

## A HISTORICAL-DOCTRINAL PERSPECTIVE OF FILIPINO PENTECOSTAL PREACHING

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### 1. Eschatological Assumption of Pentecostal Preaching

The Pentecostal revival came at the turn of the century claiming an experience of the Spirit baptism based on Acts 2.<sup>1</sup> This revival movement gave birth to the Assemblies of God that has claimed the empowering of the Spirit in the preaching of the gospel that is similar to that of the disciples at Pentecost in Acts.<sup>2</sup> Pentecostals believe that the empowering of the Spirit in Acts 2 is for the work of evangelistic proclamation of the gospel in the last days.<sup>3</sup> Together with the Evangelicals, Pentecostals believe and

<sup>1</sup> J. Rodman Williams, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 40-41, has precisely expressed the fundamental Pentecostal perception of the contemporary experience of the Spirit baptism: "For Pentecostals, Spirit baptism refers to an experience whose basis is believed to be found in the Jerusalem event of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1-4."

<sup>2</sup> "For Pentecostals the Acts of the Apostles are regarded as a normative record of the normative primitive church." See Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, trans. R. A. Wilson (London, England: SCM Press Ltd., 1972; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1988), 321.

<sup>3</sup> Pentecostals believe that Acts 1:8 is fulfilled in Acts 2. Successively the promised empowering of the Spirit for witnessing in Acts 1:8 is believed to be for today. The Spirit baptism is consistently associated by the Assemblies of God belief in the contemporary Pentecostal experience. See for example G. Raymond Carlson, *Our Faith and Fellowship: A Study of the Assemblies of God History and Beliefs* (Springfield, MO: Radiant Books, Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 44-62.

are committed to do the great commission from the very beginning.<sup>4</sup> A survey of the annals and tenets of the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God<sup>5</sup> reflects the Pentecostal sensitivity to the church's experience of the Spirit for the purpose of evangelism.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the statement of Walter J. Hollenweger in European Pentecostal experience is also true in the Filipino Pentecostal preaching: "[P]robably the most important contribution of Pentecostalism [is] its oral culture, its oral homiletics."<sup>7</sup> Hollenweger further points out that "oral spirituality of

<sup>4</sup> One of the five definite causes for the calling of the first Pentecostal convention of April 2-12, 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas was to have a united effort in supporting the foreign missionaries financially. The third reason for the call says:

We come together for another reason, that we may get a better understanding of the needs of each foreign field, and may know how to place our money in such a way that one mission or missionary shall not suffer, while another not any more worthy, lives in luxuries. Also that we may discourage wasting money on those who are running here and there accomplishing nothing, and may concentrate our support on those who mean business for our King.

As quoted in *Word and Witness*, IX (December 20, 1913), 1. See Klaude Kendrick, *The Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 82. See also the printed document of the General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ, Hot Springs, Arkansas, April 2 to 12, 1914 in Carl Brumback, *Suddenly . . . From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 157.

<sup>5</sup> Henceforth PGCAG.

<sup>6</sup> Since the PGCAG is the largest Pentecostal body in the Philippines, I therefore take this particular group as the main representative of the Classical Pentecostal Movement in the country. PGCAG as a representative of the Filipino Pentecostals is used in a functional way in this paper. It is not intended to marginalize the other Pentecostal groups in the country. Rather, PGCAG as the largest Pentecostal denomination is used as an embodiment of Filipino Pentecostals because it has more written sources and theological documentations than the other smaller Pentecostal groups. For an overview of Pentecostalism in the Philippines see Joseph Suico, "Pentecostals in the Philippines," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, *Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies Series 3* (Oxford, England and Baguio, Philippines: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005), 345-62.

<sup>7</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, "An Irresponsible Silence," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7/2 (July 2004): 219.

Pentecostalism is a heritage from its founder, William J. Seymour.”<sup>8</sup> Daniel L. Espiritu captures the Filipino Pentecostal way of communicating the message of the gospel *à la* Hollenweger in quoting Seymour by citing Trinidad E. Seleký who said: “We have been doing that [contextualizing the Bible]! Even our kids in Sunday school lay their hands on the sick. And we cast out demons in Jesus name!”<sup>9</sup> Obviously, Seleký is simply stating that the encounter of the Spirit baptism gives a challenge to the PGCAG to confirm the proclamation of the gospel with the powerful demonstration of signs and wonders.<sup>10</sup> The belief and expectation of the supernatural empowering of the almighty himself becomes part of the whole package in the proclamation of the gospel:

The small beginnings of Pentecostalism gradually became the fastest growing and reputedly dynamic movement of today. The Pentecostals are compelled to articulate their belief and experience. To express the Pentecostal mind is not only for the sake of the larger church world but, indeed, for the good of the younger generation of Pentecostals who needs hereditary identity....The task of the great commission becomes the impetus of this Spirit empowered community. Amen!<sup>11</sup>

Thus the evangelistic zeal in Pentecostal preaching among the Assemblies of God is directly influenced by the belief in the Spirit baptism

<sup>8</sup> Hollenweger, “Irresponsible,” 220.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel L. Espiritu, “Ethnohermeneutics or Oikohermeneutics?: Questioning the Necessity of Caldwell’s Hermeneutics,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 3/2 (September 2001): 269.

<sup>10</sup> Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1995), 141, in connection with the Pentecostal claim of empowerment of the Pentecostal proclamation of the gospel observes that: “One important implication of Peter’s peshering of Joel 2:28-32 to explain the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost is that the Pentecostal’s ‘evidential’ pneumatology is a truer reflection of Luke’s ‘signs and wonders’ pneumatology than that of their critics and opponents.”

<sup>11</sup> Roli dela Cruz, review of Wonsuk Ma and Robert Menzies, eds., *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, *The Courier* 7/1 (March 1998): 6.

for empowerment.<sup>12</sup> Since the Lord’s imminent return is anticipated, the burden of evangelistic preaching for PGCAG is intensified by its nearness which is symbolized by the Spirit’s presence.<sup>13</sup> The Assemblies of God is aware of its Evangelical identification as a part of the universal church of Christ even from the beginning of its history.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly PGCAG emphasizes the purpose of the movement’s existence together with the rest of the Pentecostal Assemblies for the propagation of the gospel.<sup>15</sup> Herein the history and the doctrine play a vital role in the correct understanding of how the Pentecostals perceive the importance of the preaching of the church.<sup>16</sup> Wherefore, historical facts will give light on the influence of the doctrinal beliefs of the Pentecostals in general, and PGCAG in particular, about their understanding of the mission of the church. The PGCAG, as it understands its role in relation to the universal body of Christ, assumes

<sup>12</sup> The Assemblies of God claims that the Spirit baptism is a distinctive and well emphasized doctrine in the denomination. According to a promotion brochure *The Assemblies of God—The Local Church*, Office of Public Relations (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1994) in an item entitled “Our Distinctive Doctrine”:

The doctrine which distinguishes the Assemblies of God from other churches deals with one of its four cardinal doctrines: the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Assemblies of God believes the baptism in the Holy Spirit gives believers several benefits as indicated in the New Testament. These include: power to witness and serve others; a dedication to the work of God; a more intense love for Christ, His Word and the lost; and the bestowment of certain spiritual gifts (Acts 1:4,8; 8:15-17).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. T. E. Gannon, “The End-time Challenge,” *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1968, 4.

<sup>14</sup> The Pentecostal movement recognizes that it is a part of the larger church body. It also recognizes that as a part of the church it has a mission to be fulfilled. From the beginning of its history it has recognized its evangelical heritage. The General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States exerted effort to participate in the evangelical organization. See William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 177-227. In the Philippines, PGCAG is a member of the Philippine Council of the Evangelical Churches. See Merlyn L. Guillermo, ed., *Protestant Churches and Missions in the Philippines*, vol. 2 (Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, Inc., 1983), 9.

<sup>15</sup> See the Preamble of the “Constitution and By-Laws of the PGCAG.” Adopted April, 1953. Revised 1959, 1964, 1.

<sup>16</sup> It should be acknowledged that an understanding of the history and doctrine of the Pentecostal movement will enhance the perception of how the Pentecostals suppose the mission of the church. In Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of*

that the denomination exists because of its eschatological mission.<sup>17</sup> The PGCAG stresses eschatology in terms of its association with the mission of the church. Eschatology for PGCAG can be applied in the confines of the appeal in the contemporary proclamation of the gospel that provides a confrontation and a confidence of promise of salvation against damnation.<sup>18</sup> In the history and doctrine of PGCAG, Spirit empowered evangelism is linked to the eschatological mission of the church to preach the message of the gospel.

## 2. Historical Synopsis of the PGCAG

At the turn of the century Pentecostal revival broke out in the United States. The revival that was known as the “Azusa Street Revival” became known to the Christian world when it was reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1906 under a headline “Weird Babel of Tongues.”<sup>19</sup> The

*Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1987), the doctrinal history of the Pentecostal movement is seen in view that the four cardinal doctrines of the Pentecostals, salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit and the second coming of Jesus Christ, were consolidated by the pioneers. Dayton sees the four cardinal doctrines of the Pentecostals as solidly intact with its own internal deduction. He points out that the reasoning of the Pentecostals stands. He observes that the Pentecostals are not erratic but they examine their experiences inside their own logic. The presentation of Dayton reflects the Pentecostal understanding of the mission of the church to preach salvation by the power of the Spirit with miracles following before Christ returns. Cf. Stanley M. Horton, *The Pentecostal Movement: Past, Present and Future*, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Second Annual Pentecostal Lectureship Series (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1994), 16.

<sup>17</sup> See *Rules of Church Government* (PGCAG, 1980). Statement of Purpose, 1.

<sup>18</sup> The PGCAG has shown its eschatological standpoint as basically ethical in nature. In Article XIV Essential Resolutions, Section 2 Post-Tribulation Rapture Teaching, noted on the “Constitution and By-Laws” (1964), 19, it states: “We recommend that all our ministers teach the imminent coming of Christ, warning all men to be prepared for that coming, which may occur at any time, and not to lull their minds into insecurity by any teaching that would cause them to feel that certain events must occur before the rapture of the saints.”

<sup>19</sup> See Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 95-116. According to Synan, 101-2, the first known modern tongue occurrence was experienced by Agnes N. Ozman at Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas on January 1, 1901 after her teacher Charles Fox Parham laid his hands on her. Later the other students of Parham spoke in other tongues also. This phenomenon is usually known as the

emphasis on the Spirit baptism with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues for endowment in witnessing became the trademark of the Pentecostal experience.<sup>20</sup> The encounter with the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit of God rejuvenated American Pentecostals to do the biblical mandate as they were waiting for the coming of the Lord in the last days.<sup>21</sup> The General Council of the Assemblies of God was established to conserve the fruit of the Pentecostal revival in the United States.<sup>22</sup>

beginning of the modern Pentecostal revival in the United States. Synan, 99, narrates that “[it] was Parham’s ideas preached by his followers that produced the Azusa Street revival of 1906 and with it the worldwide Pentecostal movement.” Synan, 103-16, points out that it was W. J. Seymour, a black preacher and a student of Parham, however, who became the one that God used in the original Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California from 1906 until 1909 that spread the Pentecostal movement around the world. The revival that was started by the Holy Spirit in Parham’s Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas and continued by the teaching of Seymour in Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California spread throughout America and the world. Consequently the spread of the Pentecostal movement became a significant phase of the Christian history.

<sup>20</sup> W. W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve*, 9-10, describes the Pentecostal Movement: “What is the Pentecostal Movement? The Pentecostal Movement is that group of sects within the Christian Church which is characterized by the belief that the occurrence mentioned in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost not only signaled the birth of the Church, but described an experience available to believers in all ages. The experience of an endowment with power, called the ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ is believed to be evidenced by the accompanying sign of ‘speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.’ This experience is to be distinguished from the traditional Holiness teaching of a ‘second blessing.’ Although both groups believe that there is a definite crisis experience subsequent to regeneration taught in the Bible, the Holiness understanding is that this experience is for the sanctification of the believer, whereas the Pentecostal understanding is that this experience is primarily an endowment for service. In addition, the Pentecostal Movement has made a large place in its worship for the manifestations of the Spirit described in 1 Corinthians 12-14.”

<sup>21</sup> See Gary B. McGee, “A Brief History of the Modern Pentecostal Outpouring,” *Paraclete* 18 (Spring 1984): 19-23.

<sup>22</sup> The second among the five identified reasons for the call of the first “General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ” states: “Again we come together that we know how to conserve the work, that we may all build up and not tear down, both in home and foreign lands.” The call is published in the December 20, 1913 issue of the *Word and Witness* signed by M. M. Pinson, A. P. Collins, H. A. Goss, D. C. O. Opperman, and E. N. Bell. The “First General Council of the Assemblies of God” came to fruition as it was supported and joined

The Assemblies of God came to the Philippines before World War II but did not experience immense increase until after the war era.<sup>23</sup> Some of the Filipino young men whom God saved in the Pentecostal movement in the United States decided to come back to the Philippines to share the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ with a predominantly Roman Catholic country. These Filipino-Americans became the post-war pioneers of the PGCAG. The history of PGCAG records:

Among the recipients of the Pentecostal outpouring were many Filipinos who went to the United States for various reasons. They got saved and attended Assemblies of God Bible schools and became missionaries to their own people. They pioneered the work of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines.<sup>24</sup>

Although as early as 1926 the American Assemblies of God had already sent a missionary couple to Manila,<sup>25</sup> these young men who were immigrants in the United States and went back to the Philippines after their conversion made the majority of the contribution to the establishment of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines.<sup>26</sup> They paid the price of leaving America with their ambitions and returned to the Philippines with their Pentecostal zeal. One of those young men, Rosendo Alcantara, who became a denominational leader later testifies:

by "many of the great names in the early history of the Pentecostal Movement" at Hot Springs, Arkansas in April 2-12, 1914. See W. W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve*, 93-94, 97-105.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Leonard Tuggy, *The Philippine Church: Growth in a Changing Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 151.

<sup>24</sup> *Protestant Churches & Missions in the Philippines*, 2:307.

<sup>25</sup> According to Trinidad Cabanilla Esperanza, "The Assemblies of God in the Philippines" (M.R.E. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1965), 17-18, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin H. Caudle came to Manila in September, 1926 as the first Assemblies of God missionaries. Mr. Caudle started his ministry in Manila and distant villages by preaching, distributing tracts and conducting Sunday School and Bible class. When his wife got sick they returned to the United States without a person to carry on the ministry that they initiated. This information is based on Noel Perkin, "Coordination and Advance (1925-1930)," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, December 27, 1964, and Letter from B. H. Caudle to Noel Perkin, January 12, 1965.

<sup>26</sup> Tuggy, 151. For the details on the story of the young men who went back to the Philippines to preach the gospel and were instrumental for the organization of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines see Esperanza, 19-29.

The Assemblies of God work in the Philippines grew out from the hearts of Filipinos who went to the United States to seek fame and fortune. These young men, saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, went to different Bible schools to prepare themselves to the task before them before returning back to the Philippines to establish Assemblies of God churches.<sup>27</sup>

The Filipino-American Pentecostals, from the United States, who became missionaries to their own Filipino brothers expanded the Pentecostal movement in the Philippines. In 1939 Mr. and Mrs. Leland E. Johnson, he becoming the first superintendent, came to the Philippines to labor with the Filipino Assemblies of God brothers and was instrumental in the organization of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines.<sup>28</sup> Not long after the Assemblies of God was organized the war broke out in 1941, the missionaries were imprisoned by the Japanese, and the Filipinos were alone to continue the ministry.<sup>29</sup> Although obvious hindrances occurred during the war, it did not frustrate the work of the Lord.<sup>30</sup> After the war the American missionaries who survived the prison camps returned to the United States.<sup>31</sup> The Filipinos went on with the work of the Lord and took the opportunity

<sup>27</sup> Rosendo Alcantara, "The Assemblies of God After Twenty Five Years," *The Pentecostal Voice*, May 1965, 8.

<sup>28</sup> The organizational assembly transpired in San Nicolas, Villasis, Pangasinan on March 21-27, 1940. The Assemblies of God in the Philippines was incorporated and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Department of Justice of the Philippine government as the "Philippines District Council of the Assemblies of God" on July 11, 1940. See Esperanza, 32; cf. *Protestant Churches & Missions in the Philippines*, 2:309.

<sup>29</sup> See Esperanza, 35-36. See also Leland E. Johnson, *I Was Prisoner of the Japs*, Saratoga, CA: Published by the author, n.d.

<sup>30</sup> Esperanza, 36, narrates: "The war curtailed the advancement of the work. Although the Japanese did not prohibit the holding of church services, there was always suspicion of anti-Japanese activity in assembling a crowd. In some cities sermons were censored. Open air evangelistic meetings were impossible. Personal work and house-to-house visitation were the two most effective means of reaching people for Christ. *In spite of many disadvantages concomitant with the war, most of the churches won converts.* None of the ministers had been killed by the Japanese." (The italics in the quote are mine.)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

of taking the Pentecostal message to the whole country after the war.<sup>32</sup> Later on, newly appointed missionaries came to help the nationals. The emancipation of the Philippines from Japan heralded a more thriving missionary and national coordination for the growth of the Assemblies of God in the country.<sup>33</sup>

The post-war work of the PGCAG in the Philippines can be reflected in terms of a very strong emphasis on pioneering work, power evangelism and church planting that was perpetuated in the fifties, sixties, and early seventies.<sup>34</sup> The basic reason for these emphases is the Pentecostal doctrine of the Spirit baptism for the empowering of the believers to propagate the gospel.<sup>35</sup> The PGCAG perception of the relationship of the infilling of the Holy Spirit to evangelistic endeavor can be represented by the claim of Fredesdante Mendoza:

I honestly believe that we, Assemblies of God members, need to be as Pentecostal in experience, as we are in doctrine in order to propagate the Full Gospel effectively. True Pentecostals are always true in evangelism. The power promised in the book of Acts is only for those who will make evangelism the main interest of their lives. The more we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the more we

<sup>32</sup> At first the PGCAG was just a District of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States. In the Fourth District Council in Bilad, Camiling, Tarlac on December 29-31, 1945 Rodrigo Esperanza became an acting chairperson due to the absence of a District Superintendent. Since 1946, Filipinos have presided over the work of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines. The organization was incorporated as an autonomous body of Assemblies of God in the Philippines in the Eleventh District Council in Malinta, Polo, Bulacan (now Malinta, Valenzuela, Metro Manila) on April 20-24, 1953. The name Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God was incorporated and registered with the Security and Exchange Commission on September 23, 1953. See Esperanza, 56; cf. *Protestant Churches & Missions in the Philippines*, 2:311.

<sup>33</sup> See Esperanza, 37-51, for the stories of the missionary outreaches with the nationals as co-laborers and the names of the people involved. Cf. *Protestant Churches & Missions in the Philippines*, 2:309-10.

<sup>34</sup> Most of the information in these decades on strong evangelism and church planting by the PGCAG constituents, both local and national, are recorded in *The Pentecostal Voice* which was the official PGCAG magazine in this period.

<sup>35</sup> This attitude among the PGCAG ministers is well expressed by Eli Javier, "The Pentecostal Legacy: A Personal Memoir," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8/2 (July 2005): 289-310.

shall evangelize; and the more we shall be filled with the Holy Spirit. God help us to be real Pentecostal in doctrine, in experience and in practice. May He ever remind us that the Pentecostal experience is not the end in itself: for God fills us with the Holy Spirit in order to equip us for the greatest work of the Church—world evangelization.<sup>36</sup>

The Pentecostal approach to mass evangelism is accompanied by the manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles.<sup>37</sup> The demonstration of the

<sup>36</sup> Fredesdante Mendoza, "The Holy Spirit and Evangelism," *The Pentecostal Voice*, May 1969, 7.

<sup>37</sup> The demonstration of God's power was part of the Pentecostal evangelistic crusades. The following are some of the examples. According to Esperanza, 66: "A nation-wide spiritual awakening came with the ministry of Clifton Erickson at Roxas Park in front of the Manila City Hall on January 24 to February 21, 1954. . . . Roxas Park became a scene of hundreds of miracles. . . . Other evangelists at Roxas Park were Oral Roberts in 1956, Rudy Cerullo in 1959 and T. L. Osborn in 1963. In all these meetings the power of God to save and to heal was demonstrated in many ways. Blind eyes were opened, deaf ears unstopped, goiters disappeared, cancers melted away and the lame walked." "Meeting the Challenge of the Bicol Region," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1967, 5, 7, reports that in 1958 three ministers of the Assemblies of God, namely Ernest Sjoberg, Eliseo Sadorra and Urias Ronquillo, won the hearts of the Bicolanos. They came to Bicol "bringing [the] 'Good News' and to set this region aflame with the fire of Pentecost." Nilo Lapasaran, "Revival in Western Visayas," *The Pentecostal Voice*, June 1970, 13, 18, reports: "District Superintendent Fausto Virgo, who is also director of evangelism for [his] district . . . reported that scores had responded to the invitation to accept Christ as Savior. There were many healings and manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit of God." "Pancol, Taytay, Palawan," *The Pentecostal Voice*, September 1970, 13, reports: "God is wonderfully performing miracles here in Palawan by casting out demons, healing diverse kinds of sickness, and transforming twisted lives. [A] woman who was devil-possessed and did not respond to the doctor nor [the] herbolario . . . [was] healed when Pastor Sumoroy prayed for her." "Healed," *The Pentecostal Voice*, May 1970, 13, authenticates the salvation healing crusade of Rev. Casimero Lapura and Rev. Michael Pilapil in Northern Mindanao with pictures of a person who was deaf before but now can hear; a deaf-mute girl then but now learning to speak; and a goiter that disappeared. Cf. Casimero Lapura, "Mindanao Crusades to Plant a Church in Every Municipality," *The Pentecostal Voice*, November 1970, 13, who claims: "The Lord gave us a great success in our crusades held at Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur; Tudela, Misamis Occidental; and Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. Many marvelous

miraculous is expected in the evangelistic meetings and church revivals.<sup>38</sup> This manner of proclaiming the gospel in the power of God can be depicted by the report of W. Pasiliao:

Evangelist Weekly who came to campaign for more souls and to pray for the sick in Dagupan City [had an evangelistic crusade which he] held for 2 weeks. [The crusade] began May 29, 1966. Doubtless on that very night, May 29th, sick people were prayed for. Among those healed were a woman from Binmaley, Pangasinan, a lady teacher from the Bicol region, two old women from Lingayen, Pangasinan, and an employee in the local district Engineer's office. They are mostly hopeless cases who believed that the omnipotent and omniscient Lord will surely heal, and where doctors fail, God cures and succeeds. These meetings brought notable results. Evident healings through prayer are tangible proofs of God's power which did not only make people believe and wonder but succumbed to the message preached. Wonderful manifestations of God's Spirit wrought in the midst of the people brought wonders in deed and reality.<sup>39</sup>

During the late seventies and eighties, the strong impetus for evangelism was still there among the PGCAG constituents.<sup>40</sup> During these decades

healings and miracles have transpired in our crusades, but the greatest of all miracles is the salvation of souls. This is always our expectation, to see souls saved during our meetings."

<sup>38</sup> See my discussion of power evangelism in Roli G. dela Cruz, "Missions Endeavor through the Gifts of the Spirit: The Reality of its Dynamic Power," *Year bang eul hyang ha yeo* [Korean title] *Toward the Tribes in the World* [ET] (May-June 1999): 16-21.

<sup>39</sup> Wily Pasiliao, "God Wrought Wonders and Miracles in Dagupan City," *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1966, 10.

<sup>40</sup> The information about this phase of the history of PGCAG is reflected in *Intercom* which has been the official publication of PGCAG since the mid-seventies to the present. The emphasis on evangelism is still obvious in the printed denominational paper of PGCAG. See for example Salvador Cayabyab, "A Greater Task," *Intercom*, July-September 1980, 2; Wesley, Weekly, "Worldtouch," *Intercom*, September 1987, 7; Eleazer E. Javier, "How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?," *Intercom*, June 1992, 3.

some PGCAG prominent preachers were involved with the Charismatic movement.<sup>41</sup> The denomination focused more on strategies for growth and development.<sup>42</sup> During this period hotel based churches of the PGCAG developed on neutral grounds that attracted the Catholic Charismatics.<sup>43</sup> It also got exposed to the larger evangelical endeavor.<sup>44</sup> The nineties came and PGCAG participated in the worldwide program of the Assemblies of God called "Decade of Harvest" and still emphasizes evangelism by the power of the Spirit of God.<sup>45</sup> The first decade of the second millennium continues to see the growth of the PGCAG through powerful preaching of the gospel. The current goal of the PGCAG is to have 5,000 churches by 2010.<sup>46</sup>

The history of PGCAG reflects the denomination's emphasis and commitment to the evangelization of the world as the New Testament emphasis on the eschatological purpose of the church's existence.<sup>47</sup> The

<sup>41</sup> See Roli G. dela Cruz, "Salvation in Christ and Baptism in Spirit: A Response to Robert Menzies, 'Evidential Tongues: An Essay on Theological Method'." *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1/2 (July 1998): 125-147, especially 137ff.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance the inclinations of Eleazer E. Javier, "Priorities in the 80's (Part I)," *Intercom*, July 1978, 1; and Eleazer E. Javier, "Priorities in the 80's (Part II)," *Intercom*, November-December, 1978, 1, 2. Cf. the appeal of Salvador Cayabyab, "The Challenge of Growth," *Intercom*, January-March 1980, 2; and Cayabyab, "A Greater Task," 2. For another example see "AG Leaders Plan Strategy," *Intercom*, October-December, 1982, 1.

<sup>43</sup> See Alex B. Fuentes, "A Church in a Neutral Turf: A History of the Hotel Ministry in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian Mission* 6/1 (March 2004): 81-96.

<sup>44</sup> So as part of a larger evangelical Christianity PGCAG participated in Lausanne I and Lausanne II. See Eleazer E. Javier, "Impressions on the Lausanne Congress," *Intercom*, September 1974, 1, 4; and Felipe A. Acena, "Lausanne II in Manila and Philippine Congress," *Intercom*, July 1989, 1. Thus the PGCAG constituency believes that the world can be won for Christ through the united effort and unreserved cooperation of the different Christian groups.

<sup>45</sup> See "PGCAG Kicks-Off 50th Year Fete; Launches 'Decade of Harvest'," *Intercom*, March 1990, 1, 7; "Decade of Harvest . . . To 2000, Phils. Gen. Council [of the] Assemblies of God," *Intercom*, March 1990, 4, 5; "Decade of Harvest Prayer Request," *Intercom*, April 1991, 4, 5.

<sup>46</sup> See Conrado Lumahan, "Facts and Figures: A History of the Growth of the Philippine Assemblies of God," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8/2 (July 2005): 344.

<sup>47</sup> This notion is still accented in PGCAG in the nineties. See Javier, "How Shall They Hear Without A Preacher?" 3; see also Hermenegildo A. Espinosa, Sr., "Zeal in the Service of the Lord," *Intercom*, September 1992, 5.

PGCAG's sustenance of fervor and motivation to reach the lost in its past history is noteworthy.<sup>48</sup> The movement's past history has already been shaped by Pentecostal pioneers. What will be written in the future about PGCAG, however, is most crucial and should be shaped by the next generation of Pentecostal believers according to the light of the continuity of the emphasis on the eschatological mission of the Spirit empowered believers until Christ comes back.

### 3. Doctrinal Survey of the PGCAG

It is explicit that at the outset of understanding the purpose of the existence of the church that PGCAG exists to do the Great Commission.<sup>49</sup> The perception of the mission of an existing Christian group, such as the PGCAG, is important for advancement in the ministry. The constitution and by-laws of the PGCAG reflect the denomination's understanding of the purpose of the existence of the organization. Here the denomination

<sup>48</sup> It is notable to observe the growth of the PGCAG constituency all through these years. According to the report of the late PGCAG Secretary Rev. Rudy Esperanza as recorded by *Philippine Directory of Christian Churches, Mission Boards and Related Organizations 1961*, January 1961, 7-8, the number of Assemblies of God churches in the Philippines were as follows: "Organized - 161" and "Unorganized - 262." Recently the acting PGCAG Superintendent Rev. David Sobrepena reports to the January 1996 Assemblies of God Asian Missions Association (AGAMA) Conference that the "latest count indicates a total of 2,176 churches in fellowship" with the PGCAG. Rev. Sobrepena, being a member of the Board of Governors of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), continues to report that: "The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches classify the Assemblies of God as the largest evangelical denomination in the country." He further reports that the PGCAG also started sending foreign missionaries. "[The PGCAG] now have five missionaries serving in Cambodia where they have planted eight churches to date." See "News Briefs, Philippines," *Agama Vision*, April-June 1996, 9. The incumbent General Secretary of PGCAG Rev. Felipe Acena reports that as of March 31, 1997 there are 1,165 "affiliated churches" with the PGCAG. He also notes that there are 1,866 churches recognized in the nineteen (19) PGCAG districts. See Felipe Acena, "Report of the General Secretary on the 33rd General Council on April 22-25, 1997 at Cebu City, Philippines," 3.

<sup>49</sup> The first of the prerogatives of PGCAG in Article IV of its "Constitution and By-laws" (1964), 2, is as follows: "To promote the evangelization of the Philippines and the world by Scriptural means."

articulates the nature and function of the church as an organization existing as a witness of Jesus Christ to a lost world.<sup>50</sup>

The statement of beliefs or the doctrinal positions of the denomination are commonly known as the Statement of Fundamental Truths. These Fundamental Truths are sixteen statements of the foundational doctrines of the PGCAG and the Assemblies of God in the whole world. The Fundamental Doctrines reflect the understanding in the Assemblies of God of the eschatological function of the church while waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is reflected in the Statement of the Fundamental Doctrines number ten:

THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION. The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven (Eph 1:22,23; Heb 12:23). Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshipped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is: a. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16). b. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Cor 12:13). c. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Cor 14:12). The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience: a. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Heb 2:3,4). b. Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (1 Cor 12, 13 and 14). c. Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression

<sup>50</sup> As reflected in the Statement of Purpose of PGCAG in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 1.

of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ (Gal 5:22-26; 1 Cor 14:12; Eph 4:11,12; 1 Cor 12:28; Col 1:29).<sup>51</sup>

The PGCAG together with the rest of the Pentecostal movement sees the church as an eschatological community with a defined mission to propagate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup> The PGCAG believes in the soon return of Christ. The thirteenth Statement of Fundamental Doctrines reflects the emphasis on the imminence of the coming of the Lord: "THE BLESSED HOPE. The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the *imminent* and blessed hope of the Church (1 Thess 4:16,17; Rom 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Cor 15:51,52)."<sup>53</sup> The PGCAG also acknowledges that the eschatological purpose of the church, where it is embodied, refers to what the biblical mandate challenges the church to achieve before the return of Jesus.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the eschatological purpose of the church's existence is correctly perceived by the PGCAG which is clearly traceable in its history and explicitly indicated

<sup>51</sup> Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 6.

<sup>52</sup> See French L. Arrington, "Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic Hermeneutics," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1988, 385; cf. Statement of Purpose of PGCAG in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 6. (The italics in the quote are mine.)

<sup>54</sup> See Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; cf. Matt 24:14. The Assemblies of God "Spiritual Life Committee Report" (1991 General Council, Portland, Oregon), 8, declares: "Mark this down: the lack of missionary zeal in any church or church leader is the most direct evidence possible that no revival is present. Where people do not have God's heart for the world, they do not have God's presence—even if they think they do. They do not. No one can be a disciple of Jesus Christ and ignore the Great Commission." The Media Ministry, i.e., the Radio Department of the PGCAG gave its challenge to the PGCAG 31st General Council (April 24-28, 1995 at Bethel Bible College in Valenzuela, Metro Manila): "We can boldly assert that He allowed man to 'discover' these [media] tools so that they can be used by the church to accomplish its mandate to . . . 'make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19). . . . This media arm of the PGCAG will by the power of the Holy Spirit stir up the gifts of Assemblies of God people in the area of using media for evangelization and discipleship. The time is now!"

in its fundamental truths. There is an excitement among Pentecostal believers in general<sup>55</sup> and also in the Philippines that the Lord is coming back real soon.<sup>56</sup> The church exists to do her responsibility to propagate the gospel while the Lord Jesus Christ tarries. This consciousness should be acknowledged as the eschatological purpose of the church's existence.<sup>57</sup> This is corollary to the emphasis that the outpouring of the Spirit in the church is an eschatological sign.<sup>58</sup> The expectation then of the reality of the soon coming of the Lord Jesus is a logical, evident result of the experience of Filipino Pentecostals of the Spirit-baptism as an eschatological phenomenon for the evangelization of the world.<sup>59</sup> This experience of the Spirit brings the reality of joy in waiting for the Lord's coming. The matter of evangelizing one's neighbor becomes a necessary result of the boldness brought by the Spirit.<sup>60</sup> The blessed hope, the promise of Jesus to take the

<sup>55</sup> This thrill of the Lord's coming occurs from an "apocalyptic" perspective among the Pentecostals in general. Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series, ed. J. C. Thomas, R. D. Moore, S. J. Land (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 59, stresses that it ". . . is evidenced by a worship and witness which is crucially dependent upon the witness of the Spirit and therefore constantly concerned with the presence and parousia of Jesus Christ."

<sup>56</sup> In reading the signs of the times the imminent return of Christ is expected among the Assemblies of God believers. See Salvador Cayabyab, "Earthquake, A Sign of His Coming," *Intercom*, July-August 1976, 2. The understanding of wars or rumors of wars, sufferings, epidemics, and earthquakes as signs of the times is also reflected in T. E. Gannon, "The End-Time Challenge," *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1968, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Hiroshi Yoshiyama, "Missions are Vital to the Life of the Church," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1969, 11, points out that the work of propagating the gospel is the means of the church in preparing for the soon return of Christ. Wherefore the accomplishment of the mission of the church and the second coming of Christ cannot be separated.

<sup>58</sup> The Spirit outpouring that Joel prophesied was fulfilled in Acts 2 and continually is being fulfilled in the contemporary Pentecostal experience. It is taken seriously by Pentecostals as a sign of the eschaton. As Gannon, 4, claims that "in the last days" God's intention encompasses an extensive "outpouring of His Spirit" upon the youth based on Acts 2:17.

<sup>59</sup> Yoshiyama, 11, asserts that the purpose of Pentecost is for the end time proclamation of the gospel.

<sup>60</sup> Harold H. Kohl, "Theologically Speaking: The Holy Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, October-November 1966, 22, maintains that: "The force of Pentecost coming to an individual should be that of being thrust forth in witnessing for Christ. The



believers unto himself in glory, becomes the motivating factor of witnessing to the soon coming of the Lord.<sup>61</sup>

It is important to highlight at this juncture the fact that the unique church growth of the PGCAG should be attributed to the understanding that it is the Spirit of God that is accomplishing the work through the lives of the men and women who have experienced the Spirit baptism and thus are empowered to be mighty witnesses. T. C. Esperanza succinctly portrays the relation of Spirit-baptism and evangelism: "The Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an endowment of power for service energizes the baptized believers into a program of aggressive outreach. Evangelism permeates the life of the church."<sup>62</sup> It is also consequentially significant to underscore the point that the anticipation of the soon coming of the Christ necessitating the evangelism of one's neighbor becomes a dominant notion for the eschatology of Filipino Pentecostals. Esperanza is correct in depicting the heart of the PGCAG's understanding of its eschatological purpose:

The Philippine Assemblies of God aims to perpetuate the evangelistic fervor and missionary zeal with which the Pentecostal movement was born. With the promise and command "... ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . ." (Acts 1:8), nationals and missionaries, clergy and laity work together in winning the Philippines for God 'til Jesus comes.<sup>52</sup>

The eschatological challenge for the PGCAG concerns the occasion for the church to move supernaturally as she propagates the gospel.<sup>63</sup> The supernatural can be done by God's power in the name of Jesus through the manifestation of signs and wonders.<sup>64</sup> Hence the church may be released to do her ministry with the experience of the supernatural works of God

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shock of Pentecost coming to a community should be that of awakening to sin by Spirit-anointed testimony."

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Yoshiyama, 11.

<sup>62</sup> Esperanza, 65.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>63</sup> See Yoshiyama, 11, for further discussions.

<sup>64</sup> See Acts 3:6,16; 4:10,30; 5:12.

while Christ's return tarries.<sup>65</sup> The experience of Spirit baptism for a Pentecostal believer is understood as the gateway to move into the realm of the supernatural.<sup>66</sup> This is understood in general as the perception among Pentecostals because the experience of the Spirit's infilling brings sensitivity to the Spirit himself.<sup>67</sup> As a believer becomes aware of the power and authority of the name of Jesus he or she can trust God to move in the supernatural realm.

#### 4. Supernatural Assumption of the PGCAG

The belief of the PGCAG about the supernatural is linked to the assumption that God still moves today through the miraculous to reveal himself as he did during apostolic times.<sup>68</sup> The doctrinal assumption of the PGCAG provides the opportunity for Pentecostal believers to move supernaturally.<sup>69</sup> The view of the relationship of the Spirit baptism, holiness and the manifestation of signs and wonders can be traced in the doctrinal assumption that the Pentecostal power in Acts is still available today.<sup>70</sup> As P. G. Chappell depicts the assumption of the Holiness-Pentecostal healing movement:

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<sup>65</sup> Yoshiyama, 10-11. See also Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; cf. 1 Cor 12:1-14:40; Heb 2:3-4.

<sup>66</sup> The Spirit baptism is stated in doctrine number seven, "The Baptism in the Holy Ghost," as "subsequent to the experience of the new birth." It is also implied in the doctrine, both in number seven and ten, "The Church and Its Mission," that the experience of Spirit-baptism leads a believer to the sensitivity to move in the supernatural realm through the power of God. See Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 5-6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Yoshiyama, 11, who claims for "signs following" if there is the Spirit's anointing.

<sup>69</sup> An example of this opportunity to move in the realm of the supernatural is claimed by Rev. Alfred C. Jose who is a pastor of a local Assembly of God church in Metro Manila. He also established a school focusing on "deliverance, demonology, and church revival." The objective of the school is "to stir up [and] activate [the] spiritual gifts [in] the Body of Christ, prepare [the] church for [a] greater harvest, and strengthen [the] church foundation." As a result of his faith in what the Holy Spirit can do God is using him "effectively in the ministry" and "he is being used in church revival, seeing more signs [and] miracles, [and] setting [people] free from bondages and sicknesses." Rev. Jose further claims: "[The] signs and miracles are very clear [evidences] that the prophetic voice of God [in] the book of Acts

After acknowledging that the Pentecostal power of Acts was still available today for all believers, it was a logical step to allow for the accompanying supernatural signs. When one accepts the basic presupposition of the faith healing movement that all sickness is ultimately related to sin and Satan, and the presupposition of the Holiness movement that the believer is endowed with the Pentecostal power of Acts, then the sanctified believer, who through God has power over sin and Satan, also has power over sickness. This thesis provided the fundamental basis for the intimate connection between perfectionism and divine healing.<sup>71</sup>

Chappell clearly portrays that the Pentecostal assumption of signs and wonders is basically inherited from the Holiness roots of the movement. The expectation for miraculous healings performed in the power of God is claimed by Pentecostals as still legitimate for modern believers.<sup>72</sup> The doctrine of Pentecostals which believes in the miraculous and supernatural enhances the relationship of what is believed and taught to what is applied and practiced.<sup>73</sup>

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from Chapter 2 verses 16 ff. is very much [clearly] happening today, but we need to usher our people in fulfilling these verses in their own lives to experience the same power." See "Pastor's Profile: Rev. Alfred C. Jose," *The STDC Newsletter*, May 1995, 3.

<sup>70</sup>The relationship between Spirit-baptism, holiness, and manifestation of signs in a believer's life is taught in the PGCAG as part of the Pentecostal testimony. An encouragement to seek the promise of the Father is recognized as a command from Christ. See "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, January 1969, 1. See also "The Pastor's Profile: Rev. Oral Roberts Abellano," *STDC Newsletter*, May 1995, 3, who expresses his Pentecostal belief: "[Through] the power of the Holy Spirit we can do what Jesus did, like what He said . . . in John 14:12, 'I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father'."

<sup>71</sup>P. G. Chappell, "Healing Movements," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 1988, 357.

<sup>72</sup>Cf. Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 6, under doctrine number twelve, "Divine Healing."

<sup>73</sup>See Ward R. Williams, *Knowledge and Practice in the Assemblies of God: A Commentary on the Statement of Fundamental Truths*, rev. ed. (Lakeland, FL: Published by the author, 1988), 55-62, for a discussion of the Pentecostal

The synthesis of Pentecostal faith and the experience of reality comes as the cutting edge of the supernatural move of God in Pentecostal services.<sup>74</sup> The *Intercom*, the official magazine of PGCAG, articulates the doctrine and practice of the Assemblies of God:

The distinctive feature of the Assemblies of God is the charismatic experience we call the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Glossolalia—speaking in other tongues—is the initial physical evidence of this experience. It is the doorway to a marvelous new life in the Spirit in which the Holy Scriptures come alive and the Lord Jesus Christ is a real and personal Friend. This makes full gospel churches unique—although we stand alongside other evangelical denominations in teaching the great doctrines of the Christian faith. We believe in a personal spiritual experience that is heartfelt and Christ-centered. We take the Bible as the infallible, authoritative rule in faith and conduct—and hold that all who worship God should worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Our services are marked by fervency and informality. Music, hymns, singing, and praying are enjoyed by all, but prime importance is placed on the preaching of the Word.<sup>75</sup>

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understanding and practice of miracles and healing. Williams, 61-62, summarizes his comments about the number twelve doctrine that pertains to divine healing:

Miracles today arrest the attention of men and point them to the reality of the invisible God. We thank God for the truth of Divine Healing. We must never cease to preach it, believe it, and give it the emphasis it should have in a New Testament church. But miracles do not change the general rules under which we live our lives. "Therefore we do not lose heart." . . . We must realize that healings only minister to the temporal, bodily needs of believers, for the present time.

<sup>74</sup>Matthew S. Clark, Henry I. Lederle, et al., *What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology?* (Muckleneuk, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1983), 43, claim that: "A Pentecostal meeting has always been an event, an experience, and those who attend have always expected that something will happen, and that it will happen to them."

<sup>75</sup>"The Pentecostal Evangel Reports: The Assemblies of God Still Growing," *Intercom*, September 1974, 4.

The challenge of the demonstration of signs and wonders as an eschatological phenomenon makes the experience of the Spirit baptism functional not only in terms of the prophetic witness of the church but also in relation to the reality that the Jesus whom she preaches is the same and never changing Lord of miracles. The doctrine of the empowering of the Spirit carries with it the opportunity to believe God to move supernaturally to confirm the proclamation of the gospel with signs and wonders following. It is noteworthy that although the Assemblies of God believes in the supernatural and informality, the prime importance of its gathering is given to the preaching of the word, and the center of faith is based on the Bible. The former General Superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States, Rev. Thomas Zimmerman, articulates the importance of the relation of the word to experience: "The Pentecostal movement has a tremendous responsibility to the present-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit that is everywhere apparent in the world today. Our responsibility centers in three general areas: (1) experience; (2) example; and (3) exposition."<sup>76</sup>

The doctrinal assumption of the PGCAG, together with the rest of the classical Pentecostals, combines the biblical teaching and contemporary experience. Pentecostals believe that the experience of the modern Pentecostal outpouring and the empowerment of the Spirit is for all. It is not only limited to Pentecostals. The experience is for all whom God will call (Acts 2:38-39; cf. 5:32b). The eschatological challenge, therefore, for the PGCAG is to be an example, in word and deed, so that others may also have the opportunity to enjoy the experience of the Spirit and the power of God in the last days.

##### 5. Pragmatic Emphasis of the PGCAG

Since the Pentecostal movement believes in the demonstration of the power of God in terms of signs and wonders as a part of Christian experience, it has taken the challenge to believe for the manifestation of

<sup>76</sup>Thomas Zimmerman, "The Pentecostal Movement's Responsibility to the Present-Day Outpouring," *The Pentecostal Voice*, February 1965, 4.

miracles in the ministry of the church.<sup>77</sup> The belief in signs and wonders is a doctrinal assumption in the Pentecostal movement. This assumption brings pragmatism to Pentecostals in praying for the sick for healing or hopes for the miraculous intervention of God together with the salvation of souls. The belief that signs will follow them that believe is expressed in expecting God's mighty power through the manifestations of healings and miracles in the gathering of the people of God. The supernatural is also emphasized in terms of pragmatic significance as evidence of the move of God in the proclamation of the gospel. As Rev. Eleazer E. Javier, the former General Superintendent of the PGCAG, succinctly elucidates:

It was in 1940 when the work of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines was formally organized. The history of the Assemblies of God is marked by the supernatural work of God. This is how it should be, then, now and in the future. Human organization is simply a vehicle to expedite the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation.<sup>78</sup>

It is also as important to note together with the doctrinal assumption of Pentecostals that pragmatism is also accented in the occasion of experiencing the supernatural evidences of the power of the almighty.<sup>79</sup> The signs and wonders following the preaching of the gospel brings life to the reality of what Acts narrates. The experiences of the primitive church become available to the believers of today making the written story of the church alive and exciting as experienced by the believers both then and now. Esperanza gave a synopsis of how the PGCAG was established in its early days with signs following:

<sup>77</sup>It should be noted that the first call of the general convention of the Pentecostals in 1914 was addressed to the "saints who believe in the baptism with the Holy Ghost with signs following." See Brumback, 157.

<sup>78</sup>From the Foreword of Rev. Eleazer E. Javier, General Superintendent/President of the PGCAG in *Rules of Church Government* (1980).

<sup>79</sup>W. Weekley, as quoted by Harold Kohl, "Make Room for the Holy Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1966, 4, makes a statement that exemplifies Pentecostal pragmatism: "People will do what you preach for them to do. If you want people to be saved, you must preach salvation. If you want people to tithe, you must preach tithing. If you want people to be healed, you must preach healing. If you want people to be baptized in the Holy Ghost, you must preach the baptism in the Holy Ghost."

Unique in origin, the Philippine Assemblies of God was not begun by missionaries from the United States where the Pentecostal movement has its roots. Rather, the work was pioneered by Filipinos who came to the States and were converted, trained and called to the ministry. With a love for their country and people, these Filipinos went home to the Philippines and preached the gospel. Sinners were converted, the sick were healed, and believers baptized in the Holy Spirit. Churches were born. For purposes of cooperation and fellowship, these preachers organized themselves with the help of American missionaries into a duly organized religious body.<sup>80</sup>

Thus the historical circumstances of the PGCAG reflect that the proclamation of the word with the appreciation of the Spirit's anointing did not only give boldness but even certainty and the same excitement as that of the New Testament church.

The belief in wonders and miracles also contributes to the growth of the PGCAG in terms of numbers of people touched by the power of God. Church services with Pentecostal preaching that have the indications of the supernatural practically attract people to observe and see what God is doing. Honorato B. Eslao vividly depicts the Pentecostal assemblies:

To the Pentecostal believer a revival is the dramatic realization of the Pentecost doctrine about the believed descent of the Holy Spirit accompanied by the phenomena of speaking in strange languages, and sometimes even faith healing. He believes that these marvels are the sole conclusive evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and as such the necessary means to salvation. A Pentecostal thinks that "God has in mind to perform miracles in our everyday life." And the wonders of healing mean the liberation of the sick from the oppression of the devil, from "deaf spirits, dumb spirits, insane spirits, infirm spirits, deceiving spirits, . . . and foul spirits." On every healing day there is a mass rush to get prayed for. The sick, the weary and the mentally depressed fall in line waiting for the imposition of hands and the promised remedy to their problems

<sup>80</sup> Esperanza, 83.

through faith. From these "miracle" sessions news of remarkable cures get around; then more and more spectators come.<sup>81</sup>

The stress on pragmatism in evangelistic crusades and revival meetings of Pentecostal churches does not only confirm the biblical truth written in the Bible but also invites a believer to take what the word of God says and trust the almighty for results.<sup>82</sup> This relationship between the truth of the word and the reality of faith experiences becomes the attracting feature of Pentecostalism to the unbelievers who are sincerely seeking God.

Although in any revival movement the sincere belief in what the word of God says may go to extremes,<sup>83</sup> bring inconvenient disappointments and create serious sophistications, it authenticates one thing and that is that the reality of the word of God can be experienced even today.<sup>84</sup> It should be admitted, nevertheless, that although the reality of the experience, subjective as it is, cannot establish a theological truth, it does substantiate the reality of what the sovereign almighty God says in his word. The eschatological challenge to the enthusiastic and pragmatic PGCAG constituency is to be a Pentecostal in a "scriptural sense."<sup>85</sup> Zealous Pentecostals profess that they are also people of the Scriptures. Hence, for a Pentecostal the authority of the word of God is above all miracles or signs and wonders. The PGCAG maintains that: "The Bible is our all sufficient rule for faith and practice."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Honorato B. Eslao, "How Pentecostals Attract Converts," *The Pentecostal Voice*, September 1967, 10.

<sup>82</sup> See Esperanza, 65-69.

<sup>83</sup> Horton, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 16-24, admits and narrates the extreme emphasis of the Pentecostals, at least in their initial history.

<sup>84</sup> Experience is extremely important in the Pentecostal claim. Hence the word, faith and practice cannot be separated from each other. A Pentecostal believes that the power of God is accomplished in Jesus Christ. As Clark, Lederle, et al., 43-44, affirm that without the experience "there cannot be a true identification with the church of the Book of Acts, either in mission or in essence."

<sup>85</sup> W. Morton, "In More than Name . . . Pentecostal," *The Pentecostal Voice*, June 1966, 23, asserts: "To be a Pentecostal in the scriptural sense means to be filled with love and power. It means to preach the word of reconciliation with such conviction that men and women are forced to make decisions. It means to do mighty exploits in the name of the Lord . . ."

<sup>86</sup> Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* (1980), 2. See also, under doctrine number one, "The Scriptures Inspired," 2.

## 6. Epilogue: Historical Consciousness and Doctrinal Influence

The history and the doctrine of the PGCAG depict the clear understanding of and emphasis upon the mission of the church as an eschatological community. This means that the church is being filled with the Spirit to propagate the gospel of Christ. What made the Filipino young men who were saved and filled with the Spirit in the United States come back to the Philippines was their experience which became the foundation of the PGCAG. The Statement of the Fundamental Truths declares that the mission of the PGCAG is to preach the gospel in the power of the Spirit. The experience of the Spirit baptism gives a dare for Pentecostals to show the power of God through the miraculous. The doctrine of PGCAG opens an avenue for believers to practice the supernatural in the name of the Lord Jesus. The pragmatism of Pentecostals entails the belief that signs following the preaching of the word confirm the authority of the message of the gospel.

The PGCAG devotes itself to the evangelistic preaching to the world assuming its distinctive doctrine of the Spirit-baptism for empowerment in mission. The urgency of the task of proclamation is well epitomized in the premillennial eschatology of Pentecostals. As Christ is expected to come soon, Pentecostals regard that the church has the responsibility to evangelize the whole world and then the end will come. For Pentecostals the missiological emphasis of Acts 1:8 brings a corollary theological motif that a believer is empowered by the Spirit to do his mission. This experience of the empowering of the Spirit becomes normative for every believer in Acts, for all believers have the vocation to proclaim the gospel to all the world.<sup>87</sup> Fernando R. Basilio argues it well:

<sup>87</sup> Robert P. Menzies, "Coming to Terms With an Evangelical Heritage," in *Contemporary Issues in Pentecostal Theology*, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary First Annual Pentecostal Lectureship Series (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1993), 105, argues: "Luke's intent to teach the normative character of the Pentecostal gift is nowhere more clearly evident than in Acts 2:38-39. The 'promise' of the Spirit is explicitly stated to be 'for all whom the Lord our God will call' (Acts 2:39, NIV). An examination of the relevant texts reveals that 'the promise of the Father' (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4; cf. 2:33) and 'the promise' with reference to the Spirit (Acts 2:38[-39]) find their origin in Joel 2:28: 'I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy . . . ' For Luke the promise with reference to the Spirit refers to the gift of the Spirit of prophecy promised in Joel

The "baptism with the Holy Spirit" is a baptism of power, i.e., power to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the risen Lord who promised His disciples, ". . . you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8, NASB, all italics mine). . . . Pentecostals are in agreement that the promise in [Acts] 1:5 was fulfilled in [Acts 2]. Hence the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost constitutes the disciples' own baptism with the Holy Spirit. . . . Now that explanation is crucial. In short, one speaks with tongues by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is a characteristic Lukan theology. It is important to note that Luke also describes speaking with tongues in the same verse (2:4) in terms of being "filled with the Spirit." But whether "baptized" or "filled", the point is that the disciples were filling the role of witnesses at the precise moment they were baptized or filled. Thus, their experience served the purpose of 1:8. . . . He inspired the disciples to speak in the "tongues" of the crowd, thereby making them Christ's witnesses; and He used the same phenomenon (including Peter's sermon, note same verb for "speak" in 2:4 and v. 14) to bring the people to a saving knowledge of the Messiah. . . . [In] 2:4, "speaking in tongues" is a distinctive Lukan vocabulary for inspired speech, and nothing more. . . . What then does this finding mean for us? Simply put, Luke's terminologies of "baptism" and "filled with the Spirit" are simply descriptive of a potentially repeatable experience where the disciple, by inspiration of the Spirit, becomes at that very moment a witness for Christ, within the purview of Acts 1:8.<sup>88</sup>

2:28. This promise, which is initially fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2:4), enables the disciples to take up their prophetic vocation to the world."

<sup>88</sup> Fernando R. Basilio, "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: With what "tongue" does one speak?" *Bethel Light*, February 1995, 11.