chapters that follow offer discerning sociological, historical, and theological insights into the complex mosaic of the Assemblies of God. Poloma bases her organizational case study on an extensive survey of ministers since they, more than any other personnel, communicate the spiritual vision to the faithful and connect the congregations to the judicatories that hold the organization together. Her work analyzes changes currently under way that have resulted from the tension between charisma (Pentecostal spirituality) and increasing institutionalization. It explores social, political, and spiritual forces that have molded the denomination as it presently exists.

The evidence indicates that the core identity, the supernatural worldview that has undergirded Pentecostalism and differentiated it most from evangelicalism, now stands in jeopardy. In spite of the determined efforts of leaders to encourage believers to seek for Spirit baptism and for ministers to reinforce its value from their pulpits, an inconsistency exists in the grass roots between what is verbally espoused and practiced. A variety of opinions over the validity of certain revival movements, both within and without the AG, expose reservations about phenomena that have historically characterized Pentecostal spirituality. Likewise, the declining frequency of glossolalic tongues and interpretations, as well as prophetic utterances in church services, coupled with the failure to see spectacular demonstrations of divine power (e.g., physical healings), depicts a shifting landscape.

In his theological essay, William W. Menzies investigates the dynamics behind the spiritual locomotion of the Assemblies of God. He looks at the typical worship pattern — especially its participatory nature, highlighted by experiential encounter with the Holy Spirit in praise and singing, preaching, prayer for the hurting, and manifestations of the charismatic gifts.³⁰ In this regard, the spiritual effectiveness of the local congregation thrives as believers secure the "fullness" of empowerment that comes with Spirit baptism. This orientation explains how individual callings to begin particular ministries, prompted by the "leading of the Holy Spirit," have pragmatically shaped the development of denominational programs and structure.

30. For the nature of Pentecostal worship, see Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

Menzies also traces how doctrinal exposition has progressed from the Statement of Fundamental Truths to the more recent preparation of "position papers." Through the years the council has had to address many challenging issues, including pacifism, divorce and remarriage, sanctification, divine healing, and the initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism. And of no less importance are the meaning of revival and the impact of "evangelicalization."

It is significant that both authors detect an ongoing healthy balance between charisma and institutional structure, suggesting that the future may see additional growth. Even with the changing complexion of congregations and rising diversity of thought on specific core features of doctrine and practice, the organization still enjoys a strong base of support, loyalty to the Statement of Fundamental Truths, and appreciation of its agencies. Indeed, the robust energy currently displayed in financial giving and the extensive involvement of laypersons and professional clergy in home and foreign mission endeavors engender optimism about continuing expansion.

In the estimation of Peter Hocken, "Pentecostalism represents a protest for Spirit against a powerless and largely cerebral Protestantism, in which attachment to the Word was not evidently accompanied by the vitality of the Spirit."³¹ Consequently, observers propose that the last century witnessed a seismic shift toward recapturing the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life and mission of the churches, and much of the credit for this goes to the stimulus of the Pentecostal movement.³² Given its conservative point of reference, it is clear that the AG will not settle for being "less than evangelical." The greatest hurdle, therefore, in its path into the twenty-first century stands in how successfully it recaptures what it means to be "more than evangelical."

31. Peter Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the Twentieth-Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford, Surrey, U.K.: Eagle, 1994), p. 156.

32. See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1995); Edward L. Cleary, "Introduction: Pentecostals, Prominence, and Politics," in *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America*, ed. Edward L. Cleary and Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 1-24.