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Guillermo C. Hansen

*Luther Seminary*, [ghansen001@luthersem.edu](mailto:ghansen001@luthersem.edu)

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# Blessing, Well-Being and Salvation: Should Lutherans Learn to Dance to Another Tune?

Guillermo Hansen

There are several ways in which we could approach this theme. One would be to proceed deductively by identifying discrete passages in Luther, the Confessions and Lutheran theologians that may help us to construct a grammar. Although necessary, this type of approach usually ends up with a distilled scholarly product that often fails to take into account the new global conditions within which discourses on salvation, well-being and blessing can possibly make sense. Another way would be to approach the Lutheran corpus from the perspectives offered by the new challenges and visions that relocate the very meaning of blessing, well-being and salvation. Viewpoints stemming from the life and medical sciences, ecology, systemic approaches and deep psychology will necessarily intertwine with globalization, racism, indigenous spiritualities and New Era perspectives, creating new hermeneutical scenarios that enrich and challenge (Lutheran) Christian discourse.

Since the contemporary perspectives that we should consider are so vast and diverse, it becomes a task that I cannot undertake here. Therefore, I shall reflect on the understanding of well-being, blessings and salvation that stems from a Lutheran scanning of the Pentecostal experience. In this fashion, an alleged Lutheran perspective entails not so much the recasting of statements from a closed corpus, but a lively rediscovering of our selves in something that resembles a dance. While dancing, we hold different perspectives as we take our own stances; each partner, as they hold the other's arms, embraces and separates, echoes the other's movements according to their own articulation of flesh, bones and mood. As we dance looking at each other, our partner becomes an occasion for us to see and rediscover things about ourselves. Thus we pose the question of blessing, well-being and salvation as we face our Pentecostal occasional partner as another.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> My reference here is to the "Pentecostal" experience—rather than "neo-Pentecostal"—because

I will approach our theme in an oblique way, that is, by first understanding some of the steps proposed by our partner as we both interpret the melodies of blessing and salvation. As we move together across the floor, it will become evident which idiosyncrasies we bring to the dance, and in what steps we may be completely in harmony but also out of step. Secondly, since salvation is the ultimate backdrop or melody to which both religious partners dance, we must consider the different components of the choreography. Basically, we hear and respond to the notes and rhythms with our psyches and bodies, which in turn are conditioned by the physical scenario, the relevant features and forces that we see in it, as well as the mental map that we draw of it all. We deploy and move our bodies accordingly, and that may lead to different appreciations of tempo, style and scope of our dance. Must the same rhythm always be kept? Are there different melodies to which we are also called to dance?

I suggest three avenues for approaching our complex theme. First, one must take note that Pentecostalism represents a new form of experiencing and communicating the Holy in distinction from those that see the Holy as contained by a sacred space (Roman Catholicism), or confined to a linguistic event shaping a trustful disposition in consciousness and will (Reformation), or displaced to a future messianic time (Radical Reformation). For this “new” experience of the Holy one must understand that it is in fact not so new, and that it is part of a larger pattern of an emergence of the *mysterium tremens et fascinosum*, a mystery awesome and fascinating (Rudolph Otto), in the midst of crises which tear the spatial and temporal fabric of our “paramount” reality. Pentecostalism, as a window to the mystery and a symptom of a deeper crisis of our postmodern world, can be regarded as an agent of cultural and religious deconstruction. As such, it makes us take a renewed look at the sources, experiences and codes we employ to articulate our notion of the sacred.

This leads us to the second theme. Exploring the relationship between bodies and environment and the ways in which ritual and blessings mirror or challenge the social body will help us to understand metaphors

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that allows for a broader perspective. In Latin America, we distinguish three phases regarding the Pentecostal phenomenon: 1910-1940, schism within mainline Protestant denominations and mission from the US; 1950s, consolidation of autochthonous churches among migrants; 1990s-present, hypermodern neo-Pentecostal movements. See Jean Pierre Bastian, *La mutación religiosa de América Latina: para una sociología del cambio social en la modernidad periférica* (Mexico: FCE, 1997), pp. 134ff.

of salvation as codes seeking to reorient our lives. Blessings and well-being are the concrete experiences of such an orientation.<sup>2</sup> Abandoning conscious control in Pentecostal manifestations represents the social situation they experience as a reality largely unstructured, lacking clear boundaries. If a social system determines the extent of relaxing or tightening control over the individual, then the absence of a strong social and symbolic articulation leads people to seek, in the slackening and easing of body control, appropriate means of expression that mirror the larger social situation. It is here that Pentecostalism embodies both an implicit critique of society and an unsatisfactory symbolic resolution for bodies that still need to live within the profane. Its codes seem to be unable to resituate those bodies in new, "profane" spaces of freedom and justice.

Thirdly, I will conclude with the logical corollary of the two above aspects, which coalesce in a postmodern redrawing of the frontiers between the sacred and the profane. I argue that Pentecostalism lacks a clear Trinitarian framing for its ecstatic experiences, leading to "inflation" and an irresistible desire to overflow into the profane, abolishing its relative autonomy. Its ideology of sanctification is one-sided, resulting from a restricted code of alienation that cannot move forward toward an elaborated code of integration. In the end, the theological articulation of the extraordinary experience of the sacred falls short of integrating other experiences of the sacred in and through the profane.

The redrawing of the relation between the sacred and the profane—their nature, limits, relations and dynamics—is the theme at which I want to arrive in order to recognize Pentecostalism as an agent of cultural and religious deconstruction, and at the same time to highlight the Lutheran understating of the holy and the sacred as a critical reconstructive or redirecting channel for the spectacular forces witnessed by Pentecostalism. The distinction between law and gospel and between salvation and sanctification, the anthropology of the *simul* and Luther's Trinitarian theology of the governances and orders, I will argue, stand for an elaborated code of integration that can situate constructively religious experiences within a larger world of discourses and meanings.

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<sup>2</sup> André Droogers, a Dutch professor of cultural anthropology, stresses the particular Pentecostal appeal as lodged in the rehabilitation of the person. In contexts of transition and vulnerability, rebirth, conversion and blessing it provides a solid basis for reorganizing life. See "Pentecostalism," in Guillermo Hansen (ed.), *El silbo ecuménico del Espíritu: homenaje a José Míguez Bonino en sus 80 años* (Buenos Aires: ISEDET, 2004), p. 29.

## The Pentecostal experience of the mystical

When Lutherans look around the global religious scene, they cannot but be perplexed and puzzled. Something is going on. Countless “abnormalities” stick out from the apparently smooth waters of the profane: spiritism, charismatic phenomena, body possessions, alien abductions, apocalyptic visions and religious renewals. Whatever one may think about them, at some level they are all manifestations of that which generates symbols, myth and beliefs. In psychological and anthropological studies, these can be understood as manifestations of a disturbance in the collective unconsciousness of the species, which “responds” autonomously to the violent impact of disruptive developments.<sup>3</sup> According to Carl Gustav Jung, deep changes in nature, politics and society shake the tightly knit fabric of a culture, allowing for the emergence of archetypes which hitherto were either repressed or not entirely assimilated.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, a “revolt” ensues against a one-dimensional worldview that fails to satisfy the needs of the human soul. When the habitual outlook and responses can no longer provide meaningfulness and motivation, the deep psyche is aroused through dreams, fantasies, visions, or disturbances.

Yet, whatever that may be, Lutheran churches are not major players in this contemporary phenomenon. Once our movement was the result of the cataclysmic transformations that occurred at a time when Europeans started to circumvent the globe—not exactly to the joy of the people encountered outside Europe. We were once witnesses to the irruption of the Holy that could no longer be contained in the ritualized spaces of the church, and was cast into the world making the profane a place of witness and service. What today applies to the Pentecostal phenomena was also true then: the greater the social and geopolitical changes, the more radical the revision of cosmologies and the restructuring of the inherited myth.<sup>5</sup> In the same vein, crossroads in human history signal massive conversion phenomena where ideas hitherto peripheral to consciousness become central, catalyzing psychic energies in new

<sup>3</sup> See Dennis Stillings, *Cyberbiological Studies of the Imaginal Component of the UFO Experience* (Saint Paul: Archaeus Project, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> See Carl Gustav Jung, *Energía psíquica y esencia del sueño*, transl. Ludovico Rosenthal and Blas Sosa (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1954), p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 151.

directions.<sup>6</sup> Finally, rejecting inherited rituals is the external manifestation of a change in the customary ways of dealing with the profane and the sacred. Thus, both Lutheranism at its peak and Pentecostalism today can be understood as revitalization movements with their own particular import.

In a way, much of this dynamism of the sacred that Lutheranism once stood for seems no longer to exist; it has become bogged down, rationalized. Our myths and symbols appear to have ceased to function as catalysts for spontaneous processes. We tend to fall into a legalism that makes of Christianity another moral system or force to fit into the role of agencies, busy with the implementation of development programs. The plains of the profane, the secular and the modern, which, in a way, Lutheranism has helped to build, have become sluggish, or worse, cracked from top to bottom. We are very much aware of the global economic, social and political realities and the crises these produce. But this is only part of the problem. Underlying is the deep cultural, epistemological, moral and psychological fluidity that has undermined the massive pillars of modernity and the certainties of the secular. Science, the pinnacle of "modern" achievement, is constantly eroding the very worldview for which it stood: with each successive probe, "matter" has proven to be more ethereal, more vaporous and more uncertain. The frontiers reached by microphysics on the one hand, and cosmology on the other, show that the further we track matter toward its causal origins in both time and being, the more it sheds the attributes with which we capture it in the zone of our profane existence.<sup>7</sup> Naturalism and progress, resting in strategies and ideologies of control which ruled out the possibility of transcendence, are now on the defensive. Reality has shown to be sullen in the face of such attempts to understand and control it.

Through these cracks in reality a new horizon of transcendence emerges, and new possibilities for revitalizing myth and symbols appear. Seemingly "irrational" experiences manifest humanity's symbolic encoding of that which transcends analytical capacities at a given time. It is the realm of the *numinosum*, the mystical, of what is *qadosh*, *hagios*, *sanctus*, *heilig*; not a rational categorization, not a grasping of the world of *creatura* (the profane), but an extraordinary surplus of energy

<sup>6</sup> Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Random House, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> See Huston Smith, *Beyond the Postmodern Mind* (Illinois: Quest Books, 2003), pp. 177ff.

and significance coming from beyond. As Rudolf Otto<sup>8</sup> once asserted (appealing to Luther), the experience of this irruption of the *epekeina*, of this *apokalypsis*, is not possible for the “natural” human, that is, for those whose consciousness is trapped in the encoding of the prevailing culture. This naturalness of existence is incapable of terror, fear and trembling. But for those for whom the present ways are no longer satisfying and are linked to a cultural array of narratives and myths which have not cancelled out transcendence, the abyss of the *tremendum* may open up, may tear apart the fabric of reality—to the point of sometimes becoming pathological.

The threatening side of any experience of the sacred also has an affirming side, an attractive pole, which resonates with the perception of a gain in life that follows from an apparent loss. Otto calls this aspect the *fascinosum* dimension of the sacred—the Holy—which corresponds to the creature in the attempt to possess, be filled with, or identify with the divine. When the Holy carves itself this space in the realm of the *creatura*, we encounter a blessing, a reality or dimension that is sanctified.

It is precisely at the point where the total heterogeneity of this presence threatens to cancel out the creature that the ritual emerges. These are rituals of salvation, of integration into consciousness of new contents that otherwise remain abstruse or dormant.<sup>9</sup> Ritual is always closely related to a myth, being its performative dimension that seeks to create a scenario that can deal with realities that are portrayed as “external” (God, grace, Holy Spirit, etc.). It is through ritual that creatures acquire (re)generation, (re)discovery and (re)birth, casting a new luminosity on all of existence. New rituals of salvation emerge when the fabric of reality—the paramount experience—is torn open, exposing nature, community and the individual to a source of rebirth and renewal.

Different religious movements create discreet rituals of salvation when serious damage to self-esteem and social integrity occurs. When singular life crises occasioned by social abuse, internal disillusionment, military invasions, cultural fragmentation, ecological catastrophes, colonization or pandemics impair personal identity, strenuous efforts are undertaken to understand and repair this damage. While not necessarily limited to the strictly “religious,” rituals for renewal and salvation are most often related to a transcendent agency where the model for

<sup>8</sup> Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923).

<sup>9</sup> An observation first made by Carl Gustav Jung.

human personality is associated with a supernatural being. According to the anthropologist Anthony Wallace, at least three main rituals of salvation can be identified.<sup>10</sup>

- **Possession:** The basis for this ritual is a disorder of the classic, obsessive compulsive neurosis, in which victims of a “possession” are compelled, against their conscious will, to perform certain acts, to say certain things, to think certain thoughts and to experience certain bodily sensations which are felt to be foreign to their usual nature. It corresponds to the experience of an intrusion of an alien mental system that momentarily takes control over one. Salvation by possession implies the acceptance of at least two mutually contradictory identities, each having the possibility to have control over the body and psyche at certain times. Baptisms or possessions by a spirit go hand in hand with rituals of exorcism seeking to name and cast away intrusive and detrimental identities.
- **Mystic:** This is lodged in a profound sense of dissatisfaction with one’s secular identity, generating feelings of anxiety and fear, a desperate need to be saved. A nagging and chronic sense of unworthiness, inadequacy and dissatisfaction with life shapes its pathological background. In this case, the path to salvation requires the abandonment of the old self which, in most cases, leads to a constant struggle with two tendencies within oneself. Salvation can take different hues: ecstasy, a floating away, or a deep sense of relief and release from a deep-seated fear and trembling to a new confidence and certainty of divine benevolence and concern.
- **Satisfaction:** Another strategy for repairing damage to the self and one’s self-esteem through penance and good works. Contrary to the more depressive and deeply dissatisfied psychological background, what prevails here is an identity which, although reasonably intact, may in some specific aspects experience severe shame and guilt. This shame and guilt are not so much produced by a perverse nature as by the lack of a quality, virtue, or grace that leads to a sense of

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<sup>10</sup> See Anthony Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 139ff. I present them here in a slightly modified form.

incompleteness. The goals of the rituals here are to acquire access and possess the divine or a divine favor.

This typology offers a general outline for understanding Pentecostal, Lutheran and Roman Catholic soteriological myths and rituals, which certainly cannot be reduced to these pure forms. The question then is, Why do the Pentecostal and/or charismatic ways of pursuing blessings and salvation seem to be gaining more and more ground? It is certainly not a matter of their respective conceptions of God, grace and salvation only, as though they were free-floating signs in a vacuum, developing according to an internal logic. Rather, if ritual and myths articulate the interface between a reality that is not of this world with a specific human and natural environment, why do Pentecostalism and its rituals have such appeal? I believe that this is so because today the Pentecostal movement seems better positioned both to capture the crisis of the profane, the sciences and social organizations, and to witness to a vital, living, moving God. In this sense, Pentecostalism becomes an ideal vehicle for the reemergence of a sacred unconscious, the basis of selfhood and identity for humanity.

Today, Pentecostalism seems to provide better possibilities for a symbolic encoding of those (irrational) experiences that transcend the analytical. In order to deal with this crisis, consciousness must create an "objective" scenario of forces that can bring regeneration and rebirth. This is why Pentecostalism, more than any other religious movement, is an agent of "sociocultural deconstruction,"<sup>11</sup> dismantling structures of thought and action that allow for a more fluid and semantically fruitful mode of being. It conveys a blessing for those who find comfort in the thought that, after all, there is a mystery that surrounds all. It is a deconstruction of the idols of common sense, opening up thought and being to new prospects and possibilities. This *mysterium* is what, in the end, upsets all conceptual methodologies and foundations, slipping through the fissures and gaps of a modern, materialistic worldview.

However, what is the "purpose" of these irruptions? Why does the *mysterium* appear to be more present in some epochs and/or sectors than in others? It seems to me that these irruptions of the sacred are part of an evolutionary strategy<sup>12</sup> that is fundamental for our flourish-

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Stillings, *op. cit.* (note 3), p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> "Evolution" should not be seen in a progressive or gradualist key, but from the perspectives

ing and survival. We can imagine it as a wake-up call in the face of a creation gone astray, a lure toward other imaginative possibilities. They are manifestations of a desire and need for healing, blessings, salvation. Certainly, Pentecostalism does not “create” the Holy; it channels it. But it does create a new space where the positioning of bodies within the larger social body seems to offer a privileged heuristic location.

### **The body and the bodies**

It is only after we have established the transcendent ground of religious phenomena that we can approach the Pentecostal reality from a more sociological angle. According to Jean Pierre Bastian, Pentecostalism appears as a strategy to reorganize life vis-à-vis the dominant sectors of society.<sup>13</sup> It allows for the construction of an alternate world from the margins of another that appears hostile and alien. The gaps in identity and the anomie brought about by the migration from country to city are galvanized as charismatic leaders replace ancestral shamans. Through extraordinary rituals, a new conscience emerges which undoes the edifice of the modern world. This creates spaces of fusion, where the poor, who are individualized by the disruptive forces of neoliberalism, reconstitute themselves by means of an external power (Spirit).

Consciousness cannot be conceived without bodies—both personal and collective. Bodies are the union of being and knowledge, nature and consciousness. The experience of our interaction with the physical environment and other people furnishes the raw material for conceptual and ontological metaphors which bring forth a physical world. Yet, these metaphors are in turn capable of becoming symbols for a realm that is transcendent. These observations are further supported by Mary Douglas’s studies on the relationships between body and society. For Douglas, the

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developed in paleontology by Stephen Gould and in history by Frederick Teggart. Their theories maintain that while societies and cultures tend toward stasis and equilibrium, they are sporadically marked by sudden and abrupt changes. These changes, naturally, do not come from the center but from the margins or periphery of societal and cultural complexes undergoing deep changes. In this situation, changes are unavoidable and dominant institutions and cultural representations start to recede in the face of the penetration of new groups and ideas. Lutheranism, certainly, is not there. Curiously, its future will in part depend on its ability to establish a connection with this powerful movement, hoping in this process to have some influence on the direction it will take.

<sup>13</sup> This can be related to Wallace’s typology: importation of a system of beliefs, of codes, without its original adherents. That has been the case of the Toba indigenous peoples in Argentina.

relations of spirit to matter, or mind to body, are condensed statements about the relationship of society with the individual. The body, she argues, represents wider society, while mind/spirit represents the individual identified with a specific subgroup within the larger structure.

Two things can be said about marginal groups in relation to their religious expressions and choices. On the one hand, assuming that the body is a symbol/image of society, we see that when societal dynamics oppress, alienate and marginalize, then the image of God loses its hierarchical majesty and becomes an intimate, personal friend who speaks directly to believers.<sup>14</sup> Rites of possession, healing and baptism by the Holy Spirit fall into this category, where the reality of the sacred is lived almost directly. On the other, the insistence on the superiority of the spiritual over the body must be understood not as an ontological dualism, but as a symbolic ritualization of the confrontation between individual liberty and societal/ecclesial constraints. To the extent that society contains individuals without bonds or solidarity, they are more likely to symbolize and ritualize this situation through the separation of spirit from matter.<sup>15</sup>

All these elements allow us to perceive Pentecostalism in a new light. In terms of the ritual of salvation by possession as described by Wallace, the abandonment of conscious control in Pentecostal experiences can be said to be a representation of the largely unstructured social reality they experience. If a social system determines to what extent control over the individual will be relaxed or tightened, then the lack of a strong social and symbolic articulation—what Douglas calls group and grid—leads people to seek appropriate means of expression that mirror the wider social situation in the slackening and easing of body control. Accordingly, bodily control tends to be relaxed there when social control is weak. The weaker the social constraints, the more bodily dissociation is approved, and ritual is accepted as a spiritual channeling of benign power for the self and the sub-group.<sup>16</sup> It is hardly surprising then that women are often the most active members of charismatic and possession cults in societies, where the social division of labor involves

<sup>14</sup> See Douglas, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 165.

<sup>15</sup> A contrary tendency is to insist on the expression of spirit in and through matter, implying a certain subordination and support of the structures of society, that is, a stronger integration with secular dynamics—as in of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed traditions.

<sup>16</sup> See Douglas, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 92f.

women less deeply in the dynamics of control and in the legal and political patriarchal institutions.

These anthropological and sociological perspectives show that the location of the body in the wider fabric of society largely determines the form of rituals and the mythic construction of salvation. Rituals of possession and intimate encounter with the Holy are strategies of empowerment among groups marginalized from mechanisms of profane control—but not from the manifestation of the sacred. It is inappropriate to dismiss Pentecostalism as a recreation of metaphysical dualisms, for it is a ritualized dualism that represents the basic dichotomy lived in society at large. In a way, this dualism is a cry for liberation proper to “colonial” situations.

Yet, it is legitimate to pose the question, What type of liberation? While it is true that for a myth to be operative it has to move consciousness, it is also true that this consciousness is the result of the interaction with the environment. While it is true that the human psyche’s deepest dimensions are not subjected to the laws of space and time, we must move in space and time through visions that seek to rearrange the conditions of temporality as the realm of the profane. The passage from the so-called “sacramental dimension,” signified by the Pentecostal experience, to a practical political mediation, necessary if we are to live in this world, needs something more than the enthusiasm stemming from direct contact with the Spirit. It needs mediation that helps resituate bodies and consciousness within the larger social body and social consciousness.<sup>17</sup>

Notwithstanding its phenomenal appeal, we shall see that Pentecostalism’s discourse is set within a restricted code of alienation centered on rituals of possession and bodily contortions (speaking in unintelligible tongues, the experience of fire, loss of motor control, prophecies), which have not yet moved on to an elaborated code of integration of the sacred and bodies within the world. A restricted code of alienation refers to how speakers draw from a narrow, ritualized range of syntactic alternatives, thereby interpreting experience within this narrow frame. An elaborated code of integration is when speakers have to select from a

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<sup>17</sup> When Luther criticized the *Schwärmer* for attempting to separate the Holy from the Word (both law and gospel), he was pointing to the need for the mediation of the majestic power of the sacred into the building of individual consciousness, sociability, community and the sustainability of creation. An elaborated hermeneutical mediation is critical for a sound psychological and social conformation—something that liberation theology has also stressed through the importance of the different levels of mediations: socio-analytical, hermeneutical, practical-political.

wider range of syntactic alternatives, which must be flexibly organized in order to interact with heterogeneous domains of reality.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of Pentecostalism's tremendous experience of and witness to the sacred, its understanding of the purposes, extent and dynamics of the Holy as a salvific event is left wanting. It experiences freedom, but does not encourage it. How then can consciousnesses touched by the sacred have an impact on the way in which bodies can be free, not only in ritual time and sacred space, but in secular time and profane space? Traditionally this has been the theme of sanctification. Since Pentecostalism has only the unmediated effect of the Spirit upon ritualized bodies, it is difficult for it to articulate the ways in which blessings in ritual relate to the blessings that God bestows on creation—and the larger social body. Recent attempts to do that are ominous and worrisome.

### **Redrawing the boundaries between the sacred and the profane**

The renowned Peruvian Pentecostal theologian, Bernardo Campos, offers an important insight into the problem of moving from a restricted to an elaborated code. In his book, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia* (From the Protestant Reformation to the Church's Pentecost), he describes Pentecostalism as a global movement which is socially structured around an ideology of sanctification. Yet, it is not the traditional Protestant conception of sanctification which is present here, but a new notion that signals a (dangerous) redrawing, if not erasing, of the frontiers between the sacred and the profane.

As a symbolic system that organizes social and psychic processes in order to preserve the achieved identity of groups and individuals, Campos sees Pentecostalism as driven by the aim of permanently sanctifying all that is profane. "Each small church," he writes, "has the mandate to grow numerically, to multiply and 'conquer' as much as it can of the

<sup>18</sup> See Douglas's employment of Basil Bernstein's categories of speech in *Natural Symbols*, *op. cit.* (note 5), pp. 23ff. One could also employ Maturana's category of "linguaging" and conversations. We could say that Pentecostalism is bountiful at the level of languaging, but is poor at the level of the conversations, necessary to coordinate wider spectrums of communication that go beyond the primary niche of languaging. An interesting example of transitional codes can be seen in Luther's discourse throughout the 1520s: from the distinction of inner and outer man in the *Freedom of the Christian* (1520), to the full-blown political and historical theology developed in the middle of the decade as shown in his understanding of God's will to sanctify creation through the different orders of society (*politia, oeconomia, ecclesia*).

secular places in order to covert them into sacred ones.”<sup>19</sup> While the impetus of this sanctifying drive is the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit or, as it is often put, the baptism by the Spirit or fire that gives room to a particular notion and experience of the *homo culturalis*, Campos never ceases to emphasize the apocalyptic millennialism that accompanies such a sanctifying crusade into the world. It is as though the realm of the Holy were to overflow into society, with the mission to make of it a sacred place. In a revealing passage, he states:

In the case of Pentecostals this worshipping space extends itself to spheres of daily living and of working time, invading and incorporating them to the dynamics of the sacred. ... The pentecostal man and woman are a *homo culturalis*, a man and woman of the *cultus* and for the *cultus*, for whom life does not admit differences between the sacred and the profane...all has been consecrated to God.<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to observe how Campos has been able to approach his own Pentecostal tradition as a redrawing of spaces. God, bodies, labor, ritual, secularity, worship, mission—all are condensed in terms of understanding the sacred reaching into the profane. In a way, Campos is describing Pentecostalism as a typical revitalization movement which, on the basis of the certainty of salvation, seeks now to reorganize culture and society with a better way of life replacing the old. It is as though Pentecostalism were to move from a “compensatory” realm (refuge) and “opposing” organization (social strike) to a substituting and/or reordering force in society.<sup>21</sup> Yet, the tone of and reasons for this reordering are worrisome. Campos writes: “The task of the church in the world is therefore a sanctifying task seeking to rescue persons from the present evil aeon.”<sup>22</sup> This rescue, of course, is not anymore from this world, but in this world, and the means to achieve it is by lifting the walls that distinguish the

<sup>19</sup> Bernardo Campos, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia: debate sobre el Pentecostalismo en América Latina* (Quito: Ediciones CLAI, 1997), p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Bernardo Campos, “La construcción simbólica de la Pentecostalidat: prolegómenos para una teología pentecostal,” in Bernardo Campos, *Experiencia del Espíritu: claves para una interpretación del Pentecostalismo* (Quito: CLAI, 2002), p. 155.

<sup>21</sup> See Campos, *op. cit.* (note 19), pp. 60f.

<sup>22</sup> Campos, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 155.

sacred from the profane. What can that possibly mean? A purification of the secular? A crusade? A cancellation of history?<sup>23</sup>

As noted, while the deepest dimensions of the human psyche are not subject to the laws of space and time, we must move in space and time through visions that seek to rearrange temporal conditions. Pentecostalism seems to grasp this dynamic, realizing its formidable formative force. Yet, its ideology of sanctification, the conquering of the secular in order to transform it into sacred territory and the normativity of the *homo culturalis* that leaves little room to imagine other ways to be human, point to a dangerous carryover of the sacred into the profane. Is the Holy really sacred when enclosed in such a code? Can the Holy really be encapsulated within the Pentecostal experience? I suspect that the Pentecostal hermeneutics of the Holy (Spirit), charismata and salvation are so restricted by the extraordinary contortions of bodies and souls possessed by sacred power, that little room is left for a theological perspective able to deal with bodies and souls in ordinary situations. The excessive stress on the extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit leads to a denial of the soft presence of the Spirit which insufflates our ordinary lives,<sup>24</sup> not to mention the *absconditus* nature of the sacred.

This hermeneutic, bound to the restrictive code of body contortions as the privileged locus for the sacred, is unable to recognize the otherness of bodies which are attune to different rhythms in creation—also rhythms that manifest the sacred. Here we not only reach the postmodern walls of pluralism and the respect toward otherness that were developed in the course of the last century, but also the very phenomenon of

<sup>23</sup> In Latin America, numerous attempts to redraw frontiers between the sacred and the profane have been made throughout history. The Iberian Christendom project, that Vitor Westhelle has aptly called the “ecclesialization” of Latin America has left deep wounds of resentment of and contempt for the Roman Catholic Church. See Vitor Westhelle, “Conquest and Evangelization in Latin America,” in Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder (eds), *Word Remembered, Word Proclaimed* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1997), pp. 89-107. The sacred not only overflowed into the secular as a strategy of conquest, but sought to deny its very existence and autonomy. It was an attempt to “supernaturalize” the natural. During the second half of the twentieth century, the father of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez, attempted to reverse this situation by identifying men and women as incarnationally the potential locus of the manifestation of the sacred. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas* (Madrid: Sígueme, 1972), p. 250. According to this view, history carries within itself the seeds for the irruption of the sacred processes of liberation. But instead, history has once again shown its ambiguous face. The naturalization of the supernatural proved to be a monumental failure. In view of this situation, many say—in jest and in contempt—that while the middle and working classes expected a revolution, the poor chose Pentecostalism.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Martin Luther, “The Bondage of the Will” (1526), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 3ff.

individuation that Pentecostalism incarnates. If individuation consists of a self-integration around the notion of the inner world based on unconscious identification with archetypes, then withdrawing and/or limiting projections towards the external world and integrating archetypal contents with our fragile humanity are what keeps people from falling into inflationary projections.<sup>25</sup> As Campos shows, Pentecostalism is involved in exporting and projecting “pentecostality” into society, instead of discovering and accompanying the different ways in which the Holy is already present in the world under codes different from those of the Pentecost event. The process of individuation propagated by Pentecostalism seems to leave little space for other forms of being religious and human.

Unsurprisingly, the Christological code of Pentecostalism has tended toward the exalted and glorified Christ, with little space left for the crucified beyond lip service to classic atonement models.<sup>26</sup> The “pentecostant” [sic] community sets itself congenially in the very center of the Pentecost event in order to reproduce it in the present. It is a ritual occasion that generates an ecstatic experience where the “pentecostant” community breaks with daily routine. It transports itself to *illo tempore*, to that primordial time, and realizes it in the present through cultic and ritualized space-time.<sup>27</sup>

Here we see a powerful tension in the Pentecostal experience: it stresses at the same time the atemporal character of the “pentecostant” community and the urgency to live out this experience in the larger world. The only way to resolve this tension is to “pentecostalize” the heterogeneous spaces of the profane, incorporating them into the dynamics of (its own Pentecostal version of) the sacred. This signifies the collapse of the wall distinguishing the sacred and the profane. It is not that such a wall should not be criticized, but it is objectively impossible to live in a state of constant pneumatic arousal. When this happens, violence knocks at the door, for the main goal of this excitement is to subjugate the profane by negating its very otherness.

This is another aspect of the inflationary projection of how the Pentecostal code seeks to pervade the whole of society. Because this is impossible to realize fully, it contributes to the current, postmodern

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Steven Walker, *Jung and the Jungians on Myth* (New York-London: Garland, 1995), p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> See Campos, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 143.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 141.

emotionalism, the semi-hypnotic state which leaves the realm of objective determinants completely untouched.<sup>28</sup> It is as if Pentecostalism realized within itself one of the two postmodern trends: not so much the Holy as the otherness of (profane) space, but the possession of otherness within itself. As Slavoj Žižek has argued, the postmodern emphasis in recreating subjectivities often hides the fact that objective reality, the hard worlds of economics, politics and globalization, continue their unaltered course.<sup>29</sup> This, in turn, hinders the ethical drive stemming from deep, spiritual experiences. The profane should not simply be seen as a space condemned, but as a space for ethical commitment and encounter with new expressions of the sacred.

Too quickly, identifying the profane with the demonic not only cancels any possibility of identifying different forms of sacred presence in and through the profane independent of the Pentecostal experience, but also helps to undermine the integrity of the “profane” as God’s good creation. Indirectly, it either invites the profane to become prisoner of new heteronymous theocracies which are unlikely to be realized or, more likely, it contributes to chaotic autonomies that seek emotional solutions to systemic problems. In other words, it is as though the ecstasy of bodily contortions were unable to move into the questioning of systems that contort bodies to feed their greed.

At this point, we must retrieve the important Trinitarian hermeneutic of the two regiments and the three orders, in an attempt to move from a restricted code of alienation to an elaborated code of integration.

### **Salvation and holiness: the Lutheran shift from a restricted code to an elaborated code of integration**

In Luther, the sacred has a more nuanced view that incorporates at least two distinct, related dimensions.<sup>30</sup> In his *Confession of 1528*, Luther makes an important and often forgotten distinction between holy (*heilig*) and saved/blessed (*selig*). He polemically engaged with the

<sup>28</sup> It would be interesting to compare the mesmerizing and hypnotic “glow” of the television set and the neo-Pentecostal phenomenon here—two realities that seem to go hand in hand.

<sup>29</sup> See Slavoj Žižek, *El útere y el enano: el núcleo perverso del Cristianismo* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2005), p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> I say at least two because a third dimension would be his notion of the inordinate presence of the holy, the *deus absconditus*, as he develops it in *De Servo Arbitrio*.

notion that monastic orders, rules, cloisters and religious foundations are privileged places to gain access to the sacred, i.e., to win salvation and then proceeded to reassert Jesus Christ's exclusive soteriological character (*selig*) and to redefine the true holy institutions established by God for the good of creation and humanity (*heilig*).

Pointing to the forms of social and secular life appropriate to creaturely existence from the beginning of time, he identifies three holy orders as the spaces where we are addressed by God and are capable of a free and grateful response. Every human being belongs to the order of the household (*oekonomiam*), the government (*politiam*) and the church (*ecclesiam*). These orders are co-creatures with humanity, created together with the human being in order to provide for the social spaces that are necessary for the flourishing of human life.<sup>31</sup> In a way, these orders are what make us human, and to be human is already an act of obedience to God. He writes:

For to be holy and to be saved are two entirely different things. We are saved through Christ alone; but we become holy both through this faith and through these divine foundations and orders. Even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby.<sup>32</sup>

While salvation is an event communicated through faith in Jesus Christ, God also provides for the well-being of the whole of creation independently of direct participation in the saving event. This does not undermine the ultimacy of salvation, but affirms the goodness of creation as it is constantly sustained by God. Therefore, from a Trinitarian point of view, Luther understands that the orders are holy in that they are instituted by God and sanctified through God's Word.

In the office, whose main task is the proclamation of the gospel, he affirms that "all who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good and God-pleasing order and estate."<sup>33</sup> This includes those who preach, administer sacraments and supervise the common chest, and all those servants who serve such persons. For

<sup>31</sup> See Bernd Wannewetsch, "Luther's Moral Theology," in Donald McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 130f.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 37 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 365

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364

Luther, "These are engaged in works which are altogether holy...."<sup>34</sup> But then he moves into the other two "profane" orders and makes similar assertions. Fathers and mothers who are diligently raising their children to the service of God (the realm of the *oeconomia*), "are engaged in pure holiness, in a holy work and holy order."<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, the offices comprehended by civil government "are all engaged in pure holiness and leading a holy life before God."<sup>36</sup> The reason for that is that these "three religious institutions or orders"<sup>37</sup> are found in God's Word and commandments. God's Word is holy and therefore it sanctifies everything that is connected and involved with it.<sup>38</sup>

This holiness of which Luther speaks is related to the creative Word in a twofold way. On the one hand, faith is receiving in one's own existence the person of Christ, participation in a realm of being that is not of this world but manifested and expressed in it.<sup>39</sup> Faith is not something attached to the human person, but a total trust in life as given to me graciously and unmerited.<sup>40</sup> On the other, and related directly to this union with Christ, this faith is always busy, always efficacious, always ecstatic. It can be said that love is the means through which faith works on behalf of creation. The receptive side of life comprehended by faith is thus also expressed proactively. This is why in his *Confession* Luther speaks about Christian love as another order "above" the other three. In its orbit,

one serves not only the three orders, but also serves every needy person in general with all kinds of benevolent deeds, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, forgiving enemies, praying for all

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

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

<sup>38</sup> It is critical to note that Luther saw the Ten Commandments as providing the axiological horizon for these orders. See Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," (1520) in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 44 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966).

<sup>39</sup> This is clearly developed in Martin Luther "The Freedom of a Christian," (1520), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 31 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 327.

<sup>40</sup> See Oswald Bayer, "Justification as the Basis and Boundary of Theology," in *Lutheran Quarterly* XV/3 (Autumn 2001), p. 275.

men on earth, suffering all kind of evil....All of these are called good and holy works.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to note that this relativization of the orders by the power of love does not render them unimportant. On the contrary, the nature of this very love, as expressed through structures for the service of God and the benefit of creation, seeks naturally to overflow and reach out to those who are left out of the blessings that come through these orders. These institutional mediations of love and the encounters with the neighbor outside these orders are in fact the same love that seeks integration in a wider systemic flow. Actually, to love in such a way is not a human possibility but a divine one. Our love is the love with which God loves the loveless, for God wants to work with and through us.<sup>42</sup> To be capable of such love is only possible by faith, namely, by fulfilling the first and second commandments, rather than seeking fulfillment and healing from within ourselves. Faith honors God in that it takes us out of our selfish selves, and makes us available for God through our service to the neighbor and there rest of creation. It creates new networks where honoring God means defending the poor, the downtrodden and praying for our enemies.<sup>43</sup> Where faith is, good works ensue with happiness and freedom, with gratuitousness and responsibility.

In Luther's view, faith, love and orders are closely linked in how we participate in the dynamic of the sacred. In fact, it is better to speak of the participation of the sacred in the profane, of God's carving out God's space in existence, history and nature. While for Christians the sequence of faith-love-orders constitutes a dynamic integration of the sacred and the profane, of transcendence and immanence, for the "godless" this integration is broken. They already live in environments of holiness, yet in their natural perception it is just profane. They can neither see nor perceive that the spaces of sociability are instituted by God and sanctified by God's Word, even though they may live rightly and honorably in them. As Luther said, "even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby."<sup>44</sup> Faith, on the other

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<sup>41</sup> Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 365.

<sup>42</sup> See Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," *op. cit.* (note 38), p. 49.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," *op. cit.* (note 32), p. 365.

hand, creates its own cognitive domain that sees in the profane a new transparency of the divine.

Sanctification, thus, means not the overriding of the profane in the name of the sacred, nor the elevation of the profane into the sacred, but the recognition of the hidden presence of the sacred in and through the profane which constantly redraws customary ways of perceiving their relations.<sup>45</sup>

This Trinitarian theological vision establishes clear signs of differences with the Pentecostal experience. To begin with, sanctification does not refer to the spectacle of an extraordinary shower of charismas, or the fashioning of moral virtues, but to the form taken by lives and bodies when they are transparent to what is really holy, God. Sanctification is God working in and through creation for the sake of its (present) integrity and its (future) salvation. The opening up of lives, bodies and structures that are integrated with others mediates the sustaining and healing presence of God. This does not imply the cancellation of the profane, but its affirmation as the realm of creatureliness as the penultimate "natural material" which is called to be holy.

In this regard, the sacramental dimension of Luther's theology is significant, because through it the worldly and the natural acquire a new dignity and positive spiritual weight. Luther's understanding of Word and sacraments emphasized the essentially worldly mediation of the spiritual and the spiritual significance of all worldly things.<sup>46</sup> Again, it is the Word of God that institutes, and especially the word of Christ that addresses sinners with forgiveness and the promise of a fulfilled life as creatures, thus creating a new situation. The Word is not a magical substance, nor a transformational device on its own, but it realigns creatural elements in a new sacred circuitry. This is how the Word operates on us and on nature, creating faith and trust, in the same way as it does in other aspects of nature, mediating nurturance, blessings and well-being. The faith that stems from that Word also opens the ways and means by which God has blessed creation to flow back to us again

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<sup>45</sup> Luther's so-called theory of the two kingdoms and regiments must be seen as an important restatement of relative autonomous spaces for political action. The being together around the gospel and the sacraments does not cancel the being together around goods and authorities. God operates in both realms, though through different means. Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Church, State, Resistance," in Henk de Vries and Lawrence Sullivan (eds), *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 102-112.

<sup>46</sup> See Oswald Bayer, "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Orders," *Lutheran Quarterly* XII/2 (Summer 1998), p. 134.

in a new network of relationships. The ecological, the social and the political thus acquire a new integration and relevance, placing justice in human to human relationships and balance in human to nature relations center stage in our comprehension of the sacred.

Second, the notion of sanctification elaborated by Luther is not limited to the intimate reaches of faith, but is a matter of faith and love throughout the created orders.<sup>47</sup> This is where faith overflows in love through the divinely assigned spheres of social life: politics, economics and religion. Sanctification involves bodies and nature in new, life-giving and sustaining constellations, making of them the external dimension of justification. Thus, Luther sees the work of the Holy Spirit as enacting the fulfillment of both tables of the law: on the one hand the Spirit makes a new “heart, soul, body, works and way of life,” imprinting in us the true fear and love of God. This level of holiness comes when the Holy Spirit gives people faith in Christ, thus fulfilling the first table. On the other, the Spirit “sanctifies and awakens also the body to this new life, until it is completed in the life beyond.”<sup>48</sup>

Against the antinomians, for example, Luther insists that the Holy Spirit is the subject that fulfills through our bodies and minds the commandments of the second table. For Luther, a preached Christ without the Holy Spirit is a blunt knife. The comfort consecrated by the first table is directly linked to the realization of creaturely existence. The Holy Spirit is an affirmation and fulfillment of creation, not its negation. It should be added, however, that this has to be amplified today to embrace the orders of nature that are beyond the historical and sociological, i.e., the complex systemic dynamisms that conform to the intricacies of the natural world and our common ecological existence.

Finally, Luther's insistence on the Word anchors all religious experience in the figure of Jesus Christ. The importance of this Christological concentration provides a different archetypical realization for the self than the one proposed by the Pentecostal experience. For, in effect, while Luther also had a strong pneumatological conception, it was clear that the Spirit without the Word can only lead to anomic, fanaticized existences, which not so much put in danger the gospel, as the integrity of creation and the viability of the body politic. Much has been said about Luther's

<sup>47</sup> See Wannewetsch, *op. cit.* (note 31), p. 132.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Church” (1539), in Helmut T. Lehmann (ed.), *Luther's Works*, vol. 41 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 145f.

political ethic, but we should never forget that his political theology is one of the most admirable attempts to articulate an integral view of creation and redemption, distinguishing and relating the complex dynamic with which these two dimensions interpenetrate each other—an elaborated code of integration that deconstructs and reconstructs at the same time. The point here is that it is Luther's Christology, especially his *christologia crucis* (Christology of the cross), which sets clear direction and limits to religious experience.

There are at least two ways in which the Christological archetype operates. First, as the full identification with the archetype of the *Logos/Son of God*, the Nazarene bars us from any direct access to the Holy that circumvents his body and his story told through the canonical narratives. While, according to Luther, the Jesus' story must be told in its wholeness, that is, as both law and gospel, it is important to appreciate how this identification of the Son with Jesus helps believers to integrate an inner world of signification (justification) for dealing wholesomely with the outer world and its demands (justice). The act of faith in Jesus as the savior and Son, the "happy exchange" between Christ and our sin, counters any unconscious identification/possession of the sacred. Instead of condemning the world (sinners, lost, devil), it allows for the realization of a new self, centered on the crucified. As analytical psychology insists, one must never identify with an archetype, but integrate its contents in our fragile humanity. Exclusively pneumatological perspectives often lead to inflationary evaluations of self and a deflationary regard for creation and the world.

Second, the focus on the crucified Christ as the basis for any notion of the exalted makes us seek the holy not directly in the extraordinary, in the apparently miraculous, but in the lowly, in the marginal, in the debased. Curiously, some Pentecostal churches seem to be culturally and socially better situated to grasp this important fact. Yet, the mediation offered by the experience of the ecstasies in their own bodies instead of the communion with the body of Christ, contributes toward projections of glory apart from the archetype of the crucified. Only a being that "lacks" is vulnerable and capable of receiving and giving love. The ultimate mystery of the crucified is that this lack is, in a way, higher than immediate fulfillment.<sup>49</sup> Christian perfection and sanctification is being aware of this need, of this lack, making us penitents, begging for

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Žižek, *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 158.

fulfillment in all orders of life. This important Christological emphasis ensures that we understand ourselves not only from our own particular needs for healing, but from the need to be healed with the rest of our species and with the whole of nature. We cannot “be” without them, and we cannot be healed, made whole, apart from them.

At this point, Lutheranism must strongly reinstate the Christological anchorage of the experience and conception of God. Our place as creatures is to be situated not in the realm of an exalted recreation of the primordial Pentecost event, but in this gap left open between the Father and Jesus. We confess a God who is, simultaneously, a total heterogeneity and a total human being and the gulf that separates them. The latter is the space of the profane in the sense both of the “desecrated” and that which awaits final fulfillment in front of the temple. It is there, in this gap, that we receive the blessings of the Spirit.

## Conclusion

Can we still dance? Have we not stepped on too many toes? Do we actually move to the same rhythms? As we look at the Pentecostal phenomena and seek to understand their causes and manifestations there is a point at which we must keep quiet and allow ourselves to be dumbstruck and in awe. Indeed, Pentecostal churches have unveiled the ever challenging force and vitality of the Holy. This pushes us to look anew at our stale rituals, our tedious sermons, our domesticated notions of God, our soft religious experiences. Through Pentecostalism, we have also become aware of the way in which rituals of salvation also bespeak the pressures exerted on bodies and minds by economic, social and cultural forces that often seem completely out of control. The fact that many of us do not mirror in our rituals a slackening of our bodies is also a social commentary on our churches at which crossroads we set our altars.

At the same time, however, we have noted that our own tradition witnesses also to a vital and living God, whose image may be held captive, but which is by no means dead. This is why we can and must look at the inordinate nature of Pentecostal phenomena and question the direct, immediate and sensible grasping of the Holy Spirit. Is it really the only and/or most appropriate way of relating to the sacred? Is it conducive to a wholesome relation to the larger environment that God has provided for us? This is not to deny that Pentecostalism carries a powerful

experience of the sacred, that contortions of the body are as legitimate a form of spiritual experience as are daily Bible readings or silent prayer. Nevertheless, there are certain forms of the manifestation of the sacred that, while acknowledged, must not necessarily be followed, approached, or worshipped with the same devotion and intensity. In *De Servo Arbitrio*, Luther's distinction between the hidden or inscrutable God and the preached or revealed God seems to offer an important caveat. God does much without God's Word telling us why. There is an inscrutable will of God, an amoral dimension. Many of the pneumatological codes of Pentecostalism seem closer to that type of God than the one clothed in Jesus and communicated to us through the Spirit. A naked God can also lead us to madness and to our denial of the world. It can be exciting, but is it a healing reality? Does it take me out of my self to see the emptiness of a world that begs for structures of justice and healing?

In the end, as we leave the dance floor, after looking at our partner, we depart with the sense that we have heard a different tune. Maybe this is how heaven is, an eccentric diversity that allows itself to be apprehended in different ways. Yet, as finite creatures, we cannot dance to all melodies and tunes. Our ears and perception must make a selection, must "filter" their environment. This is what theology does, or more accurately, the symbols and codes that serve to construct a theological vision. As with language, we cannot live outside the world set forth by our own cognitive categories. In the end, the question is, Which one of the dancers has enjoyed the presence of the other as another? Who has better integrated the movements of the other on the dance floor? Who has danced more *gracefully*?

Our world is in crisis, the old foundations seem to be all but dismantled and extraordinary phenomena occur in our midst. All these realities can be received as signals of doom or as opportunities for renewal. As stated previously, the irruption of the sacred is yet another way in which we can see the promise for the whole of our creation if we relate this irruption to the different ways in which God is already active in society and nature. An elaborated code allows us not only to hear a "No," but also God's "Yes." That can only be seen through something that happens in us as it is sent to us. The Holy Spirit seeks to fill this gap between potency and impotency, fullness and emptiness, healed and wounded. This is where we stand, empty and therefore able to say, *Veni Creator Spiritus!*