Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 107 (1) Regular Issue (2026)

Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism: Contours, Convergences and Divergences

Dr Kelebogile Thomas Resane
Research Fellow
Department of Historical & Constructive Theology
Faculty of Theology & Religion
University of the Free State, Bloemfontein
South Africa
Email: resanekt@ufs.ac.za

https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.107.10

Abstract

This article compares Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism. Opening remarks are personal experience of both ideologies. The historical evolution is highlighted and how they influence each other either negatively or positively. The contours balance between doctrine and faith. Doctrine is experienced though Pentecostals go for *glossolalia* as an evidential experience. Major convergences include literal hermeneutics, followed by premillennial views concerning pretribulation rapture, the coming of the kingdom of God, and cosmic destiny. Three divergences are Pentecostals' baptism with the Holy Spirit, dispensational cessationism versus Pentecostal continuationism, and Israel-Church relationship. The conclusion highlights some differences and similarities between the Dispensationalists and the Pentecostals, showing that theology is dynamic, therefore these views undergoing some evolutionary processes. Pentecostal movement is emphatic on mission and evangelism, without abandoning the conviction regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Like dispensationalists, less fervent on eschatology, but actively involved in social transformation initiatives. Dispensationalists and Pentecostals go through some evolutionary thoughts on their standpoints yet continue to hold on to their evangelical roots and persuasions.

Keywords: Pentecostalism, Dispensationalism, theology, Spirit, eschatology

Introduction

Many South Africans come from education system where learners' development was inhibited to be critical thinkers or analytical readers. They learn theology that was bracketed as metanarratives never to question or critique, but to be imbibed as absolute truth. This creates enormous conflict in rationality especially for Pentecostals. Doctrinal articulations are always sound but leave struggles with Pentecostals with standpoints such as cessationism, the role of the Holy Spirit, and other dictums where Pentecostal convictions are challenged by some dispensational ideas. The aim of this article is to point some agreements, disagreements, and features of both dispensationalism and Pentecostalism. The historical-method comparison is applied to arrive at the conclusion. Dispensational and Pentecostal together with their hermeneutics are hereby presented as distinctives where understanding can be observed and appreciated.

Dispensationalism in brief

In theological discussions, dispensation involves 'the ordering of events under divine authority; the dealing of God to His creatures… any religious system, a system of principles and rites enjoined' (Corner, 1983:99). The champions of dispensationalism who systematised and promoted it in the mid-nineteenth century include the likes of the British evangelist, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) marked with special synergy and cooperation with the Plymouth Brethren evangelical group (Ryrie, 2007:67). In the early twentieth-century, Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921) introduced the popular Scofield Reference Bible, which crystallized dispensationalism not only in the United States but throughout the world. Dispensational theology is captured by Bass (2005:19) as 'a theological framework for interpreting the Bible which maintains that history is divided into multiple ages called "dispensations" in which God interacts with his chosen people in different ways.' These dispensations are listed as the eras of innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace and the thousand years of the reign of Christ. Dispensationalists view these dispensations as 'economies under which God has managed the world. These dispensations are successive stages in God's revelation of his purposes' (Erickson, 1999:385). The term 'dispensationalism' was coined and is attributed to Philip Mauro (1928:17) in his book, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. Of crucial importance to the rise and the envisaged demise of dispensationalism is Daniel G. Hummel in his *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism* (2023). In a nutshell, a dispensation is a period which is 'identified by its relation to some particular purpose of God – a purpose to be accomplished within that period' (Chafer, 1978:40).

Pentecostalism in brief

Pentecostalism is a Christian phenomenon within Protestant evangelicalism and can be associated with fundamentalism. The movement evolved in the early years of the twentieth century from what is called Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, USA. The literature on the history of Pentecostalism is in abundance therefore no need to restate it here. Since this discussion is on Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism, it is vital to also summarise Pentecostal hermeneutics here, so that the comparisons and contrasts can be fairly stated.

Generally, Pentecostalism 'accept the fundamentalist-dispensational hermeneutic where literalism and inerrancy are emphasised' (Kärkkäinen, 2002:7). Since Pentecostalism is inalienable with Evangelicalism, all the Evangelical features are salient in Pentecostalism. These apart from what is stated in the Nicene Creed, include the personal experience of conversion by conscious steps of faith in Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Bible which is regarded as infallible and inerrant in all what it says.

Contours between Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism

By contours here, it is meant giving shape to each element involved. The contours between Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism is what kinds of influences do they derive from each other. There is some sort of symbiosis between the two. By symbiosis here, I mean harmonious interaction towards better benefits for each partner. Since dispensationalism emerged long before Pentecostalism, it is clear that it played more influence on Pentecostalism than the other way around. The two influenced each other on certain doctrinal dictums.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of new theories in science and theology, and these worked against the fundamental teachings of Scripture. This led to the emergence of liberal theology and modernism, 'which embraced the philosophy of the Enlightenment and denied fundamental doctrines such as the fall of Adam, the virgin birth, and the deity of Christ' (Laning, 2008:17). This liberal approach to faith overflowed into the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Faith became a cold rationality, being unfriendly and unemotional, though still full of scientific sensibility. It,

therefore, needed some injection to lift the spiritual level of the church. Throughout church history, there are episodes of revival or spiritual awakenings to revitalize dead dogmatism in the church.

> In turbulent times, the Holy Spirit raises up new evangelical movements that draw energies from their experience of the Gospel to renew the Church, reinvigorate mission across the globe, and lead believing Christians to a new level of holiness and service (Gros, 2012:75).

It was out of the twentieth century liberal atmosphere that Pentecostalism arose as a reaction. The spiritual experience of Azusa Street revival invoked the doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit consequent to conversion accompanied by *glossolalia* as an evidence. It is generally accepted that 'Pentecostals believe that the Scriptures teach that there is an experience, available to all believers, separable from New Birth. This experience, commonly called "Baptism in the Spirit," is understood to be an enablement for Christian witness' (Menzies, 2006:261).

The new Pentecostal experience remained rooted in some dispensational fundamentals such as the inerrancy of the Bible and the literal interpretation of the Scripture. Dispensationalism influenced Pentecostalism in such a way that the two merged into each other due to their approach to bibliology. The hallmark of dispensational hermeneutics is literal interpretation of the Scriptures, which of course is accompanied by literal meaning. The literal sense may be defined as 'the usual, customary, and socially accepted meaning conveyed by words or expressions in their particular contexts' (Conner & Malmin, 1983:15). This is further captured by Laning (2008:22) that 'holding to the literal meaning of Scripture involves holding to the literal meaning of God's own interpretation of His promises Laning.' This is further elaborated by Dilipraj Chetty that 'Pentecostals have been marked by their exactness in following a literal interpretation of Scripture. For Pentecostals the issue of Biblical authority is non-negotiable, and it is the beginning point for mission theology and strategy' (Chetty, 2006:7).

Pentecostals adhered to some dispensational features, but went further, emphasising experience of the Holy Spirit. The dead liberal orthodoxy needed some revival that would enthuse faith realism. *Doctrinality*, to some certain degree continues to remain the bedrock of Pentecostal conviction accompanied by the Spirit leading, especially as one often hears Pentecostal *kerygmatic* echoes such as 'The Bible says…!', or even 'It is written…!' In other words, stale Christian doctrine due to modernism became alive due to Pentecostal experience, though the new phenomenon remained fundamentally rooted in orthodoxy. Faith moved from head (rationality) to heart (emotions) and became practically implementable through missions (hand). Pentecostalism tended to be a theology on the move, characterised more by experiential than cognitive, more activist than reflective (McClung, 1986:47).

Pentecostalism influenced dispensationalism in some way. Liveliness and enthusiasm of faith that was lacking revived dispensational outlook of doctrinal beliefs. For Pentecostals, doctrine is not just a dogmatic rationality, but a belief system to be experienced. It can be stated that 'Historically, Pentecostalism joined Romanticism by revolting against the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment, which dominated the arts and literature at the beginning of the twentieth century' (Resane, 2021:2). Pentecostals reject and resist dogmatic assertions without inner spiritual experience. Rhetorical and ritualistic confessions including liturgies make no appeal to Pentecostal worship. The beauty of the Pentecostal faith is not based on cognitive eloquence, but as Resane (2021:2) avers:

> on the theological embrace of a pneumatic enthusiasm rather than discursive theology. For Pentecostals, Spirit's experience leads to aesthetic connection with God and self. Experience, rather than rational or mental rhetorics or oratories is at the centre of Pentecostal aesthetics.

It is an experience that is justified hermeneutically by both the Lukan and Pauline texts that refer to *pneumatic* manifestations in gathered *ecclesia* and *koinonia.* The belief in the *doctrinality* of Lukan Gospel and Acts narrative is believed to be experienced and climaxed in Pauline literature, especially the texts such as Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. For Pentecostals, God is to be doctrinally encountered, resulting in experience of the living God directly or personally (Ellington, 1996:17). This is also captured by Kärkkäinen (2002:8), that 'the basis for the doctrinal process is the experience of the community of faith.'

Convergences in dispensationalism and Pentecostalism

Convergence in this article refers to when two belief systems, ideologies or convictions become similar or take up the same shape. It is when two or more belief systems come together to form a similarity, synergy or uniformity. It is basically the agreement or affirmative stance. Although Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism emerged from different histories and backgrounds, there are some areas where they synchronise with each other and agree. Many Pentecostals embrace some important aspects of Dispensationalism. Broadly speaking many early Pentecostals can be described as dispensationalists because they held to some main features of dispensationalism such as the distinction between Israel and the church, the rapture of the church, and a literal thousand-year millennium. The hermeneutical context of the first generation of Pentecostals continued within Wesleyan Holiness praxis which created a fertile soil that shaped the Pentecostal hermeneutic (Archer, 2009:47).

This articulation easily leads to surmising that the first convergence, which is also a contour between dispensationalism and Pentecostalism is the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. It is crucial to mention that hermeneutics in dispensationalism 'is based on a literal reading of prophetic passages in the Bible and divides history into periods (dispensations) wherein the relationship between God and humanity changes' (Watson, 2013:3). According to Blombery and Wook (2009), dispensationalism uses a literal interpretation of the Bible and the unfolding of revelation throughout the Bible. It can be verifiable that Pentecostal hermeneutics is literality. Gordon Fee (in Spittler, 1976:121) says Pentecostalism employs pragmatic hermeneutic, which in a nutshell means 'obey what would be taken literally; spiritualize, allegorize, or devotionalise the rest.' This same notion is affirmed by French Arrington (in Burgess, McGee & Alexander 1988:376-389), who identifies three major characteristics of Pentecostal hermeneutics as pneumatic illumination, the dialogical role of experience, and emphasis upon the narrative texts. Their interpretive method is historically described as 'literal,' 'ahistorical' or 'pietistic,' and generally involving some combination of these three. 'The Holiness and Pentecostal communities used this fluid method to come to an understanding of the "literal" meaning of Scripture' (Archer, 2009:89). McClung (1986:48) avers that:

> Growing out of the fundamentalist and holiness roots of literal biblicism, the pentecostal have taken the literal interpretation of scripture another step further into their missionary practices. For them, the issue of biblical authority determines their basic beginning point for missions theology and strategizing.

Pentecostal hermeneutics lean on divine revelations, that the source of their *kerygma* is *pneuma* rather than intellectual rationality. In reference to this proclivity of Pentecostals, Paul N. van der Laan (2008) states:

> We have accepted Calvin's hermeneutical rule that "Scripture interprets scripture.", but in our praxis this is just the starting point of our exegesis. We want to come to

> a point where we "receive" a divine revelation or insight to understand the deeper meaning of the text. If this happens, we use phrases like "the Holy Spirit showed me" to underline that our conclusions go beyond cognitive research. We apply this in our personal lives, our Bible studies and sermons, but so far this is hardly integrated in our theology.

This points towards Spirit hermeneutic whereby the leading of the Spirit is considered paramount to intellectual eloquence. This is captured by Craig Keener (2020:136) that 'A Spirit hermeneutic means that we embrace the message of the text and live it out, not just satisfy our intellectual curiosity or, still less, to boast about our knowledge.'

The Pentecostal literal interpretation of the Scriptures is therefore praxis-oriented, with experience and Scripture being maintained in a dialectical relationship (Johns 1998:86). This relationship is maintained and kept in balance by the Holy Spirit. Though the Scripture is the final authority of truth in matters of faith and conduct, the biblical truth is not to be eschewed, abstracted or perceived philosophically. Truth is to be experienced and faith lived as a result of knowing the Scripture.

The other convergence between Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism revolves around eschatology. The general understanding of eschatology is that it is part of Christian dogmatics that investigates the last days or the last things. Some of the themes within eschatology include death, judgement, heaven, hell, the coming of the kingdom of God, and cosmic destiny. It is an anticipation of the transformation of the entire universe by God. Dispensational eschatology is explicitly premillennial. It affirms Christ's return prior to the literal thousand-years reign of Jesus Christ on earth as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy (Ryrie, 2007:147-148). The millennial reign of Christ will be distinctively Jewish, with the restoration of David's throne, therefore theocratic (Bass, 2005:31).

Most of the dispensationalists profess a pretribulation rapture. There are minor variances with those who profess mid-tribulation and post-tribulation rapture (Hoekema, 1994:164; Walvoord, 1990:13). Dispensational eschatology was very popular in the 1970s, and one of its popularising instruments was a book by Hal Lindsey titled *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970). Lindsey noted the unfolding eschatological events starting with the establishment of Israel state in 1948, Jews regaining the control of Jerusalem in the 1967 Arab-Israel War, the rebuilding of the temple yet to come, the emergence of an Antichrist, Christian removal from the earth at the rapture followed by the seven years of tribulation, culminating into the battle of Armageddon where Christ will triumph over his enemies and be able to establish his millennial kingdom on earth (Smith, 2017). The purpose for the rapture is to remove the church before the regathering of the remnant of Israel (Bass, 2005), including before the unleashing of God's wrath into the world.

This premillennial eschatology embraced by the dispensationalists led them to withdrawal from engaging in social reforms as they focused on conversion of the lost; or even applying their mind towards the kingdom-building social reforms (Balmer, 2017:35-36). This is one of the Dispensationalism-Pentecostalism convergences, since Pentecostals are historically known for withdrawal from the socio-political realities. However, the wheel is turning around as Pentecostals are beginning to engage in social transformation through occupying positions of power in politics, businesses and professional vocations, including serving in a broader spectrum of human habitat (Resane, 2018:4). Both ideologies (Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism), realising that the Lord's return tarries, start to deepen their reading of the Bible in terms of the vision that transcends spirituality centered in the individualistic piety (Shaull & Cesar 2000:109). They are faced with the world realities of social structures that are characterised by corruption, misery, poverty, hunger,

and pandemics. Resane (2019) highlights that their prophetic role is becoming epistemological through *kerygma* (proclamation), *diakonia* (acts of service), and *koinonia* (fellowship). All three activities vie for active participation and leadership roles.

Pentecostals broadly share their restorationist worldview with dispensationalists and other fundamentalists. In the early years, Pentecostals believed that they were experiencing the Latter Rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This outpouring was to prepare God's people for missions before Jesus returns. Their ecclesial and missional focus was the soon return of Christ (Noel, 2015:203). They were emphatic on Heaven and Hell. However, in their formative years of the early twentieth century, they differed in their belief that the birth of Pentecostalism with the fresh outpouring of the Spirit was 'itself a fulfilment of end-time prophecy (Wilson in Burgess & McGee, 1988:264).' They continue to regard the Pentecost events of Acts 2:16-21 as fulfilment of Joel 2:28-32's prophecy. This created some eschatological fervency among the Pentecostals that God's mission in the world is urgent as it ushers in the kingdom of God. The motivational element in the Pentecostal theology of mission 'has been an intense premillennial eschatology. Premillennialism, dispensationalism, and the belief in the imminence of Christ's return forged an evangelistic fervor of the movement in its infancy' (McClung, 1986:51). Pentecost encounter and the quotation of Joel's text by Peter on that day makes Pentecostalism a missional movement. This quotation leads to Pentecostals' understanding of Spirit Baptism as eschatological (Acts 2:17a) and missional (Acts 1:8).

Jesus's imminent return was and still continues, though with lesser enthusiasm, to be a motivational factor for world evangelisation. *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness… then shall the end come* (Matthew 24:14). This Messianic call to mission earmarked Pentecostal missions since their inception in the early twentieth century. It is expressed that:

> To restore the life and mission of the early church the Pentecostals traveled back to an ancient era, but in so doing they absorbed the New Testament (NT) emphasis on the imminent return of Jesus, which propelled them ahead to the precipice of history (Johnson, 2020:86).

For Pentecostals, mission and evangelisation has always been an eschatological hope. Menzies and Anderson (1993:8-16) highlight it that 'eschatological views need to be focused on as a stimulus to mission rather than an order to dogmatically establish one's eschatological timetable However, there is a general observation that within both the Pentecostal and dispensational circles, there is some eschatological fatigue and the waning of apocalyptic epistemologies. The gospel is preached and spread as an expression of incarnational love of Christ rather than contingency plan to save the world from cataclysmic catastrophe. This eschatological de-escalation needs some extensive research that proposes ways and means of regaining the former eschatological enthusiasm.

Divergences between dispensationalists and Pentecostals

By divergence here it is meant a philosophical or ideological division. It is when opinions become unalike. The disagreements ideologically do not become the bone of contention but stated facts of where each opinion or ideology stands. Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism stands symbiotically and move synergistically towards many doctrinal conclusions, but along the ways there are some divergences, disagreements on certain issues though remaining comrades in arms. It is where common phrases such as 'we beg to differ' or 'let us disagree in love' become pronounceable.

The divergence that characterises Pentecostals from the Dispensationalists is the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an experience consequent to conversion. The phenomenon is defined as a definite experience, subsequent to salvation, whereby the Third Person of the Godhead comes upon the believer to anoint and energize him for special service. This experience is designated, in the New Testament, as the Spirit "falling upon," "coming upon," or being "poured out upon" the yielded believer in a sudden and supernatural manner (Duffield & Van Cleave, 1983:307).

This feature draws a visible distinction making it a hallmark of Pentecostalism. While the dispensationalists and Protestants in general believe that baptism with the Holy Spirit is simultaneous with conversion, and that there is no need for experiential evidence, Pentecostals in contrast believe that the reception of Spirit baptism is evidenced by speaking in tongues. The doctrine of baptism with the Holy Spirit consequent to salvation is experiential and its purpose had been variously explored by many scholars to include power for service, spiritual warfare, overflow (quantitative church growth), and ability to confront forces of darkness and live out life of holiness. One Pentecostal writer, Robeck (1983:5) opines that pentecostal missiologists contend that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is primarily for ministry, especially for evangelism. The bottom line is that this baptism is for believers' empowerment to live sanctified (holy) lives and to carry out Jesus' mission in the world full of cosmic powers that work against God's kingdom. In other words, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is for personal holiness and missional outreach. Yong and Anderson (2014:88) capture this:

> For some, the baptism of the Spirit brought with it both sanctifying purity and empowerment for the Christian life. For others, Spirit Baptism as a second work of grace effected the cleansing of the heart, meaning an even further work of the Spirit that brought power for witness could be expected to follow.

The reality stands that 'the Lukan Spirit in Spirit baptism is the Spirit of witness' (Macchia, 2006:76). The manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit are the demonstration of the presence of the Spirit, because 'The church knew full well when the Spirit visited, because it was a reality that was felt and that produced tangible results' (Macchia, 2006:76).

The second divergence is that of cessationism versus continuationism. Many Dispensationalists are of the opinion that there are certain charismatic gifts that ceased with the apostolic era. These gifts are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:8 that *where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.* Fundamentally cessationists believe that the Spirit no longer distributes spiritual gifts as a normative experience (Resane, 2022:2). As far as they are concerned miracles, *glossolalia,* prophecy, apostles and prophets had ceased, though God continues to work miraculously through believers' faith and prayers.

On the other hand, Pentecostals are convincingly the continuationists. They reject the notion that spiritual gifts , or any of them, and the supernatural phenomena were restricted to the apostolic era. For them, charismatic gifts such as miracles, healing, demon casting, *glossolalia*, prophecy in general, are disbursed not exclusively through the 1st-century apostolic era but also as promises that go beyond time in the historical development of the church (Dojcin, 2015:53). They dispute that 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 undermines the ongoing nature of spiritual gifts by stating that Paul makes no reference to cessation, but that love supersedes gifts as they are to be exercised out of love (Warrington, 2008:71). Pentecostal faith is characterised by charismatic manifestations and they see these as the evidence of the presence of God the Holy Spirit. The operations of charismata should be in, through and out of love. The gifts are necessary and relevant as Paul

Oladotun Kolawole points that 'the gifts help to contribute to the welfare of the church as a whole and bear an effective witness to the world' (Kolawole, 2020:383).

Third, dispensationalists are of the opinion that God has always had a people throughout history, manifesting himself and his work through the nation of Israel. Dispensationalists draw a distinction between Israel and the Church (Erickson, 1999:385). They further state that the Mosaic law is not binding to Christians. One of their hallmarks is a belief in premillennialism, Christian Zionism and the rapture of the Church that precedes the Second Coming of Christ, which will take place prior to a period known as the Great Tribulation. They claim that there was no church in the Old Testament, as the church is a New Testament entity inaugurated in the Book of Acts. In some dispensational circles, the church since it was not prophetically foreseen in the Old Testament, is a parenthesis, like an interim plan of the dispensation of grace to articulate into the millennial reign of Christ. Based on this statement, there is a distinction between Israel and the church, since Israel is a national or ethnic entity rooted in Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3), the physical descendants of Abraham. Israel was instituted as an instrument of God's blessings to the world; and the vehicle for Scripture and the Messiah.

The church is not a nationalistic or ethnic entity, but a multi-ethnic entity with a clear polity and missional mandate to bring the gospel to the world until the return of Jesus to establish his kingdom on earth (Revelation 2:26-27; 5:10). The church is Christians from the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ.

This Israel-Church distinction point to the fact that the two entities cannot share the same promises including their fulfilment. This creates diversities of convictions within the Dispensationalists themselves. For instance, the Classical Dispensationalists such as Charles Ryrie (2007:33) believe no promises to Israel find fulfilment in the church today, while the Progressive Dispensationalists such as Charles Hodge (2003:446) believe there is a partial fulfilment of some covenant promises with the church. However, Inclusive Dispensationalism believes in eschatological fulfilment of the Old Testament promises when Israel will be saved and restored. The New Testament is seen as a continuation of the revelation of Israel.

Although Pentecostals agree with Dispensationalists on Israel-Church theology, they go further to affirm that Israel is still God's elect nation (Romans 11:28) and some, like the black South African Assemblies of God in South Africa made it their Sunday liturgy to pray for leadership (1 Timothy 2:1-8), including praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6). Macchia (2006:200) alludes that the Pentecostal church recognises its connection with the elect people of God in the Old Testament, since there is only one olive tree created by God to be God's people (Romans 11). The church is seen as an opportunity for Israel to recover its covenantal promises about their redemption through the Messiah. This is highlighted by Duffield & Van Cleave (1983:457):

> The church as the wild olive branch, has been grafted into the tree of God's redeeming purpose, replacing rebellious Israel. This is not, however, a permanent displacement; when the church has been completed, God will yet deal with and fulfill His promises to the remnant of national Israel (Romans 11:16-24; Jeremiah 11:16,17).

Pentecostals believe that the promises of God to Israel in the Old Testament are relevant to the church. For many Pentecostals, unconditional support to Israel ushers in God's blessings. As a result of this view, Pentecostals find it difficult to criticize Israel's conflicts with the Palestinians. Israel's conquest over her political and social enemies is regarded as God's breakthroughs. These conquests are affirmed as fulfilment of Abrahamic Covenant to Israel.

Conclusion

Theology is a dynamic discipline. It is not static as some conservatives or fundamentalists proclaim. 'Theology does not stand still' (Grogan, 2010:218). Hermeneutics also has become a technical subject due to complexities encountered in academic scholarship which engages philosophy of language (2010:219). This dynamism is exacerbated by socio-cultural factors that leave no ideologies unimpacted. All theological dictums are dynamic as observed in both Dispensationalism and Pentecostalism.

This dispensational dynamism is proved by its evolutionary genesis as it continues to take different forms such as Classic Dispensationalism (Darby, Scofield), Revised Dispensationalism (Walvoord, Ryrie, Pentecost, McClain) and Progressive Dispensationalism (Saucy, Blaising, Bock). These forms of Dispensationalism deserve their own studies therefore out of the scope of this article. Scholars such as Blaising, Bock, Barker, and Saucy emerged as Progressive Dispensationalists in the 1990s to challenge some of the views of earlier dispensationalists such as Ryrie, Walvoord, and Pentecost. These scholars were influenced by the Popular Dispensationalists such as Lindsey and LaHaye within the pop culture. This era was the beginning of dispensational decline. Within a decade (2010) dispensational theology was culturally engrossed but disappearing slowly within the academia (Hummel, 2023:283). In politics, at the time dispensationalism was popularised in North America by Ronald Reagan and George W Bush. Both Presidents' pronunciations aligned with the dispensationalists' reference to prophetic fulfilments (Spector, 2014:545). Dispensationalism evolved through the ages as a dogma towards political identity rather than a theological doctrine. However, it continues to exert and express itself as Free Grace theology (Dispensationalism and Free Grace Publishing Online).

As for Pentecostalism, it places an emphasis on evangelism and missions (Anderson, 2004:42). It never perceives itself as doctrinal formation or dogmatic crucible where belief systems are identified, analysed, systematised and postulated, but as a product of spontaneous outpouring of the Spirit prophesied earlier in the Old Testament. This explains the lack of ontological Pentecostal systematic theology in scientific epistemologies.

The emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit consequent to conversion and evidenced by *glossolalia* is regarded as the prophetic fulfilment, especially of Joel 2:28-32 text. It makes the presence of God tangible and actualises the reality of heaven and hell, including the literal return of Jesus Christ. Pentecostal theology endeavours to strike some balance between Paul's soteriological emphasis and Luke's charismatic emphasis. Both emphases are viewed as outcomes of the Spirit baptism. The two emphases 'may be united under the umbrella of God's eschatological purposes in inaugurating his kingdom' (Noel, 2015:206). Christ's kingdom is a pneumatological concept fulfilled as Spirit-baptism, which is an eschatological gift - which is the outpouring of divine love (Macchia, 2006:17).

Pentecostalism is also noted for eschatological zeal, which prompted the sense of urgency for reaching the world before Jesus' premillennial, literal, physical return to the earth to establish his kingdom. Pentecostals are of the opinion that the world is in some disarray therefore needs divine intervention, which is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What continues to mark Pentecostalism is the strong sense of *koinonia* among those of similar persuasion identified with enthusiastic worship expressed through spontaneous prayers, vibrant *kerygma*, exuberant clapping and dancing in the Spirit. Some expressive worship manifestations include trembling, crying, shaking, and falling under the power of the Spirit. Manifestations are not exhaustive as the Spirit cannot be dictated, mimeographed or orchestrated. Togetherness (*homothumadon*), worship and communion make the essence of Pentecostal *koinonia.*

The biblical authority in matters of faith and conduct is also a hallmark of Pentecostalism. This is expressed by Noel that:

> Experiential by nature, and not given to excessive rationalism, Pentecostals had experienced personally truths such as Spirit baptism and divine healing taught by Scripture, and therefore had little reason to doubt that the rest of Scripture was authoritative and trustworthy also (2015:37).

This unwavering belief in biblical authority synchronises with evangelical bibliology, including its doctrinal tenets such as the inerrancy, inspiration, authority, and infallibility of the Bible. One of the convergences of Pentecostals and the twentieth-century German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann is that the Bible as God's word or revelation, 'furthers life.' It is 'a liberating word, inclusive word, affirmative word… and is not bound to a patriarchal culture and the disparagement of women, or to a slave – owning society (2000:149). This Moltmann's furtherance of life is confirmed by Resane (2000:290) that 'For Moltmann, life is meant to continue, to grow, and sanctification has to do with the furtherance and facilitation of growing life.'

In a nutshell, the Dispensationalists and Pentecostals agree or disagree not to secede from evangelicalism but to be comrades in arms on matters of common interests. They travel the same road and like any siblings come across some rivalries that do not anatomise but unify them into the common faith. Their experiences are similar as they experience the same fluidities of ideas such as the waning of eschatological epistemologies. They insist on literal hermeneutics and regard missions as an urgent call to engage before the return of Christ. Passion for the lost soul is still the driving force for missionary outreach.

References

Anderson, A. (2004). *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, K.J. (2009). *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community*. Cleveland: CPT Press.

Arrington, F. (1988). 'Hermeneutics, Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic. In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* edited by S.M Burgess, G.B. McGee & P.H. Alexander, 376-89. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers.

Balmer, R. (2017). *The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Bass, C.B*. (*2005). *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Bloomberg C.L. & Chung, S.W. (2009). *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Books.

Chafer, L. S. 1978. *Systematic Theology*, Volume 1. 4th Print, Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press.

Chetty, D. (2006). A Pentecostal Theology of Mission, *Africa Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 3, Rynfield: Hebron Press, 4-18.

Conner, K. J, & Malmin, K. (1983). I*nterpreting the Scriptures: A Textbook on How to Interpret the Bible*. Portland: City Bible Publishing.

Dispensationalism and Free Grace: Intimately Linked - Dispensational Publishing. https://dispensationalpublishing.com//product/dispensationalism-free-grace-intimately-linked/ (Retrieved: 21 December 2024)

Dojcin, Z. (2015). Wesley and Charisma: An analysis of John Wesley's view of spiritual gifts, *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal,* 1(2), 53–71.

Duffield G. P & Van Cleave, N. M. (1983). *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. San Dimas, CA: L.I.F.E Bible College.

Ellington, S. A. (1996). 'Pentecostals and Authority of Scripture, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 9, 1- 17.

Erickson, M. J. (1999). *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Fee, G. (1976). 'Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent: A Major problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics.' In *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* edited by R. Spittler, 119-23. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Grogan, G. W. (2010). *The Faith Once Entrusted to the Saints: Engaging with the Issues and Trends in Evangelical Theology*. Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press.

Gros, J*. (*2012*).* Dialogue: Ecumenical Connections Across Time: Medieval Franciscans as a Proto-Pentecostal Movement? *Pneuma, 34*, 75-93.

Hodge, C. (2003). *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1. Peabody: Hendrickson.

Hoekema, A. (1994). *The Bible and the Future* (revised). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers.

Hummel, D. G. (2023). *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism: How the Evangelical Battle Over the End Times Shaped a Nation*. Grand Rapids*:* Wm. B. Eerdmans.

Johns, C. B. (1998). *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, Supplement Series 2. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Johnson, V. (2020). Eschatology and Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies,* 23(1) (February 2020), 85-108.

Kärkkäinen, V. (2002). *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Keener, C. S. (2020). The Spirit and Biblical Interpretation: Spirit Hermeneutics, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 23(2), (August 2020), 123-146.

Kolawole, P. O. (2020). 'Must Every Believer Speak in Tongues? Another Look at the Gift of Tongues in Acts 2:1-8 and Its Implication to the Nigerian Church' (Light in a Once-Dark World: Contemporary Issues in Nigerian Christianity Volume 2)**,** edited by John W. (Jack) Carter, 367-83. Hayesville, NC. *The American Journal of Biblical Theology,* (2020). www.biblicaltheology.com

Laning, J. A. (2008). 'The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism (1*)', Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, 42(1), (November 2008), 17-35.

Macchia, F. D. (2006). *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Mauro, P. (1928). *The Gospel of the Kingdom: With an Examination of Modern Dispensationalism.* Boston: Hamilton Brothers.

McClung, L. G. (1986). 'Truth on Fire: Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology.' In *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Centur*y edited by L Grant McClung, 47-54, South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing.

Menzies G. W & Anderson, G.I. (1993). 'D.W. Kerr and Eschatological Diversity in the Assemblies of God', *Paraclete,* 27(1), 8-16

Menzies, W. W. (2006). 'The Reformed Roots of Pentecostalism', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 9(2), 260-82.

Moltmann, J. (2000). *Experiences in Theology: Ways and Forms of Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Noel, B.T. *(*2015). *Pentecostalism, Secularism, and Post Christendom*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Resane, K. T. (2018). 'Pentecostals and apartheid: Has the wheel turned around since 1994?', *In die Skriflig*, 52(1), a2259. https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2324.

Resane, K. T. (2019). 'Church in Society: The Pentecostal Church in Action'. *Pharos Journal of Theolog*y, Volume 100. http//: www.pharosjot.com

Resane, K. T. (2021). 'Moltmann as a Guest Speaker at the Pentecostal Conference: Dictums, Convergences and Divergences', *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology*, 30, 282-299.

Resane, K. T. (2021). 'Beauty and Justice in Modern Pentecostal Theological Themes: No Loggerheads, *Pharos Journal of Theology,* 102(1), http//: www.pharosjot.com

Resane, K. T. (2022). 'Cessationism and continuationism: Pentecostal trinitarianism balances the tension', *Verbum et Ecclesia,* 43(1), a2669. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v43i1.2669 .

Robeck, C. M. (1983). *Theology, News and Notes*, 30(1) (March), Fuller Theological Seminary.

Ryrie, C. C. (2007). *Dispensationalism.* Chicago: Moody Press.

Shaull, R. & Cesar, W. (2020). 'Sociological and Theological Horizon'. *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Smith, E.A. (2017). 'The Late Great Planet Earth Made the Apocalypse a Popular Concern'. *The National Endowment for the Humanitie*s (Winter).

Spector, S. (2014). 'Gog and Magog in the White House: Did Biblical Prophecy Inspire the Invasion of Iraq?', *Journal of Church and State*, 56(3), 534-552.

Van der Laan P. N. (2008). 'Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Compassion.' *Catching a Butterfly –The Identity of Pentecostal Theology.* Senic, Slovakia, June 24-27, 2008.

Walvoord, J. F. (1990). *Blessed hope and the tribulation*: *A Historical and Biblical Study of Posttribulationism* (Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives revised). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers.

Warrington, K. (2008). *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*. London: T & T Clark.

Watson, W. C. (2013). *Dispensationalism Before Darby: Seventeenth Century and Eighteenth-Century English Apocalypticism*. Silverton, OR: Lampion Press.

Wilson, D.J. (1988). 'Pentecostal Perspectives on Eschatology.' In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements,* edited by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

Yong A & Anderson, J. A. (2014). *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* Waco: Baylor University Press.

Conflict of Interest Statement*: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*