

## **Three Fabrics Necessary to Build Pentecostal Educational Institutions**

### **I. Zeal with knowledge (Isaiah 11:2)**

- a. Pentecostals have had a love-hate relationship with education; however, we are not anti-intellectual, **rather** we have been suspect of over-reliance on reason or human endeavor that would crowd God out of the picture.
- b. The text, Isaiah 11:2, is a picture of the model of zeal with knowledge that is embodied in the coming Messiah.
- c. We have been made in God's image so when He reveals Himself we can comprehend Him. However, God cannot be known by mere reason alone. God has become flesh, which means that our human capabilities to reason and comprehend aren't enough. We must ENCOUNTER a living God.
- d. Our Pentecostal tradition was not born out of a battle of theological concepts. It was born in the context of people who hungered after God who would make a difference in their lives—Body-Soul-Spirit. Our tradition is not bound by the belief that all our understanding of God can be bound up in a doctrinal creed—to know God is not to accumulate facts about God alone. Rather, it is to ENCOUNTER the God who is Creator of the Universe. We have an opportunity to forge a new model for the world. We come to the Bible and to theological inquiry with the belief that our scientific investigation of the Bible knocks on the door of truth, but it is only the Spirit that unlocks the door of the Truth (I Cor. 2:10-16).
- e. Russ Spittler, a Pentecostal New Testament scholar, says God gives us the right to inquire and the might to believe. But what will students look like who have the fabric of zeal with knowledge? They will be able to articulate a theology of healing and also pray for the sick and see them healed. They will be able to parse Greek verbs and yet unfold the truths of the word of God so that even the illiterate can understand. They will be able to argue for the vicarious atonement offered by Jesus Christ and preach an evangelistic sermon that calls sinners to repentance.

### **II. Faith with Persistent Obedience (Zechariah 4:6)**

- a. It is a rebuilding time for the nation and the temple and Zerubbabel has a big challenge. He was tempted to try to do his job the way it had been done in the past, i.e. build a nation through peace treaties with other nations or simply work hard and do the job through sheer resoluteness. We are tempted to access all types of resources at a time of challenge in our lives; we work hard, try every new program and plan on the market. We are well-intended workaholics. But this verse says it is not by our RESOURCES nor by the RESOLUTENESS, but by the eternal living power of God who is the only authorized source of power for Christian ministry.
- b. See verse 10. It's as if Jehovah anticipates Zerubbabel's complaint that what he is doing is so small and not of consequence. But God says, don't despise the day of small things (of small beginnings) because when the final inspection of the building-project occurs, there will be no doubt as to

who has completed the project. God's hand will be obvious in the entire matter. The fabric with which we build is not of human hands, but rather an eternal fabric which "moth and rust" cannot destroy.

### **III. Empowered vision (Acts 1:6-8)**

- a. Our understanding of the Church and its Mission (as Pentecostals) cannot be separated from our affirmation of the formative power of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is not merely a doctrine to be defended, it is the central element that impacts and shapes the very way we see all of Christian life and work. The result of the Baptism of the Spirit can only be described as a significant paradigm shift. The question the disciples ask in verse 6 indicates that they have not understood Jesus' intents and purposes. The question reveals an exclusive understanding of who are recipients of God's blessing, i.e. Jews only. It indicates a geographically bounded impact on where God's blessing would be located, i.e. Palestine. The questions finally reveal a political expectation for what Jesus would do when he set up His Kingdom.
- b. Verse 7 simply gives Jesus' response that the need of the world and the expectation of the disciples did not set the agenda for what would happen. The Father set the agenda and the time and plan for what He had planned for his Creation from before the foundation of the earth.
- c. Verse 8 is God's answer to the disciples' pitifully uninformed question. The impact of verse 8 is realized 10 days later on the Day of Pentecost and continues to this day as we experience the reality of Pentecost through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- d. The impact of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a change on what anthropologists would call our worldview. Our worldview is simply the lens through which we interpret the world. It is a conceptual framework through which we evaluate the world and events that we encounter. The result of this Baptism of the Spirit on the disciples was that their exclusive view of the blessing of God moved from themselves as sole recipients to "all nations." The small geographically bounded focus of their understanding of God's blessing moved from Jerusalem exclusively to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world. The narrow political definition of God's Kingdom gave way to the redemptive mission of God's Kingdom who has as its goal the display of God's glory over all the earth (Psalm 57:11).
- e. Pentecost is the guarantee that the Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee preaching, teaching, healing and casting out demons is among us today by the presence of the Spirit. He is doing exactly what He has always done; there is no changing of His redemptive agenda. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us the clarity to see Christ who is among and Co-missions us into his global agenda for all peoples.