In my first semester at Bible college, I began reading through the entire Bible. As might be expected, a number of Scripture passages made a deep impression upon me, and one of those was Psalm 63, particularly the first two verses: ‘my soul is thirsty for you; my flesh longs for you… thus I have seen you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and your glory’. I heard in Psalm 63 a passionate prayer, an articulation of deep spiritual inclinations. I heard an expression of the psalmist’s intense desire to encounter God and to experience God’s presence. I also recognized the psalmist’s commitment to seek after God and to respond to God’s gracious acts with praise and with constant loyalty. Because of the content of the psalm and its passionate tone of expression, I memorized the psalm and began to recite it regularly as a part of my own prayers.

The longing for God expressed in Psalm 63 gave voice to the passion for God that was generated by my own Pentecostal spirituality, a spirituality that Steven Jack Land has characterized as ‘a passion for the kingdom’, which is ‘ultimately a passion for God’. I suggest in this study that Psalm 63 can function as an individual and/or communal prayer that voices the passionate aspects of Pentecostal spirituality. Furthermore, in its function as Holy Scripture, this psalm can guide Pentecostals in their pursuit of an encounter with God and in their longing for God’s presence.
In this constructive and integrative study, I examine Psalm 63 through the lens of Pentecostal spirituality; however, before examining Psalm 63, I will describe what I am calling an ‘affective approach’ to the biblical text. The affective approach calls for the hearer to attend to the affective tones that are present in the text and to allow the affections of the hearer to be shaped by the text. Once I have described the affective approach, I will present an affective Pentecostal hearing of Psalm 63 that emerges from my location within the Pentecostal community. Then I will suggest ways in which Psalm 63 can contribute to the affective formation of the Pentecostal church of today. On the one hand, therefore, my hearing of Psalm 63 is informed by and shaped by my own Pentecostal experience. On the other hand, my Pentecostal spirituality and experience is influenced by my engagement with Psalm 63.

Before proceeding to the study, I would offer four explanatory comments: 1) Although my work is generated by my Pentecostal spirituality and is aimed at the Pentecostal tradition, I recognize that affective engagement is common to all humans. Therefore, all readers of Scripture are invited to ‘listen in’ to the conversation in hope that they too may find this study beneficial. 2) The Pentecostal movement is a global, diverse, and multifaceted tradition; therefore, I do not claim to speak for all Pentecostals. 3) Biblical exegesis and hermeneutics demand the utilization of a variety of methods and approaches. Therefore, within a holistic biblical hermeneutic, the affective dimension of Scripture is only one of the many dimensions of the text that should be investigated as a part of sound exegesis. I would argue, however, that the affective dimension has been overlooked and underutilized in the academic study of Scripture. 4) This article is a provisional proposal that I submit to the community of scholars for a discerning response. I hope that it will generate further conversation about creative engagement with the biblical text.

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2 Instead of the commonly used term ‘reading’, I prefer the term ‘hearing’ because (1) it is a biblical term; (2) it reflects the orality of biblical and Pentecostal contexts; (3) it is relational, presupposing an external voice who is speaking; (4) it suggests faithful obedience since ‘hearing’ often means ‘obeying’; (5) it implies transformation, since faithful hearing transforms; (6) unlike the process of ‘reading’ Scripture, ‘hearing’ implies submission to the authority of the text. See Lee Roy Martin, *The Unheard Voice of God: A Pentecostal Hearing of the Book of Judges* (JPITSup, 32; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008), p. 53.

3 James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Cultural Liturgies, 1; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), argues convincingly that human life is shaped largely by the affections.