

[JPT 1 (1992) 109-134]

YIELDING TO THE SPIRIT: A PENTECOSTAL APPROACH TO
GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Jackie David Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns

Church of God School of Theology
900 Walker St NE, Cleveland, TN 37311, USA

What, if anything, should be the distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal group Bible study? Bible study materials published by Pentecostals seem to assume they are Pentecostal because they contain frequent references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and Acts 2.4.¹ This assumption implies that one has only to take theologically conservative, Scripture-based curricula, remove any objectionable material, add to it the doctrinal distinctives of Pentecostalism and the results will be Pentecostal Bible study.² It is ironic that a movement that laid claim to the restoration of biblical Christianity with a corresponding denunciation of creeds should so easily take an essentially credal approach to evaluating study materials.

There exists among Pentecostals a certain inclination toward a false dichotomy between content and process. The dichotomy is frequently expressed in terms of the eternal nature of Scripture and the supposed temporal nature of methods. Methods are considered value-free tools which do not affect the truths they mediate and therefore may be

1. This generalization is based upon examinations of Sunday school and elective curricula published by four leading North American Pentecostal denominations: Assemblies of God, Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), Pentecostal Holiness and Church of God of Prophecy.

2. Several Pentecostal denominations are currently editing and publishing Sunday school curricula developed by evangelical publishers such as David C. Cook.

borrowed from any number of sources, the social sciences being currently favored. Consequently, Pentecostals have failed to consider the implications of their dynamic belief system for issues of epistemology. The end result of this failure is that we may actually be using methods which negate the very message we are attempting to communicate. We may be operating out of a hermeneutic that is inconsistent with or even in opposition to our very identity. Specifically, our methods may be militating against the experiential and relational dimensions of our faith.

Pentecostals are only now beginning to formulate a hermeneutic which takes seriously the dynamics of the Pentecostal faith. We have found the rationalism of twentieth-century evangelical Christianity to be an inadequate vehicle for passing on a faith which honors the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary world. Walter Hollenweger has highlighted this difficulty and noted that Pentecostal theologizing has often been ignorant of its own distinctive ethos.³ William MacDonald has also highlighted the dynamic, oral witness of Pentecostalism in which testimonies of encounters with the living word are affirmed in relation to the written word, which serves as a check.⁴ Michael Dowd has aptly described the dilemma facing Pentecostals attempting to formulate a Pentecostal hermeneutic: 'When the only "language game" in town is rationalism it is not hard to understand why an experiential, relational, emotional and moral faith would choose not to play by the rules'.⁵

Dowd called for a Pentecostal approach to Scripture that would incorporate both the mind and the affective-spiritual dimensions of existence. Francis Martin added that it is only through 'exegesis of the Spirit' that true understanding and appropriation of Scripture is possible.⁶ While dialogue and study are rapidly emerging,⁷ it is evident

3. In particular see W.J. Hollenweger, 'Creator Spiritus', *Theology* 81 (1978), pp. 32-40, and his 'Flowers and Songs: A Mexican Contribution to Theological Hermeneutics', *International Review of Mission* 60 (1971), pp. 232-44.

4. W.G. MacDonald, 'Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint', in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism* (ed. R. Spittler; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 58-74.

5. M.B. Dowd, 'Contours of a Narrative Pentecostal Theology and Practice' (paper presented to the 15th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1985).

6. F. Martin, 'Spirit and Flesh in the Doing of Theology' (paper presented to the

that much work is yet to be done to clarify the relationship between Pentecostal beliefs and Pentecostal processes.

The objective of this paper is to contribute to the ongoing discussion a paradigm for a Pentecostal approach to small group Bible study. We have attempted to build this paradigm upon a Pentecostal epistemology⁸ that is grounded first in the biblical understanding of coming 'to know' God and second in a dialogue with the epistemology of *praxis*.

*Yada, the Paraclete, and the Scriptures: Basis
for a Pentecostal Epistemology*

It was suggested above that contrary to the experiential and relational nature of their faith, Pentecostals routinely dichotomize the content of Scripture from the learning processes which are reflected in Scripture. Such a dichotomy fails to see the unity between the God who is to be known and how that God wishes to be known. However, Scripture itself is clear that the two cannot be disjoined. Their unity may be clearly seen in the meaning of 'to know' in both the Old and New Testaments, the Johannine portrait of the Paraclete as teacher, the nature of the church as covenant community and the nature of Scripture as the word of God. In these the foundation for a Pentecostal epistemology is established.

15th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1985).

7. Note J.K. Byrd, 'Formulation of a Classical Pentecostal Homiletic in Dialogue with Contemporary Protestant Homiletics' (PhD dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990), and 'Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Theory and Pentecostal Proclamation' (paper presented to the 21st Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1991). Also, R.D. Israel, D.E. Albrecht and R.G. McNally, 'Pentecostals and Hermeneutics: Texts, Rituals and Community' (paper presented to the 20th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1990).

8. We have chosen the phrase 'Pentecostal epistemology' in order to convey our belief that there is an approach to knowledge that is consistent with Pentecostal faith, experience and practice. What follows is an attempt to describe such an approach. It is not our intention to imply that Pentecostal experience gives rise to a special form of knowledge unavailable outside of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As the text reveals, our true concern is for a biblical epistemology, an approach to knowing God that is consistent with the character of his personal self-disclosure as offered in Scripture.

Yada: A Way of Knowing

There exists in the Old and New Testaments a relatively consistent understanding of how one comes 'to know'. This understanding is rooted in Hebrew thought and may be contrasted with Greek approaches to knowledge. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for 'to know' is *yada* (יָדָע). In general *yada* is treated as knowledge which comes through experience.⁹ O.A. Piper has added that this knowledge implies an awareness of the specific relationship in which the knower stands with the object being experienced so that 'full comprehension of the object manifests itself in action which corresponds to the relationship apprehended. . .'.¹⁰ Thomas Groome has concluded that *yada* is knowing 'more by the heart than by the mind, knowing that arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active and intentional engagement in lived experience'.¹¹ It is significant that *yada* was used as an euphemism for lovemaking and that the past participle of *yada* was used for a good friend or confidant.

This dynamic, experiential, relational knowledge stands in stark contrast to the Greek approach to knowledge characteristic of the word *ginoskein* (γινώσκειν), which involved a standing back from something in order objectively to 'know it'. In comparing *ginoskein* to *yada*, Rudolf Bultmann states, 'the OT usage is much broader than the Greek, and the element of objective verification is less prominent than that of detecting or feeling or learning by experience'.¹²

With this understanding, if a person knew God he or she was encountered by one who lived in the midst of history and who initiated a covenant relationship which called for a response of the total person. Knowledge of God, therefore, was not measured by the

9. J.P. Lewis, 'יָדָע', in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, I (ed. R.L. Harris; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp. 366-68. It is not our intention to imply the existence of a static definition for the term *yada*. As with all literature, precise meaning is determined by context. James Barr has highlighted the diverse meanings of *yada* in the Old Testament. See his *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 19-23. However, the evidence is overwhelming that the Hebrews operated out of an epistemology which emphasized encounter and response.

10. A. Piper, 'Knowledge', *IDB*, III, pp. 42-48.

11. T. Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 141.

12. R. Bultmann, 'γινώσκω', *TDNT*, I, pp. 689-719.

information one possessed but by how one was living in response to God. A person was ignorant or a fool not because of the lack of awareness of facts about God but rather because of a failure to do the will of God.¹³ Ignorance, then, implies guilt as Bultmann explains:

Thus knowledge has an element of acknowledgement. But it also has an element of emotion, or better, of movement of will, so that ignorance means guilt as well as error. . . . To know Him or His name is to confess or to acknowledge Him, to give Him honor and to obey His will.¹⁴

The New Testament, while employing Greek terms, continues the Hebraic understanding of 'to know'.¹⁵ Knowing the Lord is still viewed as the result of encountering God in a manner that results in submission to his will but with the focus being on knowing God through Jesus Christ. To know God requires obedient and grateful acknowledgment of the deeds and commandments of Jesus. Therefore, 'Christian knowledge is not a fixed possession but develops in the life of the Christian as lasting obedience and reflection'.¹⁶

John's first epistle provides a rich illustration of the epistemological grounding of the New Testament. He seems intentionally to play against the Greek understanding of knowledge and attacks its implications for the Christian life, that is, that it is possible to know Jesus without conforming to him. For John, knowledge of God is grounded in a loving relationship (1 Jn 4.3, 16, 20), and this knowledge is manifest through obedience to the known will of God (2.3-5; 5.1-5). God is known through his entering into human history as flesh, and knowledge of him is inseparable from the manifestation of his

13. G.J. Botterweck, 'ידע', *TDOT*, V, pp. 448-81.

14. Bultmann, 'γινώσκω', p. 698. In his treatment of Old Testament theology from a canonical context, Brevard Childs also reached similar conclusions concerning knowledge of God in the Old Testament.

To know God is to know his will. In the Old Testament to know God is not a mystical experience or merely an inter-personal relationship. Nor is it a feeling of spirituality. Rather, the knowledge of God is defined throughout as obedience to his will which has a content. . . . Knowledge of his person and will are identical, and both are grounded in his self-revelation. To lack knowledge of God is described as disobeying his will and therefore evokes his anger (*Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], p. 51).

15. Piper, 'Knowledge', p. 44.

16. Bultmann, 'γινώσκω', p. 707.

lordship over life (5.6-12). Thus we know that we know him if we obey his commands (2.3).

The Paraclete: A Means of Knowing

If the first Johannine epistle describes the nature of knowing God through Christ Jesus, the Paraclete sayings in the Gospel of John describe the means of attaining that knowledge. There are five sayings (14.16-17, 25-26; 15.26-27; 16.7-11, 12-15), each of which could be isolated as literary units but could also fit within the larger text of the 'Final Discourse' of Jesus to form a homogeneous and coherent unit. Raymond Brown has demonstrated that Jesus and the Paraclete represent a tandem relationship of two salvific figures in the pattern of Moses and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha.¹⁷ The Paraclete was understood to be a 'second Jesus' through whom Jesus was to be experienced. Eskil Franck has further demonstrated that the primary character of these sayings was didactic rather than forensic as is often assumed.¹⁸ The Johannine portrait of Jesus as rabbi or teacher is thus extended to the Paraclete so that Jesus offered to the disciples what might be called a pneumatic epistemology. He and the Father would be known through the teaching activity of the Spirit.

Three pneumatic epistemological themes, relevant to this present study, emerge from the Final Discourse.¹⁹ *First, the Spirit would teach by bringing experiential knowledge of God.* Jesus taught that to know him was to know the Father (Jn 14.7) and that when the Paraclete came the disciples would know that Christ is in the Father, they are in Christ, and Christ is in them (14.20). Thus, the indwelling of the Paraclete would actualize the indwelling of the Father and Son and fulfill the prayer of Christ for the unity of the disciples and their unity with the Godhead (17.21). The role of the Spirit would be to cause believers to know the Lord God in the sense of knowing by intimate encounter.

17. R.E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 13 (1967), pp. 120-24.

18. E. Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (Lund: Gleerup, 1985), pp. 13-68.

19. For a more thorough treatment of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit see J.D. Johns, 'The Pedagogy of the Holy Spirit according to the Early Christian Tradition' (EdD dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1987; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1989).

Secondly, the central focus of the didactic function of the Paraclete was that the Spirit would communicate the words of Jesus. In the second Paraclete saying (14.25-26) Jesus asserted that the Paraclete would teach the disciples all things and remind them of everything he had said. These teaching and reminding activities of the Spirit would center around the historic words of Jesus. The task of the Spirit would be to bring the fullness of those teachings to the consciousness of the disciples. This would be a representation of his words in a living manner so that his commands would be freshly and appropriately applied to the experiences of the disciples.²⁰

According to the final Paraclete saying (16.12-15) the Spirit would speak after Christ his ongoing message to the disciples. The content of the ongoing message would certainly be consonant with the historic life and teachings of Christ but would not be limited to them. The Spirit would bring new information, information the disciples would need to continue to exist in the sphere of all truth. This teaching activity would center on the glorification of Christ by communicating, or literally 'making known', that which is 'of Christ', that which belongs to Christ and the Father.

The thrust of both passages was to assure the disciples of the continuation of the teaching ministry of Jesus in spite of his physical removal from them. The words of Christ were of utmost importance and the Paraclete as a personal presence would assure proper reception of and response to them; both to the glory of Christ. But the true significance of the words was that they were of Jesus and of the Father.

Thirdly, the Spirit would serve as an internal impetus for the standards of relational life in Christ. In the discourses, the teachings of Jesus were refined into the central command to love one another (13.34; 15.9, 10, 12, 17). Love was the essential characteristic of a disciple and the motivational force behind obedience to Jesus (14.15, 21, 23; 15.13). Love as expressed in obedience was to be the disciples' means of communion with the Father (14.21, 23; 16.27). Even the relationship of Jesus and the Father was described in terms of love (14.31; 15.10). Further, the witness of the disciples before the world was dependent upon their love for each other (13.35; 14.31). In as much as these functions (i.e. obedience to Jesus, communion with the

20. Brown, 'Paraclete', p. 129.

Father and bearing witness) were attributed to the Paraclete, it follows that the Spirit would serve to actualize within the disciples this new standard of living.²¹ Thus the Spirit brought communion with God and the corresponding knowledge of God was linked to knowledge of and loving relationship with the members of the new covenant.

The Covenant Community: Context for Knowing

The covenant community forms the context for encounter with God and the context for interpretation of the resulting transformation. The covenant which God offers to people is a covenant to be the people of God. He dwells in the midst of his people so that the church, being grounded in covenant relations, operates within an epistemology not of detachment and manipulation (which is a result of operating only with facts and principles) but rather of *participation and accountability*.²² The community of the Spirit gives a corporate history to the knowing of God, and it judges and is judged by individual experiences. There is therefore the avoidance of privatized subjectivism on the one hand and totalitarian objectivism on the other.

Bible study in this context is an avenue of communion with God and with others. It is not to be merely an exercise of individual interpretation in which the private self reigns. In the community of the Spirit there is no room for private knowledge as expressed in the slogan 'one truth for you, another for me, and never mind the difference'. Neither is there room for 'objectivist tyranny' in which concern for the *Truth* gives rise to the slogan 'there is one truth for me, the same for you, and I mind very much the difference'.

Knowledge, therefore, in the community of the Spirit is both a desire to know and to be known. As we are known by that which we desire to know we advance to the very heart of truth. This type of

21. Likewise, the Spirit may be linked to the fulfillment of the teachings of Jesus concerning joy (15.11; 16.20-22) and peace (14.27; 16.33). These were gifts from Jesus through his words (15.11; 16.33) and presence (16.22, 33) and hence, it may be deduced, would be received through the Spirit.

22. For an insightful treatment of a relational epistemology see P. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983). Palmer calls for a departure from the 'information transmission' model to one that is grounded in an epistemology that honors the personalness of the knowing process. In such a context education becomes spiritual formation in which there is community and obedience to the truth.

knowledge is frightening. Like the Israelites at Sinai, we are inclined to shrink from being known and exposed for who we are in light of who God is. However, the Holy Spirit offers to us a personal but corporate hope of transformation and relationship with the one who knows us and yet loves us, so that we can offer to others a relationship that both knows and loves.

Role of Scripture

Having discussed the nature, means and context for knowing God, there remains the question of the place of Scripture in the process. Pentecostals are 'people of the Book'. Their allegiance to the Bible as the word of God and therefore the authority for Christian living is unwavering. Like Evangelicals they proclaim with Donald Bloesch that their

supreme authority is the Word of God revealed and embodied in Jesus Christ and attested and recorded in sacred Scripture. This Word is not simply a past event but a living reality that meets us as we encounter Scripture and the kerygmatic proclamation of the Church. It cannot be reduced to words, but it is communicated primarily through words.²³

However, for many Evangelicals and Pentecostals, encounter with God has a tendency to be climaxed at some faith experience so that subsequent use of the Bible takes on a utilitarian goal of building an objective support system for that experience. This relegation of experience to the past enables them easily to dichotomize Bible study into aims of knowing (intellectually), aims of feeling (emotional) and aims of doing (volitional). While many scholars have attempted to balance these goals, a common result is to place emphasis on one above the others.²⁴ For some the Bible becomes primarily an answer book for the curious questions of life, a source of intellectual stability in a world often void of meaning. For others, there has been a tendency to spiritualize the Bible as a means of communion with God, that is, a feeling. In that atmosphere it is possible to downplay the objective aspect of the word of God, taking away its historical dimension and

23. D.D. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 239.

24. The best example of trying to balance the approach is no doubt F.B. Edge's *Teaching for Results* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1956). This work has remained in print for over 35 years.

replacing it with mystical individualism.²⁵ For others the Bible is reduced to serving as a motivational textbook on Christian lifestyle. It is either a rulebook or a course on principles for Christian living rather than the authentic word of God that gives rise to continued transformation. Each of these approaches fails to appreciate the essential nature of Scripture as eternal word of God.

The model offered here takes seriously the notion that Scripture is the word of God, not word about God nor even word from God (if 'from' implies distance from God). God is always present in his word. The Spirit who breathed upon the prophets to speak forth the word continues to abide with the word. Inscripturated word is 'out of' God only in the sense that it proceeds from God but never in the sense that it can be cut off from God. The word is always holy unto the Lord. Yet in it God is reaching out to touch the profane. In Scripture God offers himself to humanity, inviting creation to know the creator. It expresses his nature and will in the 'language' of humanity. Therefore, Scripture is an objective, conceptual fountain out of which knowledge of God flows. It is the standard by which experience is to be interpreted and judged. But the study of Scripture must always be approached as sacred encounter with God.

Summation

In summary, both the OT and the NT make it clear that in order to know God one has to be related to God in such a manner as to live in response to his known will. One does not move, however, from theory (ideas, facts about God which have been derived from an objectification of material relating to God) to practice (decision to follow God's commands). This approach employs a Greek epistemology rather than a biblical one and negates the covenantal grounding of

25. John Wesley seemed to have achieved a balance between the subjective-objective nature of biblical interpretation. For Wesley, 'Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given' (see his suggestions for Bible study in the 'Preface' to *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament* [1765], I, p. viii). Wesley gave admonition to 'Read the Scripture, with the single purpose of knowing the whole will of God, and with a fixed determination to do that will'. There must be prompt and total obedience to the light of Scripture. Early Methodism proceeded upon this conviction. The bands and societies therefore were places where believers were closely examined as to how they were measuring up to the light of God's word.

our knowledge which encompasses the total person. One therefore learns about God by encountering God and responding appropriately out of that encounter. The Holy Spirit is the presence of God, the means of encounter. The church as community of the Spirit forms the context of the encounter. The Scriptures are objective, conceptual, personal word of God and as such govern the processes by which he is known. Utilizing Johannine imagery, one is instructed by the Spirit in all things, and this instruction comes via divine-human encounter as defined and facilitated by the Scriptures. Furthermore, this instruction takes place within the context of covenant relationships governed by love.²⁶

A Dialogue with Praxis

Praxis has come to be a common epistemological term in the field of Christian education, especially among those who are within the tradition of liberation theology.²⁷ Basically, the term means 'reflection-action' and expresses a linking of knowing and doing. Current usage represents a move from the traditional theory-to-practice paradigm. A *praxis* epistemology shares many characteristics with the process of knowing inherent in the meaning of *yada*, yet it fails to capture some of the vital dimensions found in the biblical pattern. We will attempt a dialogue between *praxis* and *yada*, lifting up areas of commonality and areas of divergence. Finally, we will discuss how insights from *praxis* as a way of knowing can be integrated into a Pentecostal approach to Bible study.

26. James Loder speaks of knowledge which is convictional, meaning that one is transformed in the knowing event. This transformation occurs when 'the Holy Spirit transforms all transformations of the human spirit'. See *The Transforming Moment* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 92. For Loder such a knowing event follows a fourfold pattern involving conflict, scanning, release and mundane ecstasy and verification. Christ is the one who initiates, mediates and concludes the process. Convictional knowing experiences are regulatory of both the self and the world and call forth further transformation. These experiences are integrated into our personal histories and become interpretive keys for any future knowing.

27. Representatives of a *praxis* approach to Christian education would be Thomas Groome, who has already been cited, and also Daniel Schipani, the author of *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1988).

Historical Overview of the Term

In order for one to understand *praxis* there must first be a conscious move away from dichotomizing theory and practice, and toward seeing them as twin moments of the same activity that are united dialectically. Instead of theory leading to practice, theory becomes, or is seen in, the reflective moment in *praxis*. Theory arises from *praxis* to yield further *praxis*.

Aristotle saw *praxis* as a way of knowing which was basically related to one's reflective engagement in a social situation.²⁸ It was one of three ways of knowing, the other two being *theoria* (θεωρία) and *poesis* (ποίησις). *Theoria* was the highest form of knowledge which utilized only the intellect. *Praxis* merged thought with doing in the sense of interaction with society. *Poesis* merged thought with making, for example, the artisan's shaping of material objects. While *praxis* was beneficial and useful for moral training, it failed to allow one to attain the highest form of wisdom, *sophia* (σοφία). Only *theoria* could do this. Therefore, Aristotle retained the essence of the Platonic system which elevated pure reason above the material realm.

G.W.F. Hegel re-introduced the term *praxis* in modern times. Hegel took the term and adapted it to the Enlightenment's emphasis on critical reason. He placed theory and practice together in a manner even more dialectical than Aristotle. Hegel saw *praxis* in relation to *Geist*, the all-powerful and encompassing Spirit which guided the universe toward the actualization of itself. *Praxis*, according to Hegel, became the *praxis* of *Geist*. Human knowing was not realized by speculative theorizing apart from the world but rather was attained through reflection on and participation in the *praxis* of *Geist* within history.

Groome points out that Hegel's understanding of *praxis* left little room for self-initiated active/reflective engagement in the world. Knowledge comes instead by phenomenological observation of *Geist's* activity in the world. Thus, Hegel remained functionally caught in a Greek theory-centered manner of knowing.²⁹

Karl Marx was influenced by Hegel's concept of *praxis*. He,

28. The following brief historical overview of *praxis* is a condensed version of a more detailed account given by Groome. See *Religious Education*, in particular ch. 7, 'In Search of a Way of Knowing'.

29. Groome, *Religious Education*, p. 166.

however, put humankind in the place of *Geist*, calling for humans to influence and shape their own history. Thus, *praxis* became totally an endeavor within nature, devoid of any transcendent authority. Human critical reflection and action would be sufficient for the ongoing revolution of social reality.

Paulo Freire is a Catholic humanist who has most recently popularized *praxis* as an educational term. He has worked extensively in Latin America and around the world developing a *praxis* approach to education, both secular and religious. For Freire, *praxis* is necessary for a person to be fully human.

Freire bases a great deal of his understanding of *praxis* upon Marx. He divides the world into economic categories and calls for human activity in transforming these structures. People are to be active subjects in the historical process, not passive objects caught in a world in which they have no control.³⁰ While Freire considers himself a Christian, he leaves most of the responsibility for *praxis* up to humanity. At best God is a subjective presence in the historical process.³¹

The Limitations and Problems of Praxis

There are problems and limitations with a *praxis* epistemology, especially when compared to a biblical understanding of knowledge. In general these are grounded in its origin in Hellenistic thought. In spite of all efforts to join theory and practice into a singular moment, there remains in *praxis* a fundamental dualism between matter and reason. Because of this dualism, *praxis* assumes an unbridgeable distance between the knower and the known. The entire system elevates theory (in the form of reasoning skills) above all other forms of knowledge.³² The objectification of others is an unavoidable aspect of this

30. Freire is critical of Pentecostalism. He sees it as a religion which is ahistorical and passive, fostering cultures of silence and dependency. For Freire the process of conscientization would move one beyond Pentecostalism toward a less 'opiate religion'. See his 'Education, Liberation and the Church', *Religious Education* 79.4 (1984), pp. 524-36. See also C.B. Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (JPTS, 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, forthcoming). This monograph brings into dialogue the ideas of Freire and the Pentecostal faith.

31. P. Freire, 'Letter to a Theology Student', *Catholic Mind* 70.7 (Sept. 1972), pp. 6-8.

32. C.B. Johns, 'Affective Conscientization: A Pentecostal Response to Paulo

knowledge and the power of transformation is of necessity grounded in the 'spirit' of the individual.

Praxis is therefore an insufficient means of knowing God and achieving human transformation. Human reflection-action, while important, is distorted and may become self-serving, and thereby hinder true knowledge of God. Without an authority beyond the self that transcends and even negates reflection-action, we are left, in spite of our worthy intentions for the transformation of society, with sinful *praxis*. In contrast, there is within the meaning of *yada* a basis for the grounding of the self in a personal God who defines the nature and outcome of the knowing event. This grounding does not relegate human knowing to the passive posture found in Hegel's paradigm. Neither does it limit God to the role of a subjective partner in human historical processes.

Another problem with *praxis* springs from our inability, also due to sin, truly to know ourselves as subjects in the world in which we live. Transformation of the knower has to occur before that person can contribute to the righteous transformation of the world. This transformation requires the knowing person to be known and exposed and changed, thereby becoming an object as well as an active subject in the historical process. There is no room for passiveness or resistance toward critical reflection upon the world. If the basic nature of persons remains unchanged and human *praxis* remains separated from responsiveness to revelation, a self-serving, sinful *praxis* will emerge. This seems to be the case in histories of revolutions which began with transforming *praxis* but soon became hardened by dogmatic ideology which prevented further *praxis*.

While Pentecostals have historically emphasized that we are the objects of God's transforming grace, we have often neglected to acknowledge that via transformation we become partners with God in the redemptive process. We have failed to respond appropriately in obedience as historical subjects.³³ The solution may well rest in the

Freire' (paper presented to the 21st Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1991).

33. Theodore Runyon and others have pointed out that John Wesley's concept of sanctification included an anthropology which saw humans as active agents in life and as partners with God in the redemptive process. For Wesley, Christianity was a social religion set in a world that was to be critically analyzed and acted upon. He strongly criticized the mystics for their advice to cease outward action and to

integration of *praxis* methodology into the epistemology of *yada*.

The Integration of Praxis with Yada

Realization of the inherent limitations of *praxis* has caused some liberation theologians to speak of an 'epistemological break' which 'consists in the existential and historical following that yields a *praxis* knowing which is distinct from "natural understanding" as well as contrary to it'.³⁴ Daniel Schipani has reformulated liberationist *praxis* into an 'epistemology of obedience', which is characterized by discipleship as 'the dynamic, dialogical, and discerning following of Jesus'.³⁵ He asserts that the liberationist's view of *praxis* must be evaluated in light of the criteria derived from revelation, and from biblical revelation especially, 'lest doing the truth becomes equivalent to making the truth through historical *praxis*, rather than practicing the truth which is ultimately being revealed to us'.³⁶

It is evident that a *praxis* epistemology must be modified in order to be incorporated into the Pentecostal faith tradition. Schipani's revision would come close to capturing the necessary dynamics. God must be understood to be the ultimate source and judge of all truth. Knowledge of God involves encounter with and participation in the divine nature which results in the transformation of the knower. The *praxis* that would flow out of such encounter would generate a fresh vision of the kingdom of God, a vision that incorporates an ethic that is consistent with an epistemology which joins knowing and loving.

Since a Pentecostal epistemology understands the knowledge of God to be experiential and relational, and it facilitates loving obedience to the known will of God, it should be seen as compatible with human *praxis* that is judged and transformed by the word of God. Still the

withdraw from the world. See T. Runyon (ed.), *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981). A Wesleyan-Pentecostal faith should take seriously this social dimension of redemption.

34. J. Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor* (trans. M.J. O'Connell; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), p. 25. See also his *Jesus in Latin America* (trans. R.R. Barr; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987), esp. ch. 5, 'Following Jesus as Discernment'. For the most comprehensive treatment to date on the epistemological grounding of liberation theology, see C. Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (trans. R.R. Barr; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987).

35. Schipani, *Religious Education*, p. 125.

36. Schipani, *Religious Education*, p. 136.

nature and goals of biblical knowledge are best seen in the Hebrew word *yada*; to know is to encounter. *Yada* stresses the interrelatedness of the knower and the known. *Praxis*, on the other hand, offers the modern, Western mind a practical approach to the encounter. The best solution seems to be the integration of a *praxis* methodology into the broader epistemological grounding of *yada*.

An Approach to Bible Study

Drawing upon the above consideration of a Pentecostal epistemology and the dialogue with *praxis* and using the historic language of Pentecostalism, we have proposed an approach to Bible study which includes four interactive movements: Sharing Our Testimony, Searching the Scriptures, Yielding to the Spirit, and Responding to the Call.³⁷ The four movements are structured around the functions of the

37. This approach is primarily the result of interaction with evangelical Christian education theorists. Perhaps the greatest influence upon our thought was our time spent with Lois LeBar while working on our Master of Arts degrees at the Wheaton Graduate School of Christian Ministries. LeBar proposed a three-movement approach to Christian teaching. Stated in two different forms (Way-Truth-Life, Boy-Book-Boy), her process stressed beginning where the learners are by addressing 'felt needs' as a means of surfacing 'real needs'. The teacher is then to lead the learners into the truth of God's written word where they will discover the living word, Christ Jesus, who is the answer to all human needs. In the third step the learners are led into changes of their lives appropriate to the truth they have just discovered. See L.E. LeBar, *Education that is Christian* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1958). LeBar's appeal to us was no doubt influenced by her personal charisma and skills as a teacher, but her ideas were especially cogent for us as Pentecostals. She believed in a resurrected Lord who could be known intimately and who would give direction to those who seek for it from him. She understood Bible study to be a means of personal encounter with God.

Other Evangelicals have suggested four-movement approaches to Bible study. Donald Joy addressed the need for *Meaningful Learning in the Church* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1969), by suggesting the teacher move from Intersection to Investigation to Inference to Implementation. Larry Richards insisted that the need was for *Creative Bible Teaching* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), and titled his movements 'Hook, Book, Look, Took'. The major publishers of evangelical Sunday school curricula have adopted similar models. However, in our opinion these approaches have all moved to varying degrees away from LeBar's commitment to the living, personal presence of Christ.

Another significant influence upon our thought was Thomas Groome's *Christian*

Paraclete as set forth in John's Gospel and should be viewed as interactive moments. While each movement logically leads into the next in the order given, all four must be held in dialectic tension as the entire learning experience is surrendered to the Spirit. Thus, the four movements are best understood as interdependent organic functions of a dynamic system.

Sharing our Testimony—Yada of Life in the Community

The first movement calls for the participants to share of themselves through the giving of personal testimony. In this movement the individual and the group are challenged to know themselves individually and corporately as subjects of history. Each participant brings to the study a personal knowledge of what it means to be human in a fallen, sinful world. Each brings expectations of what life could be like. Each is caught in a struggle for full humanity. Yet there is a commonness to everyone's knowledge, struggles and expectations, a shared sense of incompleteness in time.

The Paraclete sayings were given against the backdrop of the disciples' pending aloneness in the world; Jesus was going to leave them (13.31–14.4). Before his departure he raised critical issues concerning their relationships with himself and the Father, their relationships with one another, and their relationships with the world. It is significant that Jesus, the first Paraclete, defined the issues facing the disciples as products of the limitations of time and presence; he could not teach them the things he wanted them to know because he had to go away. Their relationship was incomplete. The disciples were caught in a maze of dialectic tensions: they knew (14.4) but did not

Religious Education. Cheryl had the privilege of studying with Groome and Paulo Friere during an intensive Summer term at Boston College. We found in Groome's application of Friere's thought on shared *praxis* a system complementary to LeBar and in harmony with our Pentecostal faith. Many of the ideas expressed in this article were first expressed in a paper we jointly submitted to F.B. Edge during our doctoral studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. We are grateful for his ongoing encouragement in this quest.

Titles for the four movements were the result of a group project with colleagues from the Church of God School of Theology. Members of the group included Steve Land, Chris Thomas, Rick Moore and ourselves. The atmosphere and relationships of the School of Theology have been especially helpful for the refinement of this ongoing undertaking.

know (14.5), they were in the world but were not of the world (17.6-18), they will be hated (15.18-25) but must themselves love (15.12, 17), they will be troubled but they will have the peace of Christ (14.27), etc. The second Paraclete will guide them through these tensions but will not remove the tensions. On the contrary, he will intensify the believers' conflicts with the world (15.18-27; 16.7-11). Indeed, the entire set of discourses (chs. 13-17) may be viewed as a call to confront the uncertainties of following Jesus and a promise of divine assistance in that endeavor.

What we mean by the sharing of our testimony is the giving of a personal account of the ongoing confrontation of the uncertainties of life in Christ. This is far more than the telling of a story or the recounting of disengaged facts. It is for us an act of interpersonal engagement in which individuals offer themselves with their limited knowledge of God and life to the group for shared critical reflection in a process that confronts the common tensions of following Christ and thereby contributes to the corporate testimony.

The sharing of testimony is a present action involving memory, reflection and interpretation. Memory is the pulling of the past into the present. The events being remembered may be temporally distant or near. They may even involve the immediate situation or the ideological constructs of the individual's belief system. The details may be distorted or accurate. In any case, memory is a present reality and is therefore an expression of the present self with its feelings, values and understandings.

Testimony also involves reflection and interpretation. Remembering is by its very nature a process of reflection. Associations with other events and relationships are unavoidable. Testimony is a selective act in which specific events of the past are brought to bear on specific aspects of the present in an effort to give meaning to the present. It thus involves an interpretation of the present through a re-interpretation of the past. It is a confrontation of the present with the past and thereby a confrontation of the past with the present. Thus the sharing of testimony is an act of engagement with one's own past and present.

Furthermore, the sharing of testimony is the offering of the self for the purpose of ministering to the body of Christ and giving glory to God. It is a confessional movement of self-denial in which the members of the group acknowledge (implicitly or explicitly) the

incompleteness of their existence and therefore their need for ongoing transformation. The individual offers the self for interpretation by others and God. In the reception of a testimony the group members enter into critical reflection upon and interpretation of what they have heard. Members thereby interpret their own memories and situations. As they confess their existence as finite, historical beings in need of transformation they create a corporate consciousness with a shared memory and testimony.

Testimony also carries a sense of participation in the future. Past and present are confronted in an effort to appropriate coming realities. The dissonance of living in the kingdom of God while waiting on the full reign of God is thereby addressed. Experiences, feelings, values, understandings and expectations, etc., are shared in anticipation of God's response which will be discovered in his word. Thus testimony is given in expectation of dialogue with the Scriptures.

The role of the teacher is that of a guide, one who leads people toward the life-changing power of the word of God. The human teacher is a partner with the Paraclete-teacher who is leading the followers of Christ into the realm of all truth. But human teachers remain incomplete in their own existence. They are 'first among learners', and not depositors of truth. In preparation for this first movement the teacher must complete a thorough study of the passage to be considered and must reflect upon the life issues of the group members. By reflecting on the manner in which the passage and the needs of the people interact, the teacher is able to select an appropriate focus for the testimonies to be given.

In calling forth testimonies the teacher may pose a question, raise an issue, or open the discussion in any manner that invites the participants to enter into shared reflection upon their own experiences. Methodologically, testimony requires personal expression which may be given through a variety of media such as art, mime, role-play, monologue, dialogue, or the simple telling of one's story. Responses to these expressions should surface similarities in life experiences and help to create critical awareness of common issues facing the participants. These should be carefully articulated. The central issue is that the members of the group have the opportunity to reflect upon their present in light of their past and with anticipation of their future.

Searching the Scriptures—Yada of the Word

The second movement involves the searching of the Scriptures under consideration in an effort to know the word of God. It is here that the issues of epistemology must be clearly brought into dialogue with the task of hermeneutics. How is biblical interpretation to be done so as to facilitate a dynamic, relational and obedient knowledge of God? The traditional hermeneutical approach leaves much to be desired inasmuch as it assumes that one can objectively understand the text by utilizing certain scientific tools. This approach ignores the subjective 'pre-understanding' that the interpreter brings to the text, and through its own subjective pre-understanding (i.e. a false assumption of objectivity) discounts any reliance upon the Holy Spirit as subjectivism.

The new hermeneutic as developed by Bultmann and others emphasizes the pre-understandings we bring to the text, but fails to honor the objective nature as well as the unity of the text. Certainly our approach acknowledges the presuppositions we bring to the text. The first movement, 'Sharing our Testimony', involves a confession of pre-understandings. However, we are committed to the objective authority of the text to judge all of life, including these presuppositions. Our approach is to bring life to the text so that the word of God might interpret us. The key element in understanding the text is the power of the Holy Spirit to work in spite of and even through our subjective nature.

Francis Martin has dealt with the issue of the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation by calling for a 'critical hermeneutics of the Spirit'.³⁸ Utilizing Paul Ricoeur's categories of 'explaining' and 'understanding', Martin has constructed guidelines for 'exegesis according to the Spirit', which 'presupposes that the reader is in living contact with the same realities about which the author in the Sacred Text is speaking'.³⁹ The Scripture is to be understood, therefore, via the Holy Spirit who unveils the mystery of God's plan of salvation.

Martin's work is consistent with the teaching functions of the Paraclete as presented by John. The second Paraclete saying (14.25-27) addresses the need of the disciples for a deepened knowledge of the teachings of Christ. As in the first saying, the Paraclete is identified with the Spirit, and the Spirit's role in continuing the

38. Martin, 'Spirit and Flesh', p. 1.

39. Martin, 'Spirit and Flesh', p. 1.

ministry of Jesus is reiterated. But here the Paraclete will be sent in the name of Jesus and will teach 'all things' and 'remind' the disciples of everything Jesus has said. These two clauses are parallel thoughts, that is, the reminding of everything Jesus has said is synonymous with the teaching of all things.⁴⁰ But the 'all things' which the Spirit will teach (v. 26) also stand in contrast to 'these things' which Jesus has already taught (v. 25), so that the role of the Spirit as teacher will be to add to what Jesus has taught. Jesus as teacher in human flesh has been limited to the time of his 'abiding with' the disciples but the Spirit will not be limited.⁴¹

But what is the intended extent of 'all things' (v. 26)? What will the Spirit add to what Jesus has taught? Will the Spirit teach quantitatively more than Jesus, literally 'all things'? Since the teaching of all things is synonymous with the reminding of everything Jesus has said, the answer is no. Rather, the function of the Spirit-teacher will be to interpret the sayings of Christ so as to enable the disciples to see the full meaning of Jesus' words.⁴² His reminding will be a representing in a living manner; the words of Jesus will, through the Spirit, be freshly applied to the lives of the disciples.⁴³ The Paraclete will bring the words of Jesus to bear in a meaningful way on all the situations of life.

Rick Moore has offered exegetical grounding for a Pentecostal approach to God's word. His exegesis of Acts 15 (the Jerusalem Council) has yielded the following aspects of the hermeneutical process involved in the passage: (1) comprehending God's word entailed attending to the testimony of God's activity in human experience; (2) comprehending God's word entailed affirming the participation of each and every believer; (3) comprehending God's word entailed a corporate process of discernment which went beyond individual perception and human reason; (4) comprehending God's word was bound to the eschatological mission of edifying the church and extending the gospel. Moore further points out that the new covenant's emphasis on the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh (Jer. 31.31-34) calls for

40. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (xiii-xxi)* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 650-51.

41. D. Moody, *Spirit of the Living God: The Biblical Concepts Interpreted in Context* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 166.

42. Brown, *John*, p. 650.

43. Brown, 'Paraclete', p. 129.

everyone to receive the word (דבר) of God and thereby come to full knowledge (ידע) of the covenant.⁴⁴

We have concluded that searching the Scriptures in a group should bear certain characteristics. It should be personal. Each person must engage the text as one called to hear and receive the word of God. It should also be corporate and interactive. Individual interpretations should be submitted to the group for critical reflection in an attempt to achieve a consensus of understanding. Also, the text must be approached in a manner consistent with its nature as the word of God. It is an objective, historical reality which cannot properly be understood outside of the bounds of reason. Yet, it is a personal, subjective word that is carried along by the Holy Spirit. Out of the text flows the infinite presence of God which addresses the finite limitations of humanity. The Scriptures must be approached as an avenue for personal and corporate engagement with God. The knowing of the word involves the engagement of the whole person. It is an act of reason but is not limited to reason. Because of these considerations we suggest that the study of Scripture be inductive in nature.

The inductive approach assumes that the interpreter has a spirit of openness and is willing to do a thorough analysis of the text before drawing general conclusions. This approach elicits a deep personal engagement with the text in a manner that gives the text integrity by allowing it to 'speak for itself'. The power of transformation is realized when Scripture is honored and allowed to address us. Francis Martin describes this process as having a 'liberating power' because of the distance established between ourselves and the text.⁴⁵

The inductive process first overviews the text in order to gain an understanding of the larger picture (main divisions, major themes, historical and literary context, and relation of the individual parts of the whole). Observations are made on relationships between events, characters, ideas, etc., and finally conclusions are derived based upon these observations. The inductive process is based upon the assumption that the books of the Bible contain good literary structure and that this structure reveals the thought of the author. This process of interpre-

44. R. Moore, 'Approaching God's Word Biblically: A Pentecostal Perspective' (paper presented to the 19th Annual Meeting of the Society of Pentecostal Studies, 1989).

45. Martin, 'Spirit and Flesh', p. 33.

tation when illumined by the Holy Spirit puts us in touch with the source realities of the Scripture so that we know ourselves to be addressed by the author himself. It is critical that the students receive the text unto themselves and dialogue with it.

Primarily the role of the teacher is to guide the participants in the inductive process of interpretation and thereby invite and facilitate discovery. In order to encourage engagement instead of detachment, lecture is not to be the predominant mode of this movement. Of course, there will be lectures given, especially when there are gaps in knowledge of textual issues or when the participants' exposure has been limited. But the teacher must avoid any posture, method or terminology that tends to separate the learners from the text. Once the learners have become skilled in the method, the teacher serves as a facilitator of dialogue, making sure all points of view have been heard and the central issues have been addressed.

As the group searches the Scripture they will be prompted to reflect on their own life issues. Reflection should be ongoing throughout the four movements of the Bible study. However, movement to life should not keep the participants from thoroughly studying the text. The focus of this movement should be to attend to the Scripture.

Yielding to the Spirit—Yada of the Spirit

Parker Palmer's observation that 'we may bring truth to light by finding it and speaking its name, but truth also brings us to life by finding and naming us'⁴⁶ aptly describes the dynamics of this third movement. Yielding to the Spirit is that transforming encounter between the truth of Scripture and the truth found in our own selves.

Typically, Bible study materials written from the objectivist theory-to-practice stance take a deductionist tone of 'now here is the truth, go and do likewise'. Such an approach is based on the Platonic assumption that if one knows the truth (reflectively) one will do the truth. *Theoria* must first be apprehended, for only then can it be actualized in the world.

These study materials tend to reduce the Holy Spirit to a prompter or mild-mannered coach. He is often portrayed as a quiet voice that will speak to the heart, urging one to live in the truth. The role of the teacher is to give out the objective truth (the word of God) and the

46. Palmer, *To Know*, p. 60.

Holy Spirit will take that word and make sure it does not return void. Unfortunately, we often go out from Bible study without any real change having taken place in our lives.

The Holy Spirit cannot be tamed and domesticated. In John's description of the Paraclete the Spirit is understood to be the living presence of the sovereign God. The Spirit is an authoritative presence leading the church in its confrontation with the world.⁴⁷ Specifically, the Spirit bears witness to Jesus (15.26-27). Eskil Franck has described this function as revealing 'an actual, living, and authoritative knowledge about Jesus, which provokes response in people'.⁴⁸ The Spirit also 'convicts' the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (16.4-11). To convict means 'to expose'⁴⁹ with the sense of proving wrong.⁵⁰ The Spirit makes clear the presence of sin. In the final Paraclete saying (16.12-15) the Spirit is portrayed as guiding the disciples into all truth by speaking what he receives from Christ and the Father. The context suggests a meaning of guiding into and within the whole sphere of truth.⁵¹ However, in this case the message of the Spirit is extended beyond the confines of the words of the historical Jesus. He will receive (*lambanei*) words directly from Jesus and deliver them to the disciples.⁵² He will proclaim what is yet to come. Thus the Spirit will bring the mission and being of the resurrected Christ into the present reality of the church.

This epistemology demands that the church be responsive to God's critique of the individual and the church. The Holy Spirit is the agent of encounter with the holy God which results in transformation. The Spirit is not a domesticated cultivator of good works. As God's word becomes known, the individual and the group are known and named for who they are. They are exposed and have the choice of obedient response with its resulting transformation or denial of the truth with its resulting degeneration.

But God is also critiquing the world. Yielding to the Spirit means

47. Brown, *John*, p. 690.

48. Franck, *Revelation Taught*, p. 56.

49. C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1960), p. 405.

50. D.A. Carson, 'The Function of the Paraclete in John 16.7-11', *JBL* 98 (1979), pp. 549-51.

51. Barrett, *St John*, p. 408.

52. Barrett, *St John*, p. 407.

attending to the Spirit's living presence in the world. The Spirit contextualizes the Scriptures, working within the believer to interpret the world. As God's word becomes known, the world is also known and named for what it is. To yield to the Spirit is to join oneself to the presence and mission of Christ in the world.

In this movement the task of the teacher is to assure that the group is called into accountability for living in the light of God's word.⁵³ In essence the objective is for the members of the group to renew their covenant to live under the lordship of Christ by surrendering to the transforming power of God's Spirit. The basic method is to place the testimonies of the group into dialogue with the discovered truth of the word. Critical memory is to be surfaced and engaged with the fresh knowledge flowing from the text. The core question of the movement is 'What is the Spirit saying to the church through this passage about our lives and the world in which we live?'

Specific methods should recognize the need for individual and corporate response. Creative expression through the writing of prayers, songs, poems, or letters is appropriate, as is the offering of other creative talents. The key is that these expressions flow from the soul that is surrendered to the Spirit. In that atmosphere the Spirit is free to engage the believers as he chooses. As the group attends to the Spirit he may choose to make himself known through the charismata or through a quiet voice from within the individuals. But we must allow him to set the boundaries of his activities. The task of the teacher is to yield to the Spirit so that the group is invited to do the same.

Responding to the Call—Yada of the Father's Glory

The ultimate objective of Bible study is to know God and live in his presence. Jesus understood the knowledge of God to be synonymous with eternal life (Jn 17.3). He also associated this life with the glory of God when he added

53. We are using the term 'accountability', in the sense of encouraging the individuals and the group to take account of themselves as opposed to requiring that an account be settled. In general this responsibility is observed by keeping prior knowledge of God fresh in the memories of the group members.

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began (Jn 17.4-5 NIV).

It is the task of the Paraclete to bring glory to Christ. He will do this by receiving that which belongs to Christ and proclaiming it to the disciples. But that which he would receive of Christ was also of the Father (16.14-15). The glory of the Father and Son is one glory just as they are one. Thus the Holy Spirit causes believers to know the glory of God and to return that glory unto him. Just as Jesus understood the process of giving glory to flow out of the completion of the work of God, so we must give God glory through submission to his will.⁵⁴

As we yield to the word of the Spirit we are convicted and transformed and thereby become a people of conviction, a people who have experienced what Craig Dykstra terms 'imaginal insight'.⁵⁵ A new testimony emerges, one in which we confess what we have seen and what we have heard and what we are compelled to be and to do. If we truly want to know God we must respond in loving obedience to the light he has shed upon our paths. The question of this movement is 'Lord, what would you have us do in response to your word?'

The role of the teacher in this movement is to provide opportunity for response and to lead the group in processing the personal and corporate call of the Spirit. As in the other movements, this response is both individual and corporate. By testifying to the conviction we have received, we give to the community our experience for verification and interpretation. In such a context the power of the word of God is both particular and general. Through shared accountability a consensus of the Spirit arises and with it a sense of corporate journey. No one should be left to 'go it alone'.

54. The theme of giving glory to God through works that grow out of grace is often repeated in the New Testament. Consider especially Rom. 12.1-8; Eph. 4.1-16; Phil. 2.1-13; 1 Pet. 1-2.

55. Dykstra defines imaginal transformation as moral growth through those 'events that give our lives their particular shape and quality, and out of which our responses to life often seem to flow'. In these experiences 'the deepest patterns of the nature of reality and existence, and of our relationship to them, are revealed, and our own essential convictions are rooted in them' (*Vision and Character* [New York: Paulist Press, 1981], pp. 87-88).