How should Scripture be approached? On this question we believe Pente-
costals have some decisive insights which no one else can offer. We Pen-
tecostals bear distinctive witness to a reality and dimension of life in the
Holy Spirit, out of which a uniquely Pentecostal approach to Scripture
emerges. Some of the key aspects of this reality of life in the Spirit and
their import for a Pentecostal approach to Scripture are described in the
following:

1. *The Holy Spirit addresses us in ways which transcend human reason*

We see this especially in the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12.14) but also in
more subtle ways (Rom. 8.1–27). Thus we know that there is a vital place
for emotion as well as reason, for imagination as well as logic, for mystery
as well as certainty, and for that which is narrative and dramatic as well
as that which is propositional and systematic. Consequently, we appre-
ciate Scripture not just as an object which we interpret but as a living
Word which interprets us and through which the Spirit flows in ways that
we cannot dictate, calculate, or program. This means that our Bible study
must be open to surprises and even times of waiting or tarrying before
the Lord.

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* This chapter was first published as ‘A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture’, *Seminary
Viewpoint* 8.1 (November 1987), pp. 4–5, 11. Editor’s Note: This statement was drafted by
Rick Moore in connection with his work on a committee authorized by the General Execu-
tive Council to look into the development of a comprehensive Bible study program for the
Church of God. As such, this statement was included in the committee’s report to the Execu-
tive Council in September and reflects the synthesis and consensus of those on the com-
mittee, including Chris Thomas, Cheryl Johns, Jackie Johns, and Steve Land, who chaired
the committee.

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ogy at Lee University in Cleveland, TN, USA.
2. Experience is vital to knowing the truth

Pentecostal faith is not, as some have caricatured, an experience based faith. Yet we Pentecostals do see an inseparable interplay between knowledge and lived-experience, where knowing about God and directly experiencing God perpetually inform and depend upon one another. This accords with the biblical vs the common secular understanding of knowledge. In the Old Testament this is seen in the very word for knowledge, *yada*, which points beyond the conceptualization of an object to the actualization of a relationship. This is why *yada* is used for marital lovemaking (e.g. Gen. 4.1) and covenantal intimacy (e.g. Jer. 1.5; 22.16; 31.34). This understanding of knowledge is carried forward into the New Testament, so that, as 1 John teaches, ‘he who does not love does not know God’ (4.8). We Pentecostals have appreciated this biblical emphasis upon lived-experience by including testimony in our times of gathering around the Word and by expecting not just information but transformation. What would Pentecostal preaching be without the altar call? And by the same token, what would Pentecostal Bible study be without explicit recognition and overt responding to the transforming call of God’s Word? Can our approach to Bible study be Pentecostal if the question ‘What then shall we do?’ is left unexpressed and unanswered or otherwise loses that urgency which marks a people of last-days expectancy and global mission?

3. The Spirit calls every individual believer to be a witness of the truth
   *(cf. Acts 1.8)*

The priesthood (1 Pet. 2.5, 9) and prophethood (Num. 11.27–29; Joel 2.28–32; Acts 2.16–20) of all believers has distinct reality among Pentecostals in our experience of the Spirit being ‘poured out upon all flesh’ (Acts 2.17). The Spirit gives to some the special gift of teaching but calls every believer to walk in the light for themselves (1 Jn 1.7; 2.27; cf. Eph. 4.7–17) and to be a Christ-like witness of that light before others (1 Jn 4.13–17; Mt. 5.14). These concerns claim deep roots in our Pentecostal heritage. We see them in the enduring adage, ‘one should walk in the light as it shines upon his/her path’ (the tradition underlying the *Lighted Pathway*), and in our expectation that every convert should be a firsthand partaker and bearer of the word, thereby edifying the congregation and evangelizing the lost.