



Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series

VOLUME 20



Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity



Edited By

**Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen
& J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu**



REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES
Volume 20

Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity



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The Centenary of the World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh, was a suggestive moment for many people seeking direction for Christian mission in the twenty-first century. Several different constituencies within world Christianity held significant events around 2010. From 2005, an international group worked collaboratively to develop an intercontinental and multi-denominational project, known as Edinburgh 2010, and based at New College, University of Edinburgh. This initiative brought together representatives of twenty different global Christian bodies, representing all major Christian denominations and confessions, and many different strands of mission and church life, to mark the Centenary.

Essential to the work of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, and of abiding value, were the findings of the eight think-tanks or ‘commissions’. These inspired the idea of a new round of collaborative reflection on Christian mission – but now focused on nine themes identified as being key to mission in the twenty-first century. The study process was polycentric, open-ended, and as inclusive as possible of the different genders, regions of the world, and theological and confessional perspectives in today’s church. It was overseen by the Study Process Monitoring Group: Miss Maria Aranzazu Aguado (Spain, The Vatican), Dr Daryl Balia (South Africa, Edinburgh 2010), Mrs Rosemary Dowsett (UK, World Evangelical Alliance), Dr Knud Jørgensen (Norway, Areopagos), Rev. John Kafwanka (Zambia, Anglican Communion), Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum (Korea, World Council of Churches), Dr Wonsuk Ma (Korea, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies), Rev. Dr Kenneth R. Ross (UK, Church of Scotland), Dr Petros Vassiliadis (Greece, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), and coordinated by Dr Kirsteen Kim (UK, Edinburgh 2010).

These publications reflect the ethos of Edinburgh 2010 and will make a significant contribution to ongoing studies in mission. It should be clear that material published in this series will inevitably reflect a diverse range of views and positions. These will not necessarily represent those of the series’ editors or of the Edinburgh 2010 General Council, but in publishing them the leadership of Edinburgh 2010 hopes to encourage conversation between Christians and collaboration in mission. All the series’ volumes are commended for study and reflection in both church and academy.

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Contents

Contents	v
Foreword	vii
Acknowledgements	xi
Introduction: Pentecostalism and World Mission	
Editors	1
The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement: A Historical Review	
Allan Heaton Anderson	10
The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission	
Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen	26
‘You Shall Receive Power’: Empowerment in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity	
J. Kwabena Aşamoah-Gyadu	45
‘Everything Is Permissible, but Not Everything Is Beneficial’ (1 Cor. 10:23): Pneumatological Christology of the Parousian Church of Christ and (Ab)uses of Spiritual Power in Nigerian Pentecostalism	
Innocent Oguerı Aguwuom	67
Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth	
Julie C. Ma	87
Church Growth: Reflections on Yoido Full Gospel Church	
Younghoon Lee	107
‘Silver and Gold Have I None’: Healing and Restoration in Pentecostalism	
Elizabeth Salazar Sanzana	124
<small>Copyrighted Material</small>	
Principalities and Powers	
Opoku Onyinah	139
Ministry of Mercy and Justice	
Johan Mostert	162
Christian Unity and Pentecostal Mission: A Contradiction?	
Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.	182
Global Christianity and Ecumenism in Asian Pentecostalism	
Connie Au	207

The Sevenfold Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Christian Theology of Religions	
Tony Richie	224
Pentecostal Interaction with Religions: A Nepali Reflection	
Bal Krishna Sharma	241
Word, Work, and Wonder as Holistic Ministry	
Douglas Petersen	255
Blessing in Pentecostal Theology and Mission	
Wonsuk Ma	272
Church and Society: A Pentecostal Perspective from the Southern Hemisphere	
Japie La Poorta	292
Pentecostals, Society and Christian Mission in Latin America	
Miguel Alvarez	301
Could Anthropology Contribute to the Future of Swedish Pentecostalism?	
Jan-Åke Alvarsson	324
Pentecostal Theological Education and Ministerial Formation	
Teresa Chai	343
Ecology and the Future of Pentecostalism: Problems, Possibilities and Proposals	
Jonathan W. Rice	360
Conclusion	
Editors	380
Selected Bibliography	385
Contributors	395

FOREWORD

Christianity was delivered in the birth pangs of Pentecost, and throughout its history it has not shed its birthmark or forgotten it. This motif is etched into the very soul of the Christian movement: it is as hard to comprehend the rise of Christianity as it is to understand the Post-Western Christian manifestations without that motif. J.B. Phillips, the English Biblical scholar, wrote that Christianity, the real thing, emerges from the pages of the *Acts of the Apostles* as a living reality. “The newborn Church,” he affirms, “as vulnerable as any human child, having neither money, influence nor power in the ordinary sense, is setting forth joyfully and courageously to win the pagan world for God through Christ...Here we are seeing the Church in its first youth, valiant and unspoiled – a body of ordinary men and women joined in an unconquerable fellowship never before seen on this earth.”

Phillips ponders the significance of the Church energized by the irruption of the Spirit, saying such a Church is vigorous, flexible, and nimble on the ground, and does not exhibit the symptoms that come from being “fat and short of breath through prosperity, or muscle-bound by overorganization.” The disciples “did not make ‘acts of faith,’ they believed; they did not ‘say their prayers,’ they really prayed. “The Church at the time was not consumed in workshops on psychosomatic medicine because it was absorbed in healing the sick. The Church acted in that fashion because it was “open on the God-ward side in a way that is almost unknown today.”

Emerging fresh from his translation of *Acts*, Phillips said he became all too conscious of the fact that Someone was at work in the book beside mere human beings. Perhaps, he mused, because of the disciples’ simplicity and their readiness to believe, “to obey, to give, to suffer, and if need be to die, the Spirit of God found what surely God must always be seeking – a fellowship of men and women so united in love and faith that God can work in them and through them with the minimum of let or hindrance.” It produced an unprecedented revolution in the annals of human history. “Never before has any small body of ordinary people so moved the world that their enemies could say, with tears of rage in their eyes, that these men and women ‘have turned the world upside down’!” (*Acts 17: 6.*)

In light of such momentous developments and of the Church’s paramount missionary mandate, it is natural and imperative to engage in serious reflection on the work and guidance of the Spirit, as Phillips does. The vitality pulsating in the pages of the *Acts* flows from the grace-filled wind blowing at God’s prompting. That work of renewal and empowerment is a continuation of the work of God in Christ that is able to lift the matted layers of stubborn resistance to expose the heart of what stands between us and God.

After the crucifixion and the subsequent bewildering series of events that all but immobilized the disciples, it was tempting to conclude that

Christianity had become an extinct volcano after the first Pentecost. Yet those faraway events hold the key to the truth that the Christian movement is a movement of ever-new beginnings, that the religion's birthmark is etched anew in its extended and growing limbs, and that the river of God's surplus of grace does not rise higher than its perennial source in Christ, His anointed Son, crucified and risen.

When we read today *The Young Church in Action*, Phillips' fresh and lively translation of *Acts*, we are struck not so much by how contemporary and familiar it sounds, as by Phillips' aching nostalgia for those bygone days, nostalgia bordering on faintheartedness. If the book of *Acts* furnishes stirring evidence of the church being "open on the God-ward side," the avalanche of the Christian ferment visible all around us today is assurance that such God-ward openness is far from something "that is almost unknown today." The theological themes of *Acts* that Phillips underscored in his portrait of the young Church in mission seem to frame the contemporary post-Western resurgence: freedom in the Spirit; the generosity and impartiality of God; the impetus of a forward-looking Church; trust and obedience; boundary-penetrating witness, vulnerable obedience to the Holy Spirit, and a glad acknowledgment of God's universal design for human life, these are very much contemporary chords of the post-Western Church. Vibrant Christian life today captures all the features of what Phillips called the Church in its first youth. However, the 1950s generation that Phillips was addressing, rising from the ashes of the Second World War, had ironically overlooked the fact, as G.K. Chesterton noted, that Christianity's God was one who knew the way out of the grave. Even the most prescient of observers then could not have predicted the spectacle that greets us today in the robust surge that has overtaken the Church.

Yet, as this book of essays makes clear, the signs were there from a very early point in history – long before globalization became the mantra of the market economy and before the internet revolution had us all booted and webbed. To go "global" was in the DNA of Christianity – the breath of the wind of Pentecost has always wafted on the pathways of the Church's earthly pilgrimage. Just as the post-Christian phase in Europe was reaching its high point, and leveling the elevated ramparts of Christian life, the post-Western phase beyond Europe was breaking in. In time Europe would be penetrated by the surge from beyond Europe, with the prospects of recovery and renewal no longer as implausible as it once appeared.

Inserted into my High School copy of *The Young Church in Action* I found a flyer dated January 29, 1966, announcing a meeting of the Capital Area Chapter of the Full Gospel Men's Fellowship International Breakfast Meeting (FGMFI) in Loudonville, a suburb of Albany, New York. I attended that meeting while I was at College, and subsequently placed the flyer in the book where it remained forgotten until I came to write this Foreword forty-seven years later. The subject of the breakfast meeting was "Charismatic Renewal," and the speaker was Stuart Sacks, a graduate of Boston

University, a writer and composer who did work for CBS Television, and someone who was at the time employed by the Burroughs Wellcome pharmaceutical company. A Jewish convert to Christianity and a member of the Reformed Church, Mount Vernon, New York, Sacks received the baptism of the Spirit and joined the charismatic movement in which cause he traveled extensively throughout the United States speaking to audiences. The announcements made reference to similar assemblies specifically in Europe and Asia, including Catholic Charismatic gatherings backed by Belgium's Cardinal Suenens, giving intimation of the worldwide and ecumenical reach of the Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal. I had no way of knowing then that the presentations I heard from the podium were a glimpse into a phenomenon emerging as a cutting edge of the Christian movement. Eye-witnesses, I acknowledge with chagrin, can make inattentive sympathizers. The reminders of the Gentile turning point for a Jewish-led Church at the first Pentecost seem to be evident in a reverse way at that meeting in Loudonville. In the contemporary surge the turning point concerns overcoming the forces responsible for the cultural captivity of the Gospel and rendering the Western Church spiritually immobile, and no one reading this book of collected essays can doubt that we are in the midst of a massive tidal current.

The book represents an admirable balance between analyzing the resurgence in terms of established categories of organization and theological orientation on the one hand, and, on the other, appropriating ideas and insights from the resurgence itself. Theological analysis and descriptive observation combine to expound the subject, with past and future in creative tension. Predictions about the Pentecostal movement must be tempered by the unfolding character of a movement still in spate, and familiar assurances must yield to new challenges. The agenda for action must leave space for emerging initiatives, and structures of stability must bend to embrace unforeseen developments. The Church must address the principalities and powers with which we contend in personal as well as collective witness and conduct, aware that it is engaged at the bidding of the Spirit. Issues of Church and Society, theological education and ministerial formation, personal blessing and civic responsibility, ecumenical unity and interfaith understanding – all these issues need to be illuminated in the healing light of the Spirit. The Church should not be allowed to lapse into a business-as-usual mindset but must be called to honor its birthmark as the handmaid of the Holy Spirit. The ground must shift to reveal a fresh perspective of reflection and action, and turn us outward and God-ward. This book represents an important asset for that reckoning, and should be welcomed as such.

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December 2013

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The publication of this book has been a long process from its initial inception in February 2010. There has been general recognition throughout the Edinburgh 2010 process that the exponential growth of Pentecostal Christianity is one distinct mark of the twentieth century experience of global Christianity. For this reason, it has been a special encouragement that Yoido Full Gospel Church of Seoul, Korea (Dr Younghoon Lee, Senior Pastor) expressed its strong support for the whole process of the Conference and the book project. The second support we enlisted from the Church of Pentecost, Ghana (Dr Opoku Onyinah) attests to the leadership of the 'Southern' Pentecostal churches in the development of global Christianity. Both leaders exemplify today's prevalent Pentecostal spirituality and deep theological scholarship. The editors wish to thank them and their churches for their contribution.

The editors are particularly grateful to the contributors. They have been drawn from diverse geographical, contextual and ecclesial backgrounds, though all share Pentecostal conviction. The editors identified a dozen or so areas of reflection on Pentecostal mission. In some cases, contextually grounded case studies are added. All the chapters are both to reflect on the past and to point to the future, and the contributors were asked to articulate theological groundings for Pentecostal mission practices. Some are uncharted areas in Pentecostal mission, such as reconciliation, environmental care, etc. It took much courage for the contributors to speak prophetically for the future of Pentecostal mission. For these innovative contributions, the editors are deeply grateful.

We also want to acknowledge the constant support and encouragement of the Series Editors. Even long after the resolution of the Edinburgh 2010 General Council, the series team has laboured hard to manage the series and to look for funding to make this historical legacy for the future of Christian mission. We are particularly grateful to Mr Tony Gray for his editorial professionalism.

But at the end, it is the Spirit who gives different gifts to the body of Christ, thus, we present this as a gift of the Spirit to his church.

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INTRODUCTION: PENTECOSTALISM AND WORLD MISSION

Editors

The significance of the modern Pentecostal movement to world mission is seen in different ways as the various essays in this volume make clear. One of them is that in the global south, for example, it has become virtually impossible to talk about Christianity without Pentecostalism in its various forms and dimensions. Additionally in both Western and Eastern Europe today, the single largest Christian churches belong to the Pentecostal tradition. Although the ecumenical movement has during its history talked about unity in the body of Christ often quoting the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ (Jn. 17), for many years Pentecostalism was approached through value-loaded and pejorative terms and expressions. Historic mission Christianity remained the norm and Pentecostalism became an aberration in traditional theology and mission studies. Non-western Pentecostalism like its African versions suffered the most when their pneumatological emphases, especially on healing and prophecy, were explained as attributable to the workings of traditional spirit-deities rather than the one Holy Spirit of Christ that indigenous Pentecostals wanted to experience in church life.

Today in Africa, as in other non-western contexts, the force of Pentecostalism has led to the Pentecostalization of historic mission churches to the point where in many countries the expressions Pentecostal, charismatic and evangelical are becoming indistinguishable from each other. The mainstreaming of Pentecostalism as an inter-disciplinary academic field of religious and theological studies and the establishment of centres devoted to Pentecostal-charismatic studies across the globe adds to the growing importance that Pentecostalism has acquired in world Christianity. To that end, the single most important contribution that Pentecostalism has made to world mission since Edinburgh 1910 is to draw attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in the whole enterprise. This is a point initially made by John V. Taylor in *The Go Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission*. The commissioning of the disciples for mission and the granting of the Spirit by the resurrected Christ occur at the same time. Thus by pointing to the power of the Spirit as the source of Christian mission, the Pentecostal movement was drawing attention to a neglected factor in the Christian enterprise. We say this because at a time when the ecumenical movement did not know what to make of the

movement or even failed to take account of it in world Christian history the Spirit, like the wind that blows from God in Christ, was making his presence felt in the lives of men and women through his power of transformation.

A century after Edinburgh 1910 the power of the Spirit blowing through Pentecostalism means we cannot talk about world Christian mission without the movement. This can only be the doing of the Lord. Thus whether we are talking about indigenous Pentecostalism or non-western immigrant Christian communities in the northern continents, Pentecostalism is beginning to define the future of Christianity and world mission as this volume makes clear.

Pentecostalism in its Global Diversity

Pentecostalism is not a monolithic movement. Thus any attempt to define Pentecostalism at the global level faces insurmountable challenges. Reasons for the multiplicity and diversity of movements and traditions that can be grouped under the inclusive category of Pentecostalism are many and varied. First, unlike established Christian traditions such as Roman Catholicism, Pentecostalism cannot build on ecclesiastical tradition for the simple reason that it came to existence only a century ago. Second, until recent years, Pentecostalism has not produced much theological literature; its contribution to Christian faith has been in the form of occasional pastoral and missional writings, testimonies, dreams, prophecies and the likes that do not easily translate into an analytic, discursive theology.¹ Third, because Pentecostalism was birthed out of dynamic experience rather than a theological discovery, it has liberally incorporated elements from a number of theological traditions and sources such as Methodist-Holiness Movements, the Protestant Reformation, mystical-charismatic movements in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as 'Black' or African American spirituality.² Its theology is still in the making and represents a dynamic 'syncretistic' exercise; the Pentecostal identity is best described in terms of

¹ This is of course not to say that Pentecostals have not produced theology. They have, but in forms that until recently have been neither appreciated nor well known by the professional theological guild. Pentecostalism's way of doing theology, paralleling the way much of non-Western Christianity is still doing, has been oral rather than discursive. Only in recent years a proliferation of academic literature among Pentecostals has emerged as number of theologians, many of them trained in the best theological schools of the world, have not only reflect on their own tradition but also engaged older traditions.

² Hollenweger has summarized the 'roots' of Pentecostalism in these terms: 1) the Black oral root; 2) the Catholic root; 3) the evangelical root, 4) the critical root, and 5) the ecumenical root. This typology serves as the structure of his book. For a brief discussion, see his 'Verheissung und Verhängnis der Pfingstbewegung', *Evangelische Theologie* 53 (1993), 265-88.

spirituality rather than theology.³ The fourth challenge to attempting a definition of global Pentecostalism has to do with the movement's breathtaking diversity, to the point that one should probably speak of Pentecostals (in plural). The diversity has to do with two dimensions relating to the nature of the movement: cultural and theologico-ecumenical. Pentecostalism, unlike any contemporary religious movement, Christian or non-Christian, is spread across most cultures, linguistic barriers, and social locations.

Finally, there is the complicated and complex question of Pentecostalism's relation to the Charismatic Movements which emerged few decades later among historical churches and subsequently, even in more diverse forms, outside established churches. In order to make some sense of this bewildering matrix, it is advisable to follow the current scholarly consensus and speak of three interrelated set of movements, namely, first: 'Classical Pentecostalism', Pentecostal denominations such as Assemblies of God or Foursquare Gospel, owing their existence to the famous Azusa Revival; second, 'Charismatic Movements', Pentecostal-type of spiritual movements within the established churches (the biggest one of which is Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal), and third, 'Neo-Charismatic Movements', some of the most notable of which are Vineyard Fellowship in the USA, African Initiated Churches, and China House Church Movement, as well as innumerable number of independent churches and groups all over the world⁴ Number-wise, the Charismatic Movements (about 200 million) and neo-Charismatics (200-300 million) well outnumber Classical Pentecostals (75-125 million).

Even with this three-fold typology in place, there is a continuing debate among Pentecostal scholars as to the contours of Classical Pentecostalism. Just consider these examples: African Pentecostalism gleans from the rich African religio-cultural soil, including the spirit world⁵ similarly to the way Latin American Pentecostalism conceptually encounters folk Catholicism and spiritism;⁶ some Korean Pentecostals have made use of shamanistic

³ For discussion of Pentecostal identity, see Kärkkäinen, 'Free Churches, Ecumenism, and Pentecostalism', in A. Yong (ed.), *Towards a Pneumatological Theology*, ch. 4.

⁴ While canons are still in the making, this is the typology adopted in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

⁵ See, e.g., Allan H. Anderson, *Moya: The Holy Spirit in an African Context* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1991); 'Pentecostal Pneumatology and African Power Concepts: Continuity or Change?' *Missionalia* 19 (1990), 65-74.

⁶ See, e.g., Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origin and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), ch. 7 (on Mexico) and ch. 10 (on Chile).

traditions in the culture,⁷ and so on.⁸ Not all Pentecostal theologians, however, are willing to admit that these non-white, non-western Pentecostals with their contextualized and ‘syncretistic’ pneumatologies represent genuine Pentecostalism. The dispute continues and is not likely to find a resolution.⁹ What is clear is that ‘[i]n Third World Pentecostalism, experience and practice are usually far more important than dogma. Pentecostalism today is in any case both fundamentally and dominantly a *Third World* phenomenon. In spite of its significant growth in North America, less than a quarter of its members in the world today are white, and this proportion continues to decrease’.¹⁰

Edinburgh and Pentecostalism

Two Great Mission Movements

It is not an exaggeration that the two most significant mission movements of the twentieth century are the ‘Edinburgh’ legacy and global Pentecostalism. The former, which began in the historic Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, had developed mission theology that is closely linked with unity of the church through the international mission conferences organized by the International Missionary Council. Its incorporation into the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961 coincides with the birth of the Evangelical missionary movement, culminated in the Lausanne Conference in 1974. The other ‘sibling’ in the modern missionary landscape is the birth of the modern Pentecostal movement. In spite of debates on the exact origin of the movement, it is commonly agreed that the Azusa Street Mission (1906-1909) is the beginning of the global Pentecostal movement. This movement had grown from zero to half a billion by the turn of the new century, and it continues its growth, particularly in the global South.

These two powerful mission movements, birthed in the same decade, seldom met with each other. At the same time, their influences have grown

⁷ See, e.g., Boo-Woong Yoo, *Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology*, Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 52 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988).

⁸ See further, Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

⁹ See the conflicting judgments in Gary McGee ‘Pentecostal Missiology: Moving beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues’, *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 16:2 (1994), 276-77 and Allan H. Anderson, *Bazalwane: African Pentecostals in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1992), 2-6.

¹⁰ Allan H. Anderson, ‘The Pentecostal Gospel and Third World Cultures’ (paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, Missouri, 16 March 1999, <http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson>), accessed 21 August, 2006.

to a global scale, the former through the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC and the formation of mission theologies, and the latter through the steady and sometimes explosive growth throughout the world. Of course, ideologically the two took very different paths, and in fact, the gap between them has been ever widening: the CWME has championed 'left' mission agendas epitomised by Liberation Theology and *Missio Dei*, while Pentecostalism has been in the forefront of evangelism and church planting. In simplistic terms, the former focused on 'life before death', while the latter on 'life after death'.¹¹ Understandably they have rarely converged with each other, except in a few rare instances, such as the US Assemblies of God mission department once working with the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the missionary association which eventually became part of the National Council of Churches.¹² However, this rather enduring engagement (from 1920) was to come to an end, as the US Assemblies of God strengthened its anti-ecumenical stance.

It is only in the last quarter of the twentieth century, that several specific steps were taken, but not without difficulties. The Catholic and Pentecostal theological dialogue has shown an enduring commitment to dialogue and mutual understanding from 1972. Currently it is running the sixth cycle of this ground breaking ecumenical dialogue. The Reformed and Pentecostal dialogue followed (1996-2011), while other initiatives have either been commenced or attempted, including one with the WCC, with the Lutheran Church, and also with the Orthodox Church.¹³ This was also the time when some Pentecostal churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America began to engage with national and global ecumenical bodies. The membership of the Korean Assemblies of God in the National Council of Churches came with much objection from western sister churches. Although there are positive signs of changing attitudes among Pentecostal churches towards church cooperation, it is likely that non-western Pentecostal churches will play a leading role in Pentecostal engagement in ecumenism. Responsibility for this large gap on ecumenism is not entirely the Pentecostals' doing. The kind of ecumenism advocated by the WCC has been viewed with a great deal of suspicion, not only by the Pentecostals, but more broadly by evangelicals. Obstacles inadvertently placed by the WCC both in

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¹¹ Wonsuk Ma and Julie C. Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2011), 264-65.

¹² Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation: 1920-1965', in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (eds.), *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 107-150.

¹³ A useful collection of documents and statements of ecumenical dialogues involving Pentecostals is available in Wolfgang Vondey (ed.), *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Ecumenical Documents and Critical Assessments* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

theological and organizational areas have proven to have worked against the very purpose of the ecumenical movement. The recent success of the Global Christian Forum seems to affirm work to be done by both sides to achieve meaningful church cooperation. And the day seems to have dawned.

Edinburgh 2010 and Pentecostalism

The first plans to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference were initiated by the Church of Scotland through the program called Towards 2010. When its first planning conference was organized by calling twenty global mission leaders in May 2005, a Pentecostal delegate was invited from Asia to represent the Asian Pentecostal Society, and this conference proposed nine study themes and transversal themes.¹⁴ The preparatory work of the Towards 2010 was handed to the General Council of the Edinburgh 2010, once it was formed in 2006. Among the twenty General Council members, a Pentecostal delegate represented global Pentecostal Christianity. When the size of the conference was finalised, the Pentecostal delegates were the largest in number among church representatives, reflecting the sheer size of Pentecostal Christianity in the twenty-first century. No one among the 1910 conference leaders would ever have thought that an obscure and ignored Pentecostal Christianity would grow, in a century, to become the second largest Christian group, only after Catholics!

Thirty global Pentecostal delegates were invited to the actual conference, representing over 10% of the 250 official conference delegates.¹⁵ On the second day, a Pentecostal leader was among the three plenary speakers. During the conference, Pentecostal delegates came together for two evenings for fellowship and exchange of views; some Charismatic delegates also joined the meetings. The delegates decided to produce a statement, and this document has become part of the official conference collection.¹⁶ The full text is worth repeating:

We acknowledge the historical significance of Edinburgh 1910 and rejoice that we have been counted among those gathered together in Edinburgh 2-6 June 2010 to mark the centennial. The twentieth century gave clear testimony that although we were not in attendance at Edinburgh 1910, we have taken our rightful place on the landscape of contemporary Christianity. We would like to express our gratitude to those who prepared and participated in the Edinburgh 2010 conference and for giving us the opportunity to be able to affirm the significance of the global mission call joining a diverse fellowship of believers in Christ.

¹⁴ Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 343-34.

¹⁵ The list of the delegates is found in Kim & Anderson, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 425-42.

¹⁶ Kim & Anderson, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 343-44.

As Pentecostal delegates we participated at Edinburgh 2010 in the nine themes as well as on all levels of the study processes. We have shared issues and concerns. We listened, prayed and learned together, with an attitude of love and respect, building bridges rather than creating chasms, divisions and barriers. We affirm the divine mission mandate to reconcile the whole of God's creation in Christ and do this across denominational and confessional lines. We are to engage in effective witnessing [to] the Good News of Jesus Christ to all parts of the world, in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the glory of God. This vision reflects the heart of God and belongs to the very nature of the Church.

We appreciate that Pentecostals are recognised in a positive way. At the same time we leave with the challenge to find fuller expressions of global Pentecostalism in an ecumenical context. We also noticed a disparity of the language used and concerns expressed between the global North and global South. We must be careful that the academic voices of the North do not wash away the narrative claims of the South. As Pentecostals we are acquainted with both linguistic traditions, we realise that we can play an important role as bridge builders. This would truly benefit the whole Body of Christ. Furthermore, we are deeply aware that Christians need the help of the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit's guidance and empowerment we will be able to answer God's mandate to the world.

We humbly acknowledge that it is God who has the last word. Issues that relate to mission and unity should not drift into intellectual manoeuvrings. It must be the prayer of all people of God, wherever they are, to hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches so that we can turn to God and our common call can be, 'Come, Lord Jesus!'¹⁷

The conference statement called 'The Common Call' was viewed as a remarkable achievement of the whole conference process, considering the full breadth and incredible diversity of the participant stakeholders, from the Catholic and mainline churches to the Pentecostal and African Independent Churches. Any Pentecostal believer would detect a strong influence of Pentecostal hands in the formation of the document. The ninth point is a good example:

9. Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As

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¹⁷ Those who signed the statement are: Rev. Dr. Miguel Alvarez, (USA), Mr. Kenneth Ben (Cook Islands), Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns (USA), Dr. David Daniels (USA), Dr. Anne Dyer (UK), Mrs. Dynnice Rosanne Engcoy (Philippines), Dr. Samson Fatokun (Nigeria), Dr. Pamela Holmes (Canada), Rev. Dr. Harold D. Hunter (USA), Rev. Dr. Veli Matti Kärkkäinen (Finland), Dr. Elijah Jong Fil Kim (USA), Rev. Steven K.L. Kum (Malaysia), Dr. Julie Ma (Korea), Dr. Wonsuk Ma (Korea), Rev. Rauno Mikkonen (Finland), Apostle Dr. Opoku Onyinah (Ghana), Rev. Philippe Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), Rev. Dr. Tavita Pagaialii (Western Samoa), Dr. Jean-Daniel Plüss (Switzerland), Rev. Dr. Daniel Ramirez (USA), Dr. Elisabeth Del Carmen Salazar-Sanzana (Chile), and Rev. Bal Krishna Sharma (Nepal).

we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.¹⁸

Although Pentecostals do not have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit, the conference process from its inception began with a strong acknowledgement of the contribution of Pentecostal mission in the expansion of global Christianity. The publication of *Atlas of Global Christianity*¹⁹ for the celebration of the Edinburgh centenary makes it clear that the present and future of global Christianity depends heavily on the continuing growth of Pentecostalism. And the truth is, this is a wide-spread belief! Pentecostalism grows at an annual rate of 2.20%, while Christianity as a whole records a bare minimum of 0.09%.²⁰

The Pentecostal Volume

The production of documents is a long-established legacy of the 1910 conference. The eight-volume conference publications have been read, studied, interpreted, evaluated and criticised for the last one hundred years. The centenary celebration, to be truthful to this tradition, was far more than the conference. The real contribution will be a body of literature that may reach close to thirty titles.

Besides conference-related titles, and ones that grow out of various study commissions, several major church families were encouraged to organize a study process to be culminated in a volume. Along with Catholic and Orthodox churches, the idea of a Pentecostal volume was suggested in order to study the unique contribution of Pentecostal mission to global Christianity in the last one hundred years. The volume is also to provide Pentecostal Christianity with a new direction towards its new century of mission.

The book is organized by themes that the editors concluded to be the most important and critical themes for Pentecostal mission, past and future. Each study is to look back at the past of Pentecostal mission and offer reflection, but also to pay serious attention to the good health of future Pentecostal mission. Some themes have more than one study, and in such cases, the second studies look at specific cases, with defined religio-cultural and socio-political contexts.

Contributors have been selected who will bring a good balance between the North and the South. Considering that today's Pentecostal Christianity,

¹⁸ Kim & Anderson, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 2.

¹⁹ Edited by Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

²⁰ Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, and Peter E. Crossing, 'Status of Global Mission, 2011, in Context of 20th and 21st Centuries', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35:1 (Jan 2011), 29.

like global Christianity as a whole, is a ‘southern’ religion in its characteristics and concentration, the editors have made a serious attempt to bring in unique voices of the South. Less successful is the gender balance. In spite of a desperate search, the editors were only marginally successful, finding just four women authors. A small consolation is that both are from the global South. This seems to point to one area where future global Pentecostals need to pay special attention: preparing women for leadership in academics as well as in ministry. The volume concludes with a reflection by bringing the voices of the contributors for the future of Pentecostal mission.



THE EMERGENCE OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL GLOBAL MISSIONARY MOVEMENT: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

Allan Heaton Anderson

Edinburgh 1910 and Pentecostalism

This chapter looks at the origins and development of a global network in early Pentecostalism, and how this contributed to the formation of a multidimensional global movement. The great Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 was an important milestone in Protestant missions and gave birth to the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century. This was also a conference that put great stress on evangelism, and the motto of its organizer John Mott was 'the evangelization of the world in this generation'. But there is little evidence that it had any influence on Pentecostal missions. After all, Pentecostals were not invited to this event and their work was unrecognized, quite understandable in these early days when they were not yet organized into structures. Furthermore, Edinburgh 1910 did not foresee the massive transformation in the nature of the Church that was to take place during the twentieth century, in which Pentecostalism played a major role. Pentecostalism confounded the general assumption at Edinburgh that Christianity would not flourish without white missionary control. It probably became the main contributor to the reshaping of Christianity itself from a predominantly western to a predominantly non-western phenomenon during the twentieth century. However, for the Pentecostals and radical evangelicals themselves, the Edinburgh conference was hardly noticed.

There may only be one printed commentary on this epochal event made by Pentecostals at the time. The editor of the Atlanta-based *The Bridegroom's Messenger* Elisabeth Sexton, in a 1910 editorial titled 'Increasing Missionary Activity', referred to the Edinburgh Conference of less than three months earlier as 'undoubtedly the greatest missionary gathering the Christian world has ever known'. She noted that although the increasing number of missionary societies (aided by the laymen's movement) pointed to an 'auspicious outlook for great results for God' in this age unlike any other, she doubted whether any activity 'not representing the fullness of the Gospel, with full redemption in Christ Jesus for body, soul and spirit' would achieve the expected outcome. She wondered whether the unity reported on in Edinburgh was 'by the working of the blessed Spirit of God, uniting them in Christ' or was merely 'apparent unity out of respect for the great occasion'. She lamented what she saw as 'compromise' in allowing a Roman Catholic to address the

conference – unless Catholics had ‘greatly changed’, she added. She felt that concessions had been made ‘regarding heathen religions in recognising certain moral good in them’. Such concessions would ‘dishonour God and weaken the cause of Christ’. She reiterated her conviction that the only ‘equipment for effectual missionary service’ was ‘Holy Ghost power’ and ‘uncompromising faithfulness to the full Gospel truth’. Without this there was ‘little hope for great results for God as the outcome of this great missionary conference’. She saw the conference as a lost opportunity, especially as it had in her view missed the urgent eschatological dimension of missions and the power of the Spirit that were thrusting out Pentecostal missionaries all over the world in the shortest possible time. It was not the frantic and increased activity in itself that would achieve God’s purposes, she wrote, but the haste that was needed in these last days was in ‘preparation for that blessed day, and the making ready of the Bride of Christ’. Any missionary activity that did not have this end in view would ‘miss the highest privilege of this age’.¹ Missionaries made premillennial eschatology part of their preaching wherever they went and the seeming delay in Christ’s coming did not deter them.

This commentary illustrates what were some of the fundamental issues already developing in Pentecostal circles based on a premillennial eschatology that was highly suspicious of and uncooperative with the wider Christian world, especially in the case of the ecumenical movement and Catholicism. Thankfully, this was beginning to change. Over two years later, Cecil Polhill, leader of the Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU) in Britain had a broader experience with his Anglican background and China Inland Mission involvement. His assessment of Edinburgh was more positive. The conference was ‘evidently ordered in the Plan of God’, he wrote, and its reports brought the church ‘face to face with the world’s needs in detail’ while they concentrated on the ‘unparalleled opportunity’ and the ‘Church’s responsibility’. He drew special attention to the ‘Report of the Commission for Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World’ and highlighted its emphasis on the unprecedented opportunities for evangelization. But he observed that the Church had not responded to these calls and that the Pentecostal movement had arisen to rectify this grave omission. Polhill positively drew attention to the calls of the conference for making the most of the unprecedented opportunities to engage in world evangelization. There had never been a decade like the second decade of the twentieth century where doors all over the world were opened. Sadly, the Great War of 1914-18 was to put pay to these opportunities and leave the world reeling from its devastation with a profound disillusionment in western civilization.² Incidentally, two PMU missionaries were official delegates to a continuation conference of Edinburgh 1910 conducted by

¹ *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 69 (1 Sept 1910), 1.

² *Flames of Fire* 9 (Jan 1913), 3.

John Mott in Beijing in 1913.³ So Pentecostals were not entirely absent from these events.

Early Pentecostalism as a Missionary Movement

By 1916, six years after the Edinburgh conference and only ten years after the beginning of the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostal missionaries from the West were found in at least forty-two nations outside North America and Europe.⁴ This was indeed a remarkable achievement, especially in view of the lack of central organisation and co-ordination, the naivety of most of these missionaries, and the physical difficulties and opposition they encountered. Pentecostal denominations were still in the process of formation, and in most countries they did not exist as organisations with centralised structures. Most of these early missionaries were novices who had never ventured outside their own, often narrow cultural setting. Those who left America in the wake of Los Angeles' Azusa Street revival did so with the conviction that they could speak the languages of the nations to which they had been called. European Pentecostals from the Pentecostal Missionary Union, being rather more phlegmatic and having the experience of Cecil Polhill of the China Inland Mission to guide them, went out to China, India and central Africa expecting to need to learn the languages. Many of the early Pentecostal missionaries lacked financial means (including funds to take furloughs in their homelands); they were subject to impoverished living conditions, and many died from tropical diseases. Some of their stories are indeed tragic.

It is possible, however, to understand the present global proliferation of Pentecostalism from these rather chaotic beginnings and to discern the essential characteristics that made it ultimately the most successful Christian missionary movement of the twentieth century. Pentecostalism has always been a movement with global orientation and inherent migrating tendencies that, coupled with its strong individualism, made it fundamentally a multidimensional missionary movement. Very soon its ambassadors were indigenous people who went out to their own people in ever-increasing numbers. Networks were formed that criss-crossed nations and organisations. These networks were essential in the globalising process, and were aided and abetted by rapid advances in technology, transportation and communications. As the twentieth century progressed Pentecostalism became increasingly globalised, and the power and influence of the former colonising nations and their representatives diminished.

Charismata or 'spiritual gifts' and ecstatic or 'enthusiastic' forms of Christianity have been found in all ages, albeit sometimes at the margins of the 'established' church, and they have often been a characteristic of the

³ *Confidence* 6:4 (Apr 1913), 83.

⁴ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM & Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 288.

church's missionary advance, from the early church to the pioneer Catholic missionaries of the Middle Ages. Protestantism as a whole did not favour such enthusiasm, however, and it often suppressed any expressions of Christianity that would seek to revive spiritual gifts. The histories of the Anabaptist, Quaker and Irvingite movements are cases in point. It took new revival movements in the nineteenth century (especially of the Methodist and Holiness type) and movements among other radical Protestants who espoused similar ideas, to stimulate a restoration of spiritual gifts to accompany an end-time missionary thrust. The many and various revival movements at the start of the twentieth century had the effect of creating a greater air of expectancy for Pentecostal revival in many parts of the world. The signs that this revival had come would be similar to the earlier revivals: an intense desire to pray, emotional confessions of sins, manifestations of the coming of the Spirit, successful and accelerated evangelism and world mission, and especially spiritual gifts to confirm that the power of the Spirit had indeed come.

Key to understanding the globalisation process in early Pentecostalism was the role of the periodicals. There were at least three features of this process. First, the early periodicals were sent all over the world and provided the mass media for the spread of Pentecostal ideas. Second, they also formed the social structures that were necessary during this time of creative chaos, when the only form of missionary organisation was often linked to the support engendered by these periodicals. International travel was an increasing feature of the early missionaries and their networks and conferences the means by which their message spread. One cannot read these different early periodicals without noticing how frequently a relatively small number of the same Pentecostal missionaries are referred to in all the periodicals. Division and schism was to come later; but the periodicals promoted a unity of purpose and vision that has since been lost. And third, this internationalism, this global meta-culture of Pentecostalism was evident in these years through the influence of both the periodicals and the missionary networks. In the first years the missionary networks like those of A.B. Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance were essential for the spread of Pentecostal ideas. Azusa Street missionaries A.G. and Lillian Garr arrived in Calcutta in December 1906, and immediately held meetings with the western evangelical missionaries when they discovered that they could not speak Bengali as they thought.⁵ At the same time, Pentecostal missionaries like William Burton in the Congo saw the globalization that occurred by which native peoples were adopting western ways as 'a marvellous, an unparalleled opportunity for presenting the

⁵ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89-90.

realities of Christ' to replace the now discarded old beliefs in witchcraft, fetishes and charms.⁶

In any discussion on the multiple origins of global Pentecostalism, I make four central assumptions, without which the history cannot be fully understood. The first assumption is that the Welsh Revival (1904-5), the revivals in North-East and Central India (1905-7) and the Azusa Street revival in the USA (1906-9) were all part of a wider series of revivals that promoted Pentecostal beliefs and values throughout the world. In particular, a convincing case can be made to situate Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Revival in Kedgaon, near Pune in 1905-7, within the emerging Pentecostal movement; and Minnie Abrams, one of its leaders, was instrumental in passing on the news of this revival to inspire the emergence of Pentecostalism in the Methodist Church in Chile.⁷ The second assumption is that the existing missionary networks, especially that of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, were fundamental in spreading Pentecostalism internationally. Many of these missionaries were among the first Pentecostals on the 'mission field' and their experience of Pentecostal Spirit baptism spread quickly among these networks and among their converts, particularly in China and India, where the greatest concentration of Pentecostal missionaries was soon to be found. The third assumption, already mentioned, was that the Pentecostal periodicals posted to missionaries in the 'field' were not only significant in spreading Pentecostalism internationally but were the foundation of the meta-culture that arose in global Pentecostalism in its earliest forms. The last assumption to make is that the various centres and events in early Pentecostalism were part of a series of formative stages in the emergence of a new missionary movement that took several years to take on a distinctive identity. This identity has changed and become more complex over the years, and was not at all distinct at its beginning. Put simply, Pentecostalism as it existed in 1910, 1960 or 2010 were very different animals.

The Impact of the Mukti Revival

The Azusa Street revival was undoubtedly the most significant of the early twentieth century revival movements in America that were formative in the process of creating a distinct Pentecostal identity. Azusa Street also was the main cause for the rapid internationalizing of American Pentecostalism. But there were other similar movements at this time, the most noteworthy of which was the Mukti ('Salvation') revival in India (1905-7) at the Mukti Mission under the famous Brahmin Christian woman Pandita Ramabai, her

⁶ Max Wood Moorhead (ed.), *Missionary Pioneering in Congo Forests: A Narrative of the Labours of William F.P. Burton and his Companions in the Native Villages of Luba-land* (Preston, UK: R. Seed & Sons, 1922), 81-82.

⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 77-89.

daughter Manoramabai and the former Methodist Episcopal missionary Minnie Abrams. This significant revival lasted for a year and a half and resulted in 1,100 baptisms at Ramabai's school, confessions of sins and repentances, prolonged prayer meetings, speaking in tongues, and the witnessing of some seven hundred of these young women in teams into the surrounding areas, about a hundred going out daily, sometimes for as long as a month at a time. Ramabai formed a 'Bible school' of two hundred young women to pray in groups called 'Praying Bands' and to be trained in witnessing to their faith. These Praying Bands spread the revival wherever they went and some remarkable healings were reported.⁸

The revival had at least four far-reaching consequences, apart from the significant role Mukti workers had in the early expansion of Pentecostalism in India.⁹ First, it is clear that the eyewitness and participant in the Azusa Street revival Frank Bartleman, its African American leader William Seymour, and the writers of its periodical *The Apostolic Faith* saw the Indian revival as a precedent to the one in which they were involved. It was seen as a prototypical, earlier Pentecostal revival that they thought had become 'full-grown' in Los Angeles.¹⁰ It is more likely, however, that these were simultaneous rather than sequential events in a general period of revival in the evangelical world accompanying the turn of the century. Together these revivals created an air of anticipation that was a prominent reason for the growth of Pentecostalism. Second, women played a more prominent role in the Indian revival than in the American one – although women leaders played very significant roles in both the Azusa Street revival and the early American missionary movement that issued from it. But the fact that Ramabai was an Indian woman who resisted both patriarchal oppression in India and western domination in Christianity and was attracted to what a biographer calls 'the gender-egalitarian impulse of Christianity' was even more significant.¹¹ Or as her assistant Minnie Abrams put it, Ramabai was 'demonstrating to her countrymen that women have powers and capabilities which they have not permitted them to cultivate'.¹² The Mukti Pentecostal revival was pre-eminently a revival among women and led by women, motivating and empowering those who had been marginalized and cast out by society. This was another case of Pentecostalism's early social activism, empowering the marginalized and oppressed for service and bestowing dignity on women. In this the Mukti revival and Ramabai herself were pioneers within global Christianity and without precedent. This was to result in an unparalleled missionary

⁸ *Word & Work* 28:4 (April 1906), 16; *Trust* 9:8 (Oct 1910), 12-13.

⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 98-101.

¹⁰ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (S. Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1925, 1980), 19, 90.

¹¹ Meera Kosambi (ed. & trans.), *Pandita Ramabai through Her Own Words: Selected Works* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18.

¹² *Triumphs of Faith* 31:1 (Jan 1911), 5.

outreach of Indian Christians into surrounding areas and further abroad. As one periodical observed, Ramabai's 'Praying Bands' of young women were going 'in every direction to scatter the fire that has filled their own souls' and the result was that 'many parts of India are hearing of the true and living God'.¹³ The third consequence was that both Ramabai in her ministry and the revival she led demonstrate an openness to other Christians, an ecumenicity and inclusiveness that stand in stark contrast to the rigid exclusivism of most subsequent Pentecostal movements. This was undoubtedly one result of the pluralistic context of India and Ramabai's indebtedness to her own cultural and religious training in Brahmin philosophy and national consciousness, despite her later Christian fundamentalism.

The fourth consequence was its contribution to global Pentecostalism, especially its impact on Latin American Pentecostalism. Minnie Abrams contacted her friend and former Bible school classmate in Valparaiso, Chile, May Louise Hoover, who with her husband Willis were Methodist Episcopal missionaries. Abrams sent a report of the revival in Mukti contained in a booklet she wrote in 1906 titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire*, which in its second edition later that year included a discussion of the restoration of speaking in tongues. This was the first written Pentecostal theology of Spirit baptism, and thirty thousand copies were circulated widely. As a result of this booklet and Abrams' subsequent correspondence with the Hoovers, the Methodist churches in Valparaiso and Santiago were stirred to expect and pray for a similar revival. The Pentecostal revival began in 1909, creating a schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Willis Hoover became leader of the new Chilean Methodist Pentecostal Church consisting at first of those expelled from the Methodists. Chilean Pentecostalism has its roots in the Mukti revival and was specifically a Methodist revival that did not promote a doctrine of 'initial evidence'. An alternative to the 'initial evidence' form of Pentecostalism was developing globally and Mukti was its earliest expression.¹⁴ Mukti operated as a centre for Pentecostalism, not only in India, but was visited by scores of early Pentecostal traveling preachers and missionaries. The Mukti revival can legitimately be regarded with Azusa Street as one of the most important early formative centres of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism has always had revival centres for international pilgrimage, and the Azusa Street Mission and the Mukti Mission were the most prominent of the earliest ones.

The various revival movements in Mukti, Los Angeles, and Valparaiso were all part of a series of events from which global Pentecostalism emerged. Missionaries from these various revival movements went out into

¹³ *Word & Work* 28:5 (May 1906), 145.

¹⁴ *Pentecost* 2:11-12 (Nov-Dec 1910), 9; *Latter Rain Evangel* 3:7 (Apr 1911), 19; *Bridegroom's Messenger* 126 (1 Feb 1913), 1.

faith missions and independent missions, some joining Holiness and radical evangelical organizations like the Christian and Missionary Alliance and then became Pentecostal. The coming of the Spirit was linked to a belief that the last days had arrived and that the 'full gospel' would be preached to all nations before the coming of the Lord. Considerations of religious pluralism, colonialism and cultural sensitivity were not on the agenda of those who rushed out to the nations with this revivalist message believing that they had been enabled to speak those languages they needed for the task. The stage was set for the coming of a new Pentecost to spread across the world in the twentieth century. The means by which these Pentecostal fires would spread would be a global network of these same faith missionaries and so-called 'native workers' whose devotion to Christ and enthusiastic zeal were unrivalled by most of their contemporaries. The Pentecostalism emerging was essentially a missionary migratory movement of unprecedented vigour.

Pentecostalism and Independency

Another very important aspect of early Pentecostalism was its impact upon independent churches, especially in Africa, India and China. China was the largest of the early fields for Pentecostal missions. It has been estimated that there could have been as many as 150 expatriate Pentecostal missionaries there by 1915, and the creation of the Assemblies of God in Arkansas in 1914 and the affiliation of the majority of these missionaries with them meant that by 1920 they were by far the largest of the Pentecostal bodies in China.¹⁵ But even more significant was the fact that by that time there were already strong nationalist forces forming churches totally independent of western missions and developing a Pentecostal spirituality that was distinctively Chinese. These Chinese churches already formed the majority of Pentecostals by the time the expatriate missionaries were forced to leave China in 1949. Questions concerning how these churches differ from western-founded Pentecostals and the extent of conscious or unconscious adaptation to the Chinese context require much more research. The evidence in China that Pentecostalism converged with and strongly influenced the phenomenon of independency is incontrovertible. Pentecostalism in its emphasis on the supernatural was in sync with Chinese folk religion, its offer of spiritual power to everyone regardless of status or achievements, and its deep suspicion of hierarchical and rationalistic Christianity, encouraged the development of new, anti-western independent churches. Resentment against western interference in Chinese affairs and patriotism increased during the 1920s, which was when most of these churches began. Pentecostal missionaries were unwittingly drawn into this process. Assemblies of God missionary W.W. Simpson was in contact with Chinese independent

¹⁵ *Trust* 19:3 (May 1920), 11.

churches in Manchuria and made pleas for more missionaries to come to China to work with them. Other Pentecostal missionaries frequently interacted with Chinese independent churches in this period. Their policy of creating self-supporting Chinese churches assisted in developing independency. A missionary writing from Taiyuan in Shanxi wrote of a strong Pentecostal church he visited that was started in 1914 and was run completely by Chinese leaders with four full-time workers.¹⁶ Independent Chinese Pentecostalism had both foreign and domestic influences in its formation. Pentecostal missionaries from the West brought their teachings of divine healing (although not a new idea for some Chinese Christians) and speaking in tongues, which was a new idea. At the same time there was a strong anti-western and nationalistic feeling in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, causing many newly emerging Chinese Christian groups to distance themselves from western missionaries.¹⁷ The two largest Chinese Pentecostal denominations to arise during this period were the True Jesus Church and the Jesus Family, both of which came under these two influences. They are still active in China today: the True Jesus Church (being Oneness and Seventh-Day) is possibly the largest Protestant grouping in China, and the Jesus Family set up separate living and self-supporting communities after the model of an Assemblies of God mission in Taiyuan, Shandong under the Anglins.¹⁸

A similar process took place in colonial India and Ceylon. The early history of Pentecostalism in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) has been shrouded in confusion. The same involvement of local workers that was true of India and China was the case with the Pentecostal work in Sri Lanka. Alwin De Alwis (d. 1967), was preparing for the coming of the American missionaries Mr and Mrs W.D. Grier to Colombo in 1913. De Alwis was an early convert to Pentecostalism, receiving Spirit baptism in 1912, possibly as a result of South Indian-based George Berg or J.L. Bahr's ministry in Sri Lanka. De Alwis was the Griers' main co-worker and took charge of their work in 1915, and the Griers left Sri Lanka permanently in 1917.¹⁹ It is indicative of how important the careful reconstruction of early Pentecostal history is when it has been suggested that Pentecostalism in Sri Lanka began with the Danish actress Anna Lewini and Walter Clifford, a former British soldier in India, who arrived in Colombo in 1919 and 1923

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¹⁶ *Triumphs of Faith* 35:2 (Feb 1915), 47; *Word & Work* 37:3 (Mar 1915), 92-3; *Christian Evangel* 73 (9 Jan 1915), 4; 77 (13 Feb 1915), 1; *Weekly Evangel* 202 (11 Aug 1917), 12; 204 (25 Aug 1917), 12.

¹⁷ Deng Zhao Ming, 'Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations', in Allan Anderson & Edmond Tang (eds.), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2011), 373-74.

¹⁸ Deng, 'Indigenous Chinese', 452-62; *Triumphs of Faith* 37:6 (June 1917), 127; *Latter Rain Evangel* 11:3 (Dec 1917), 16; Assemblies of God 'Constitution and By-Laws', 1931, 132.

¹⁹ *Weekly Evangel* 145 (24 June 1916), 11; 186 (21 Apr 1917), 12.

respectively. From their work evolved the Assemblies of God and the independent Ceylon Pentecostal Mission of Alwin De Alwis and Ramankutty Paul. It was also thought that the De Alwis family became Pentecostals as a result of Clifford's healing services, whereas De Alwis had already been a Pentecostal for a decade.²⁰ It is true that Paul and De Alwis were connected with Lewini and Clifford in Colombo, but it was more the case of the missionaries working with established missions there than being the direct cause of the independent church that followed. In any case, Paul and De Alwis founded the independent Ceylon Pentecostal Mission in 1921, a unique church that encouraged celibacy for its pastors and community living for its members.²¹ Pentecostal missions were active in Sri Lanka long before Lewini and Clifford arrived, and its pioneers were Sri Lankans.

Out of the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission came the inspiration for a whole series of independent Pentecostal secessions. In South India, several Indian preachers associated with the American missionary Robert Cook were instrumental in starting independent Pentecostal churches, including K.E. Abraham, who joined Cook in 1923, was ordained by Ramankutty Paul of the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission in 1930, and with others founded the Indian Pentecostal Church of God in 1934, now (with the Assemblies of God) one of the two largest Pentecostal denominations in India.²²

The pressures of religious change occurring in colonial Africa at the end of the nineteenth century resulted in many movements of resistance. The 'Ethiopian' independent churches in Southern Africa and the 'African' churches in West Africa were not as much movements of religious reform and innovation as were the later 'prophet-healing' or 'Spirit' churches, but were primarily movements of political protest, expressions of resistance against European hegemony in the church. Although they rejected the political dominance of white-led churches, they framed their protest in familiar Protestant categories and therefore did not seriously contest its social, religious and cultural components.²³ Their more lasting significance lay in the fact that they were the first to overtly challenge social structures of inequality and oppression in the church and to give a religious ideology for the dignity and self-reliance of the black person – thus foreshadowing the African nationalist movements and forming a religious justification for

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²⁰ G.P.V. Somaratna, *Origins of the Pentecostal Mission in Sri Lanka* (Mirihana-Nugegoda: Margaya Fellowship of Sri Lanka, 1996), 12–23, 27–32, 41, 45–47.

²¹ *Word & Witness* 9:1 (Jan 1913), 2; 9:11 (Nov 1913), 4; 9:12 (Dec 1913), 1; 10:4 (Apr 1914), 4; 12:5 (May 1915), 7; *Bridegroom's Messenger* 144 (15 Nov 1913), 1; *Christian Evangel* 70 (12 Dec 1914), 4; *Weekly Evangel* 91 (22 May 1915), 4.

²² *Confidence* 6:1 (Jan 1913), 20; *Word & Work* 36:6 (June 1914), 187; 36:10 (Oct 1914), 316; 36:11 (Nov 1914), 349–50; 42:1 (Jan 1920), 14, 20; 42:6 (June 1920), 13; *Christian Evangel* 56 (29 Aug 1914), 4; *Word & Witness* 12:5 (May 1915), 6.

²³ Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 176.

them. These secessions were often the result of tension between an increasingly self-aware African Christian community and a multiplying number of zealous European missionaries with colonial expansionist sympathies. The secessions that began in South Africa and Nigeria and spread to Kenya and the Congo were to set a pattern for the next century. Secession was not a peculiarly African phenomenon, as Africans were simply continuing the plurality that was common in European and North American Protestantism. By the end of the nineteenth century there were already hundreds of new denominations, 'faith missions' and other mission societies springing up in the West, from where missionaries were sent to Africa. These multiplied denominations and societies were reproduced there, and it is hardly surprising that it was considered quite a natural thing for secessions to occur – urged on by the mission policies and colonial politics of the time that were highly prejudicial to Africans.²⁴ The entrance of Pentecostalism into the African melting pot had the effect of stimulating new and more radically transforming forms of independent churches. The 'African' and 'Ethiopian' churches were overshadowed in the early twentieth century by new, rapidly growing 'prophet-healing' or 'spiritual' churches – so named because of their emphasis on the power of the Spirit in healing, prophecy and speaking in tongues. Along the West African coast, churches associated with the Liberian prophet William Wade Harris and the Nigerian Garrick Sokari Braide emerged. They were later followed by churches known by the Yoruba term 'Aladura' ('owners of prayer') from the 1920s onwards in south-western Nigeria, where the emphasis was on prayer for healing. All these churches had their genesis in healing and revival movements at the time.²⁵

The existence of large and strong independent churches in southern Africa today has much to do with early Pentecostal missions. There are indications that Pentecostal missionaries tapped into a new phenomenon that was particularly strong in British colonial Africa, and especially in South Africa. American Pentecostal missionary Jacob Lehman wrote of a whole tribal community in the north-west of Southern Africa that had, with their chief, seceded from 'a certain missionary society' because of the highhandedness and exploitation of the missionaries. Near Middelburg, Transvaal, Lehman, and his fellow missionaries Archibald Cooper and William Elliott held services to welcome a group of secessionists into the Pentecostal fold. John G. Lake visited an 'Ethiopian' church conference that was seeking affiliation with his Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). Lake wrote of a 'native missionary', Paul Mabiletsa, who told Lake about a paralyzed woman healed through prayer in the Germiston district. Mabiletsa founded the Apostolic Church in Zion in 1920, to become one of

²⁴ Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 499.

²⁵ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 161-67.

the larger Zionist churches whose leadership remained in the Mabiletsa family throughout the twentieth century. Lake himself reported that twenty-four 'native Catholic churches' and 'five large Ethiopian churches' had decided to affiliate with the AFM in 1910, and that the 'African Catholic Church' with 78 preachers joined in January 1911. Again in 1911 the 'Ethiopian Church' affiliated with Pastor Modred Powell, a British missionary, to become the Apostolic Faith Church of South Africa. Clearly, many of the early Pentecostal 'converts' in South Africa were already members of Christian churches, especially African independent ones.²⁶ But the flow went both ways – by 1915 there were several secessions from the Pentecostals, especially from the AFM. Azusa Street missionary Henry Turney also complained of African women who had 'risen up refusing to acknowledge any authority in the church' and who were now 'trying to establish a church of their own, with a native as leader'.²⁷

The role of Pentecostalism and expatriate Pentecostal missionaries in the early years of African, Indian and Chinese independence and the links with some of its most significant leaders is historical facts that must not escape attention. Although these movements tended to isolate themselves, they were another manifestation of Pentecostalism's propensity to diversify and its impact on the changing shape of global Christianity. The Zion Christian Church is the largest denomination in South Africa, and independent 'Zionist' and 'Apostolic' churches together form the largest grouping of Christians in that country today. Although the independent churches may no longer be described as 'Pentecostal' without qualification, the most characteristic features of their theology and praxis is definitively Pentecostal and, in the case of South Africa, also influenced by the Zion City movement of John Alexander Dowie near Chicago at the beginning of the twentieth century. Healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and baptism by immersion (usually threefold), and even the rejection of medicine and the eating of pork, are some of these features that remain among these African churches. Dowie's movement also had historical connections to Pentecostalism in the American Mid-West and in the Netherlands.²⁸

Whatever their motivation might have been, expatriate Pentecostal missions were unwittingly catalysts for a much larger movement of the Spirit that was to dominate African Christianity and play a significant role in transforming Christian demographics worldwide for the rest of the twentieth century. Half the world's Christians today live in developing, poor countries, where forms of Christianity are very different from what

²⁶ *Bridegroom's Messenger* 52 (15 Dec 1909), 4; *Upper Room* 1:10 (May 1910), 6; 2:2 (Sept-Oct 1910), 3; 2:4 (Jan 1911), 6, 8; 2:5 (May 1911), 6; *Confidence* 4:12 (Dec 1911), 284; Allan Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001), 97.

²⁷ *Weekly Evangel* 124 (22 Jan 1916), 13.

²⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 37-39, 167-81.

western ‘classical Pentecostals’ might wish them to be. These Christians have been profoundly affected by several factors, including the desire to have a more contextual and culturally relevant form of Christianity, the rise of nationalism, a reaction to what are perceived as ‘colonial’ and foreign forms of Christianity, and the burgeoning Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal. These factors play a major role in the formation of independent churches throughout the world.

Multidimensional Global Pentecostalism

Although Pentecostals have only existed for only a century, today they are among the most significant role players in Christian missions, with three quarters of them in the Majority World.²⁹ According to some statistics, in 2011, 64% of the world’s Christians (1,396 million) were in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, while those of the two northern continents (including Russia) constituted only 36%. When this is compared to 1900, when 82% of the world Christian population was found in Europe and North America, we have dramatic evidence of how rapidly the western share of world Christianity has decreased in the twentieth century. According to the same statistics, if present trends continue 69% of the world’s Christians will live in the South by 2025.³⁰ But it is not only in terms of overall numbers that there have been fundamental changes. Christianity is growing most often in Pentecostal and Charismatic forms, and many of these are independent of both western ‘mainline’ Protestant and ‘classical Pentecostal’ denominations and missions. What Andrew Walls describes as the ‘southward swing of the Christian centre of gravity’ is possibly more evident in Pentecostalism than in other forms of Christianity.³¹ It is not always transparent in the various statistics what proportion of these numbers are Pentecostals or Charismatics, and often it depends on how Pentecostalism is defined. In the Pew Forum’s *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*, conducted in 2006, it was discovered that in all the countries surveyed, Pentecostalism constituted a very significant percentage of Christianity. In six of the countries Pentecostals and Charismatics were over 60% of all Protestants. In Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, South Africa, and the Philippines, they constituted over a third of the total population – in Guatemala and Kenya it was over half.³² Barrett et al. estimated a total of 523 million, or 28% of all Christians to be

²⁹ The term ‘Majority World’ is adapted from the *New Internationalist* and is used to refer to Asia and the Pacific, Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

³⁰ Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, and Peter F. Crossing, ‘Christianity 2011: Martyrs and the Resurgence of Religion’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35:1 (2011), 29.

³¹ Andrew F. Walls, ‘Of Ivory Towers and Ashrams: Some Reflections on Theological Scholarship in Africa’, *Journal of African Christian Thought* 3:1 (June 2000), 1.

³² <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal/> accessed 3 January 2011.

Pentecostal and Charismatic in 2000. This number was divided into four groups: 1) 18 million ‘peripheral quasi-Pentecostals’ (or 3% of the total); 2) 66 million ‘denominational Pentecostals’ (12%); 3) 176 million ‘Charismatics’, including 105 million Catholics (32%); and 4) the largest group of 295 million ‘Neo-charismatics, that is, Independents and Post-denominationalists’ (a massive 53% of the total).³³ Of course, these figures are debatable but do give indication that something highly significant is taking place in the global complexity of Christianity as a whole and of Pentecostalism in particular.

The terms ‘Pentecostals’ and ‘Pentecostalism’ are used here as elsewhere in my research to include a wide variety of movements where the emphasis is on receiving the Spirit and practicing spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, healing and speaking in tongues. The terms include various different forms as they have emerged during the past century. Most of the rapid Pentecostal growth has taken place since the 1960s in the postcolonial world, and indications are that this growth accelerated after the 1980s, when Pentecostal forms of Christianity began to multiply rapidly in the burgeoning cities of Africa, Latin America and the Asian Pacific Rim. The fledgling Pentecostal missionary movement without much coherent organisation eventually became Pentecostal denominations with highly developed structures, centralised headquarters and international operations. This was particularly the case with the Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination globally, but also includes the Church of God (Cleveland), the Foursquare Church, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The Assemblies of God, however, does not exist as a single denomination and is governed by national headquarters in different countries independent of the American denomination. Many Assemblies of God groups, including the largest, the Brazilian Assemblies of God, and the Assemblies of God in Britain and Ireland, have their origins and organisation independent of the Americans. Scandinavian Pentecostals have promoted independent and congregational systems of Pentecostal movements wherever they have worked, and these have been particularly evident in East Africa, Ethiopia, India and Latin America.

Since the 1960s there have been Charismatic renewals in the older churches that have included large numbers of Catholic Charismatics in countries like India and the Philippines, and in Britain some of the largest Anglican churches have been Charismatic ones. A wide range of independent churches – over half the numbers in Barrett’s statistics – have emerged especially since the 1980s. Many, if not most, of these have been Charismatic in nature, but usually are characterised by successful preachers and entrepreneurs whose organisational abilities have created mega-

³³ David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, ‘Missiometrics 2006: Goals, Resources, Doctrines of the 350 Christian World Communions’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30:1 (2006), 28.

churches in cities throughout the world with complex networks looking much like multinational corporations. Many of these new churches espouse a success ethic, a 'prosperity gospel' that sees health and wealth as signs of the blessing of God to be coveted and realised by faith. The roots of this teaching are in the writings of E.W. Kenyon and his disciple Kenneth Hagin in Tulsa, Oklahoma, but these ideas have been adapted in different contexts to reflect the desire for upward social mobility that rises above the poverty prevalent in places like sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these mega-churches have developed into denominations in their own right. This is particularly the case with West African churches like Nigeria's Redeemed Christian Church, Deeper Life, and Living Faith (Winners' Chapel), and Ghana's Church of Pentecost. These churches are now found throughout Africa and in the western world, especially where Nigerians or Ghanaians have migrated. Similarly, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea has congregations in Japan, China, North America and Europe, wherever Koreans have moved in significant numbers. Pentecostal denominations from Latin America have established themselves throughout North America for the same reasons.

However we interpret these terms and statistics, we need to acknowledge and celebrate the multidimensional diversity in Pentecostalism. This has amounted to a twentieth century reformation of Christianity. Whereas older Protestant churches have bemoaned their ever-decreasing membership and possible demise in the West in the twenty-first century, a most dramatic church growth continues to take place in Pentecostal and independent Charismatic churches, especially outside the western world. During the 1990s, it was estimated that the Majority World mission movement had grown at seventeen times the rate of western missions.³⁴ South Korea, Nigeria, Brazil and India have become major Christian missionary-sending nations, many of whom are Pentecostal. From its beginnings, Pentecostalism throughout the world is both transnational and migratory, or 'missionary' in its fundamental nature. In these processes the various movements remain stubbornly consistent, for they see the 'world' as a place to move into and 'possess' for Christ. Transnationalism and migration do not affect their essential character, even though their adherents may have to steer a precarious course between contradictory forms of identity resulting from the migratory experience. Pentecostalism developed its own characteristics and identities in different parts of the world during the twentieth century without losing its transnational connections and international networks. The widespread use of the mass media, the setting up of new networks that often incorporate the word 'international' in their title, frequent conferences with international

³⁴ Michael Jaffarian, 'Are There More Non-Western Missionaries Than Western Missionaries?', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28:3 (July 2004), 132.

speakers that reinforce transnationalism and the growth of churches that provide total environments for members and international connections are all features of this multidimensional Pentecostalism, which promotes this Charismatic global meta-culture constantly.

The extent to which globalization and migration have affected the shape of this very significant religious sector is something that requires a much more careful analysis than this paper offers, but is surely an important task for future research. The shapes of the new forms of Pentecostalism that have emerged as a result of the globalization process, how they differ from the older networks of denominational Pentecostalism and specifically what the features of this global shift of centre to the South means for Pentecostalism have yet to be precisely described. Another area that needs further investigation is the extent to which Pentecostalism has permeated and affected the beliefs, values and practices of other Christians, seen especially in the popular Christianity that dominates public events like weddings and funerals. Multidimensional Pentecostalism in its many and various forms has been from its beginnings a migratory faith. Its earliest propagators at the start of the twentieth century were driven by an ideology that sent them from North America and Western Europe to Asia, Africa and Latin America and various islands of the world within a remarkably short period of time.

Pentecostalism has always been a missionary movement in foundation and essence. It emerged with a firm conviction that the Spirit had been poured out in 'signs and wonders' in order for the nations of the world to be reached for Christ before the end of the age. Its missionaries proclaimed a 'full gospel' that included individual salvation, physical healing, personal holiness, baptism with the Spirit, and a life on the edge lived in expectation of the imminent return of Christ. For this message, its pioneers were prepared to lay down their lives and many of them did exactly that. But these were very human vessels of this 'full gospel' who cannot be emulated in many respects – especially when it came to attitudes to other religions and cultures and matters of race. But the selfless dedication and sacrifices in the face of immense difficulties of these courageous women and men of early Pentecostalism (among countless others) can only be greatly admired. Without them we would be the poorer, and the composition of global Christianity today would certainly look very different and possibly even be in a state of permanent decline. We cannot fully understand the contemporary multidimensional plurality of global Pentecostalism without revisiting its historical roots.

THE PENTECOSTAL UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

Introduction: 'The Church as Mission' as a Lived Reality

In contemporary ecumenical missiology and ecclesiology there is a lot of talk about mission belonging to the essence and 'nature' of the church, as Vatican II's document on mission *Ad Gentes* (# 2) famously formulated it: 'The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father'. Even though few Pentecostals outside the academic elite have any knowledge of these kinds of lofty statements, with good grounds it can be said, that it is Pentecostalism as a movement that has lived out and realized this principle in the Twentieth Century in a way that no other church has. Indeed, as the 'Older Brother' has spent much time in library in trying to formulate the principle of the missionary nature of the church as accurately as possible, the 'Younger Brother', has just gone about doing the missions work in the harvest field! Pentecostal movements have lived out the principle of the missionary nature of the church in a way that should catch the imagination of both missiologists and theologians. Hence, it may not come as a surprise to many that the 'mission statement' of the very first church of the modern Pentecostal church, namely the Apostolic Faith *Mission*(!) in Los Angeles, California, was all about mission.¹

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MOVEMENT Stands for the restoration of faith once delivered unto the saints – the old time religion, camp meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian Unity everywhere.

Pentecostalism has been inherently a missionary movement that took its message out into all the world within the shortest possible time. 'Its missionaries were for the most part inexperienced and with one common qualification: an overwhelming conviction that they had been filled with the Holy Spirit in order to spread their message to the furthest corners of the earth. And this is what they did, defying the conventions of the time and in some cases, laying down their lives for their cause. And these early missionaries were by no means always westerners. Wherever Pentecostal missionaries went, and whenever there was a revival movement where the Spirit had come, new missionaries arose with the same conviction that the

¹ *Apostolic Faith* 2, no. 1 (September 1906).

whole world must hear the Pentecostal gospel before Jesus came back soon'.²

This missionary enthusiasm by and large still persists as is evident in the declaration on evangelism adopted in 1968 and subsequently affirmed several times by the Assemblies of God, the largest white Pentecostal denomination in the U.S. In it they declared '[t]hat the Assemblies of God considers it was brought into being and built by the working of the Holy Spirit as an instrument of divine purpose in these end times'. It further declared that it recognized its mission '[t]o be an agency of God for evangelizing the world'. Similarly, another significant American Pentecostal body, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) affirmed in 1983 'a covenant on World Evangelization' and committed themselves to a 'world Christian lifestyle'. This lifestyle was to consist of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, strict biblical obedience, deep dedication, willingness to adopt a cross-cultural and co-operative attitude, and be guided by an eschatological expectancy.³

The Pentecostal Mission Ethos

All observers agree that the missionary nature of Pentecostalism derives from the two formative factors that are integrally related to each other, namely eschatological fervour and the crucial role of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe that they have been called by God in the 'last days' (Acts 2:17) to be Christ-like witnesses in the power of the Spirit. The hope in the imminent coming of the Lord has energized Pentecostal churches and movements into a world-wide missionary enthusiasm and activity. Pentecostals have consistently taught that the church must be ready for the coming of the Lord by means of faithful witness and holy living.

Part of the texture of enthusiastic missions ethos is spirituality which caters for the importance of visions, healing, dreams, dance, and other archetypal religious expressions. The Harvard theologian Harvey Cox rightly remarks that that 'the re-emergence of this primal spirituality came – perhaps not surprisingly – at just the point in history when both the rationalistic assumptions of modernity and the strategies religions had used

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² Allan H. Anderson, 'The Vision of the Apostolic Faith: Early Pentecostalism and World Mission', *Svensk Missionstidskrift/Swedish Missiological Themes* 97:3 (2009), 295. For a similar account concerning Scandinavian missionaries who went in early years to several African contexts to spread the Gospel, see Gunilla Nyberg Oskarsson, 'Swedish Pentecostal Mission in Burundi and Ethiopia – a Comparison between Different Missionary Enterprises', *Svensk Missionstidskrift/Swedish Missiological Themes* 97:3 (2009), 351-76.

³ L. Grant McClung, Jr., *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1986), 166-72.

to oppose them (or to accommodate to them) were all coming unravelled'.⁴ For any observer of Pentecostal worship services, the presence of an affective element is visible in music, dance, drama, movement, tears and laughter, and so on.

When attempting a more concrete and specific list of factors behind Pentecostal missions ethos, the American missiologist Gary McClung's intuitions seem to be right on. He mentions seven such factors. Pentecostal missions is:⁵

- experiential and relational;
- expressly biblical with a high view of inspiration of Scripture⁶
- extremely urgent in nature
- 'focused, yet diversified': it prioritizes evangelization, but not to the exclusion of social concern;
- aggressive and bold in its approach;
- interdependent (both among various Pentecostal/Charismatic groups and in relation to older churches and their mission endeavours); and
- unpredictable as to the future.

Similar kinds of characterizations have been posed by other Pentecostal missiologists who have spoken of naive biblicism and eschatology, individualism, total commitment, pragmatism, flexibility, a place for emotions, personal testimonies, establishment of indigenous churches as a goal of missions, demonstration of the power of the Spirit, and participation of all believers.

When it comes to the actual praxis of the missions work, the so-called 'indigenous church principle' has been a high priority from the beginning of Pentecostal mission. This was, paradoxically, helped by the lack of funding especially in the beginning decades of Pentecostal missions when a

⁴ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 81-82.

⁵ L. Grant McClung, Jr., 'Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives on a Missiology for the Twenty-First Century', *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 16:1 (Spring 1994), 11-21.

⁶ Richard Burgess, 'Nigerian Pentecostal Theology in Global Perspective', *PentecoStudies* 7:2 (2008), 29-63 (<http://www.glopent.net/pentecostudies/2008-vol-7/no-2-autumn/burgess-2008/>) tells us that Nigerian Pentecostals claim to derive their theology directly from the Bible. While they may handle it in an uncritical way by neglecting its historical context this is partly because they wish to make it relevant to local contexts. It is also because they are reluctant to divest the Bible of its supernatural character. Like liberation theology, Nigerian Pentecostals seek to understand local contexts and culture in the light of Scripture, but they do so by retaining a literalist approach to biblical hermeneutics. They look for correspondences between their own life situations and the Bible, and expect biblical texts to have practical relevance and problem-solving potential. Thus they could be said to follow more contemporary reading strategies, which stress the role of the receiving communities.

considerable number of missionaries went overseas without any pledged support. The 'faith missions' was enthusiastically adopted by many pioneers both because of the biblical support of the idea and an intensive expectation of the Second Coming, but it soon gave way to a more traditional mission praxis.

Not surprisingly, Pentecostals have also been pragmatists in their approach to mission. Consequently, flexibility in choosing methods, strategies, and structures (or in the lack of structures!) has been a brand mark of Pentecostal missiology. In their mission and church-structures, Pentecostals embrace all the possible variations from episcopal (e.g., former Eastern Europe, Africa) to presbyterian (mainly English speaking world) to polities emphasizing total autonomy of local churches (Scandinavian Pentecostals and their mission fields, e.g., in some Latin American countries).

For long time, Pentecostals were so busy in spreading the Gospel that little time was left for an academic missiological reflection. For decades, it lagged behind the practical work of mission.

The Development of Pentecostal Missiology

What is the state of art in Pentecostal reflection on the theology of mission?⁷ The first missiological treatise written by a prominent Pentecostal theologian and practitioner did not appear until 1953, when Melvin L. Hodge produced the widely-read book *The Indigenous Church*. Two decades later, he wrote a sequel to it under the title *Theology of the Church and Its Mission* (1977). Both of these books followed the paths explored by evangelicals on mission theology and social action.⁸ It was quite natural for Pentecostals to align

⁷ The definitive current history of Pentecostal missions is Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007). Important is also his: *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For surveys and discussions of aspects of Pentecostal missiology, see Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985); McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond*; Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959*, 2 vols. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986, 1989). Useful for Pentecostalism is also the work by the Anglican Charismatic from the UK, Andy Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* (Bletchley: Paternoster, 2005). For Charismatic missions, see David Shibley, *A Force in the Earth: The Charismatic Renewal and World Evangelism* (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1989). For treatments of Pentecostal/Charismatic views of mission, see also several articles in the *Pneuma* 16:1 (1994). For an assessment of recent Pentecostal missiology by the famous Latin American liberationist José Bonino Míguez, see 'Pentecostal Missions Is More Than What It Claims', *Pneuma* 16:1 (1994), 283-88.

⁸ For an evaluation, see McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached*, 2:157-58.

themselves with Evangelicals, since the mainline ecumenical movement seemed too liberal both theologically and in its mission agenda.⁹ Both Pentecostals and Evangelicals share conservative doctrinal views regarding the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the lostness of humankind without Christ, and justification by faith, as well as the priority of evangelism over social action. Recently, in an increasing number, Pentecostal theologians and missiologists have come to question the compatibility of their pneumatological distinctiveness with evangelical beliefs about the Holy Spirit, yet they have not questioned their allegiance to the wider Evangelical constituency.¹⁰

It was not until 1991, when the major compendium of Pentecostal missiology titled *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*¹¹ came out, that some theologically serious perspectives were offered by a younger generation of Pentecostal academics. The book contains biblical, theological, strategic, cultural, and religious viewpoints on global Pentecostal mission.

Along with their interest in the work of the Holy Spirit, some Pentecostal exegetes have done serious work in the area of New Testament pneumatology, especially in Luke-Acts,¹² which has a lot of missiological potential. The Pacific Rim missionary Robert Menzies has written on distinctive features of Lukan pneumatology with a view to mission. In his *Empowered for Witness*,¹³ he argues that the church, by virtue of its

⁹ Gary B. McGee, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions', in James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (eds.), *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission: Essays in Honor of Gerald H. Anderson* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 43. In the U.S.A., Pentecostals joined the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 and its mission organization, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, in 1945 (which in 1991 changed its name to the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies). Pentecostals have also actively participated in the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Lausanne Movement, and later in the AD 2000 Movement.

¹⁰ Pomerville argues that post-Reformation Protestant scholasticism has had a negative impact on evangelicalism, since its strong rationalistic orientation 'has eliminated the "witness of the Spirit" in verifying Christian experience. Biblical theology was, therefore, reduced to the "objective" written Word. Its locus was wrongly conceived as the text of Scripture rather than the *witness of the Spirit* in conjunction with that written Word *in the heart of the Christian*' (*The Third Force*, 83-84, emphases his). Whether one agrees with Pomerville's caricature of Protestantism here (e.g., Calvin had a high view of the role of the Spirit in the reading of the Word), his point is still valid in emphasizing the neglect of a pneumatological approach to theology and, consequently, to mission.

¹¹ M.W. Dempster, B.D. Klaus, and D. Petersen (eds.) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991).

¹² Some missiological insights can be gleaned from Roger Strondtandt, *A Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) with its idea of the transference of the Spirit from Jesus to his followers.

¹³ See also his earlier work: *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

reception of the Pentecostal gift, is a prophetic community of empowerment for missionary service. His line of thought is developed and specifically focused on mission by Australian J.M. Penney in his recent *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*.¹⁴ Penney contends that the reason why Luke-Acts has been so dear to Pentecostals is that Pentecostalism – from inception a missionary movement – saw in the Spirit-baptism of Acts 2 a normative paradigm for the empowerment of every Christian to preach the gospel. ‘Acts is more than history for the Pentecostal: it is a missionary manual, an open-ended account of the missionary work of the Holy Spirit in the church, concluding, not with ch. 28, but with the on-going Spirit-empowered and Spirit-directed gospel preaching of today’.¹⁵

A decisively new turn in the brief history of Pentecostal missiology has been taken by the release of two volumes by Amos Yong, Malaysian-Chinese born leading Pentecostal theologian, His *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*,¹⁶ and its sequel *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*.¹⁷ advance a robustly pneumatological approach to mission and other religions. Yong argues for a uniquely Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatology that, while holding on to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and Trinitarian faith, would also be open to acknowledging the ministry of the Spirit outside the Christian church. His goal is to develop criteria for discerning the Spirit of God and distinguishing that ministry from the work of other spirits in the world. That program is still in the making and the mature results are yet to be seen. Those books also represent a cutting edge of not only Pentecostal, but also Evangelical theologies of missions.

The latest major contribution to Pentecostal missiology comes from the Korean couple Julie and Wonsuk Ma, long-term missionaries to the Philippines and with a long experience in academic teaching and research in Pentecostal missiology. *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal /Charismatic Missiology* (2010)¹⁸ makes number of significant contributions which have a lot of relevance beyond Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. The book develops a robust and holistic account of the work of the Spirit of God, beginning from the Old Testament, in the work of the Spirit of Yahweh in creation. The turn to the Old Testament is a needed corrective to the one-sided focus on the New Testament. Hence, a pneumatological creation theology is developed first (ch. 2) and only then, the work of the charismatic Spirit of God comes to play (ch. 3), including signs and wonders (ch. 5). The Canadian Pentecostal theologian Steve

¹⁴ Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

¹⁵ Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis*, 12.

¹⁶ Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2000.

¹⁷ Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Books, 2003.

¹⁸ Oxford. UK: Regnum Books, 2010.

Studebaker has issued a similar call to appreciate the Spirit's role as the principle of life and creation.¹⁹ This kind of theology supports the care for environment as an essential part of mission work and affirms the importance of theological anthropology as well. This Korean Pentecostal theology also pays close attention to the social context of mission, particularly the Asian cultures (ch. 6), and highlights the importance of tackling issues of oppression, poverty, and various forms of human abuse. An important part of the cultural task is to engage the diverse religious traditions of the continent (ch. 7). Along with careful tackling of biblical, theological, cultural, and other basic missiological issues, Mas also offer a detailed consideration of the praxis of mission work including church planting (ch. 8), church growth (ch. 9), women's role (ch. 13), and similar issues, as well as a look into the future.

Towards a Theology of Pentecostal Mission

Theology of Mission 'From Below'

Until recently, Pentecostalism has not produced much theological literature; its contribution to Christian faith has been in the form of occasional pastoral and missional writings, testimonies, dreams, prophecies, and the like, which do not easily translate into an analytic, discursive theology. In keeping with the originally non-academic, non-discursive way of emergence and development of Pentecostal theology, the Nicaraguan Carlos Sediles Real attempts to discern key themes of Pentecostal theology of mission as they appear in songs, hymns, and choruses of worship and liturgy. By looking at the songs, he is asking question such as: 'Which biblical texts are privileged in Pentecostal celebrations? What theological elements and emphasis can come out of their content?' He summarizes the findings under the following rubrics, worth quoting in length:²⁰

- *The saving acts of God, where the biblical texts are underlined that speak of the acts of the salvation of God in the history of the people of Israel in the Old Testament, and the central redemptive action of God in Jesus Christ in the New Testament.* Easter, as a central element of the Christian faith, is celebrated in Pentecostal cult as the liberating and redemptive action of God in human history. Jesus' resurrection is the clear and overwhelming test of the saving power of God and of the hope of the believers faith in the new and eternal

¹⁹ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Christian Mission and the Religions as Participation in the Spirit of Pentecost', ch. 3 in Amos Yong and Clifton Clarke (eds.), *The Wide Reach of the Spirit: Renewal and Theology of Mission in a Religiously Plural World* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011).

²⁰ Carlos Sediles Real, 'Pentecostalism in Nicaragua: General Aspects of their Foundations, Growth and Social Participation', *Exchange* 36 (2007) 386-396 (391).

life. The believer celebrates and actualizes these acts of God's salvation as God's promises for the people which are seen as of prompt fulfillment.

- *The imminent coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus.* Many are the songs that pick up almost complete passages of the episodes of the Gospels that speak of Jesus' actions in favor of the poor, sick persons and the excluded as tests of the power of God and of the arrival of the Kingdom. But mostly the emphasis is on the eschatological element of the Parousia, because for the believing Pentecostal, Jesus' return is imminent, and the events lived in our time (wars, hunger, epidemics, etc.) are the test that one is living in those 'last of times'.
- *A Christology of exaltation.* In connection with the previous aspect, Pentecostal Christology underlines the image of the glorified, victorious and powerful Christ. Likewise, there is an emphasis on the Christ who will come with power and glory to judge humanity and to establish in a definitive way the Kingdom of God. Paradoxically, those sufferings of the present life are identified as part of the commitment to the gospel, and with Christ's sufferings, but for the believer the most important thing is the prize that God will give him in the 'other world'.
- *A life led by the Spirit.* The spirituality of the believing Pentecostal is based fundamentally on its intimate and personal relationship with God, thanks to Jesus Christ's redemptive work, but lived under the power and the action of the Holy Spirit. The believer's ethics is based on the sanctification received thanks to the presence of the Spirit in their life. Many are the songs that celebrate this experience and that call the believer to live a coherent life with the demands of God expressed in Sacred Scriptures.

Inspired by this analysis stemming from the grassroots spirituality and expanding it on the basis of emerging Pentecostal theological literature, the following key themes can be discerned in the Pentecostal theology of missions. No attempt is made to present any kind of comprehensive 'theology' of missions, nor an effort to superimpose dogmatic loci from Christian tradition on the dynamic spirituality of Pentecostalism. Rather, a tentative, suggestive reflection is the goal:

- Jesus Christ and the Full Gospel
- Holy Spirit and Empowerment
- Salvation and the Vision of Holism
- Church and the Spirit of *Koinonia*
- Eschatology and the Imminent Expectation of the Return of Christ

Jesus Christ and Full Gospel

Against the assumptions of uninformed outside observers, pneumatology does not necessarily represent the centre of Pentecostal spirituality. Jesus Christ, rather, is the centre, and the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ. At the heart of Pentecostal spirituality lies the idea of the 'Full Gospel', the template of Jesus Christ in his fivefold role as Saviour, Sanctifier, Baptizer with the Spirit, Healer, and Soon-Coming King.²¹ Consequently, the key to discerning and defining Pentecostal identity lies in Christ-centered charismatic spirituality with a passionate desire to 'meet' with Jesus Christ as he is being perceived as the Bearer of the 'Full Gospel'. This is a particular form of 'Spirit-Christology'.²² In the words of the American Pentecostal theologian, Steven J. Land:²³

Thus, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost constituted the church as an eschatological community of universal mission in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. The tongues at Pentecost and Peter's subsequent sermon meant that the church in general and each Spirit-filled individual are to be and to give a witness to the mighty acts of God in saving humanity. Thus, the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost constituted the church as an eschatological community of universal mission in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. The tongues at Pentecost and Peter's subsequent sermon meant that the church in general and each Spirit-filled individual are to be and to give a witness to the mighty acts of God in saving humanity. This witness centers in Jesus Christ and must therefore be given in the power of the Spirit if it is to have continuity with his ministry and fulfill the promise of the Father through Christ. The 'full gospel' of the Jesus who is Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and coming King can and

²¹ The classic study is Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).

²² Pentecostals do well to heed to the warning of the Singaporean Pentecostalist Tan-Chow May Ling, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 102–3, for the lack of a robust Christological and Trinitarian focus of Pentecostal theology. She argues that the fundamental fragility in the empirical Pentecostal conception of the Spirit lies in its inability to connect adequately the inextricable relationship between the empowering work of the Spirit and the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Calvary and Pentecost are regarded as two successive stages of God's activity.... It is not that Pentecostalism denies the centrality of the Christ event; conversely, this is its explicit teaching. The problem lies in bifurcating the events of the cross and Pentecost into the 'pardon department' and the 'power department'. The attending danger with such compartmentalisation is the privileging of the experiential (power of the Spirit), and often the experiential becomes disconnected from the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Herein is the fragility inherent in the promise of Pentecostalism.

²³ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 60–61.

should be proclaimed in the fullness of the Spirit so that the kingdom will be manifested in the midst of the world in words and deeds...

The term 'Full Gospel' signalled to Pentecostals the desire to embrace 'all' of Christ.²⁴ Observing the preaching and mission of other churches, Pentecostals were wondering if older traditions were missing in some crucial aspects of the Full Gospel.²⁵ The healing work of Christ is a case in point. Pentecostals were glad to hear Lutherans preach the Gospel of justification by faith and Methodists/Holiness movements highlight the importance of sanctification. What they did not hear in the preaching of other churches and their missionaries was the dynamic New Testament testimonies to the healing power of Jesus, the One who is same yesterday, today, and tomorrow (Heb. 13:8). Rightly, the Korean Samuel Yull Lee makes an integral connection between Christ, Full Gospel, and Healing of the Body.²⁶

Healing has been one of the most often discussed topics in the [Pentecostal] movement from its beginning. It is a well-known fact that most leaders in Pentecostalism were advocates of the gift of healing and its practice.... [H]ealing was regarded as being originated in the atonement of Christ...[H]ealing power [was] found in the redemption of Jesus and its appropriation by means of faith and prayer.... Their apparent concern was the extent of the atoning blood of Jesus not being limited to the soul alone but being extended to the body as well.... [H]ealing was thought to be impossible without being filled with the Spirit since it was the gift of the Spirit. Last, healing was perceived as the manifestation of divine power.... Despite an emphasis on divine power, the role of human faith was so crucial for its actual practice. In other words, healing was mostly understood that no divine power would be available without human faith in receiving it. Pentecostal pastors and leaders were quick to note that the critics of the biblical doctrine of divine healing do not understand the full extent and significance of Christ's atoning work. These Pentecostals took Isaiah 53's account of the innocent suffering of the Servant of Yahweh of the suffering on the cross of

²⁴ Materially, the Pentecostal term 'Full Gospel' says the same as the ancient term of 'catholicity', the idea of wholeness and completeness (literally: 'no missing anything'.) For a theological discussion, see my 'Full Gospel, Fullness of the Spirit and Catholicity: Pentecostal Perspectives on the Third Mark of the Church', *Ecumenical Review* (forthcoming).

²⁵ Of course, the early Pentecostals at times were guilty of an ideological use of the term Full Gospel. They were not only sincerely concerned about the well-being of other churches but instead, used the Full Gospel template as a way of criticizing, making pejorative comments, and even condemning their 'dead' spiritual life. That human fallibility, unfortunately not limited to Pentecostals alone (!), however, is a reason to ignore its positive contribution.

²⁶ Samuel Yull Lee, *Grace and Power in Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology* (Apeldoorn: Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn, 2002), 109–10.

Jesus not only for the ‘healing’ of our sins but also the restoration of our bodily healing as divine paradigm.²⁷

The prioritisation of the Christ and his Full Gospel does not of course mean downplaying the work of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is to put pneumatology in a proper perspective.

Holy Spirit and Empowerment

Whereas for most other Christians the presence of the Spirit is just that, *presence*, for Pentecostals the presence of the Spirit in their midst implies *empowerment*.²⁸ While this empowerment often manifests itself in spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophesy, or healings, it is still felt and sought for by Pentecostals even when those manifestations are absent. The main function of the Pentecostal worship service is to provide a setting for an encounter with Jesus, the embodiment of the Full Gospel to receive the (em)power(ment) of the Spirit.²⁹ As important as sermon, hymns, and liturgy are, they all take second place to the ‘meeting with the Lord’, as they put it.

While the experience rather than doctrine came first,³⁰ a novel and disputed doctrinal understanding of Spirit-baptism emerged in the early years of the movement. While never uniformly formulated nor followed by the worldwide movement, it is only fair to say that for the large majority of Pentecostals, this view came to be known as the ‘initial physical evidence’. This simply means that Pentecostals expect an external sign or marker of the reception of Spirit-baptism, namely, speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*). Pentecostals claim this doctrine comes from the book of Acts, their favourite book, and from contemporary experience.

Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophesying, prayer for healing, and works of miracles are enthusiastically embraced and sought for by Pentecostals. Belief in the capacity of the Spirit to bring about healing, whether physical or emotional/mental, is one of the hallmarks of Pentecostalism. In this Pentecostals echo the postmodern insistence on a holistic understanding of the body-mind relationship. A related belief is the capacity to engage in ‘spiritual warfare’ and exorcise demonic spirits, if necessary. This is a significant part of Pentecostal spirituality, especially in

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²⁷ See further Vernon Purdy, ‘Divine Healing’, in Stanley M. Horton (ed.), *Systematic Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1999), 508–9.

²⁸ In this distinction I am indebted to the Benedictine Catholic expert on Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, Fr. Kilian McDonnell, OSB who was my mentor in the post-doctoral studies.

²⁹ See Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

³⁰ Jean-Daniel Plüss, ‘Azusa and Other Myths: The Long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Beliefs and Back’, *Pneuma* 15 (Fall 1993), 191.

the Global South.³¹ In the words of the late Ghanaian theologian Ogbu Kalu:³²

Going through life is like a spiritual warfare and religious ardor may appear very materialistic as people strive to preserve their material sustenance in the midst of the machinations of pervasive evil forces. Behind it is a strong sense of the moral and spiritual moorings of life. It is an organic worldview in which the three dimensions of space are bound together; the visible and the invisible worlds interweave. Nothing happens in the visible world that has not been predetermined in the invisible realm. The challenge for Christianity is how to witness the gospel in a highly spiritualized environment in which the recognition of the powers has not been banished in a Cartesian flight to objectivity and enlightenment.... The argument here is that Pentecostalism in Africa derived her coloring from the texture of the African soil and from the interior of her idiom, nurture, and growth; her fruits serve the challenges and problems of the African ecosystem more adequately than did the earlier missionary fruits.

Salvation and the Holistic Vision

In their yearning and search for a holistic account of the Full Gospel, Pentecostals came to embrace the notion of 'holistic salvation' much before the term gained fame in some mainline theologies. Amos Yong in his *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* offers an important account of that desire in global Pentecostalism.³³

A world pentecostal perspective on the doctrine of salvation therefore leads to a pneumatological soteriology. This would be in contrast to soteriologies that tend to bifurcate the work of Christ and of the Spirit, such as those articulated by Protestant scholasticism. In that framework, Christ provides salvation objectively (e.g., in justification) and the Spirit accomplishes salvation subjectively (e.g., in sanctification). Hence the soteriological work of the Spirit is subsequent to and subordinated to the work of Christ'. In response, a pneumatological soteriology understands salvation to be the work of both Christ and the Spirit from beginning to end. To use Pauline language: the Holy Spirit enables the proclamation, hearing, and understanding of the gospel, justifies through the resurrection of Christ, provides for the adoption of believers, accomplishes rebirth and renewal, sanctifies hearts and lives, and provides the down payment for eschatological transformation. In all of

³¹ See further, Opoku Onyinah, 'Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Contemporary Africa: Ghana as a Case Study', ch. 10 in Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (ed.), *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

³² Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 24:2 (2003), 122.

³³ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh. Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 82.

this, the Spirit is not an appendage to Christ in the process of salvation but saves with Christ throughout.

In an important essay titled 'Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies', Miroslav Volf, originally a Yugoslavian/Croatian Pentecostal, has argued that with all their differences, these two Christian movements share a vision of salvation in this-worldly, physical, material, embodied terms. While neither of the movements, of course, leaves behind the eschatological, future-oriented hope, relegating salvation merely to the future will not do either. True, liberationists focus their efforts on socio-political (including gender) liberation, while for Pentecostals it is more about the individual's release from sicknesses and ailments, physical or emotional.³⁴ All the same, there is resistance to excluding the bodily this-worldly reality from the vision of salvation.

Alongside the idea of the materiality of salvation and search for holism goes the continuing work for social, political, and economic justice and righteousness. With all its problems with 'other-worldliness', Pentecostalism is also characterized by a commitment to social justice, empowerment of the powerless, and a 'preferential option for the marginalized' tracing back to its roots at Azusa Street as a kind of paradigm of marginalization – a revival in an abandoned stable, led by an African American preacher.³⁵

At the same time, the idea of the materiality of salvation in the hands of too many Pentecostals and Charismatics has also turned into a gross materialistic search for financial and other benefits. The misdeeds of many Pentecostal leaders in their greedy quest for money and prestige are too well documented to deserve much reflection. Any visit to some Pentecostal churches not only in the USA but also all over in the Global South from Africa to Asia to Latin America paints a picture with serious questions to any theologian and missiologist. Health and wealth are made the prime indicator of God's blessings, and spiritual techniques for reaching them are fine-tuned by ever new itinerant charismatic preachers. Pentecostalism also at times suffer from the same kind of 'spiritualist' reductionism Volf sees indicative of many traditional theologies, namely, prioritizing the salvation of the 'souls' to the point where the wholeness of the human being as an embodied *imago Dei* is being missed. In Pentecostal preaching and witnessing, you can hear simultaneously both voices: seeking for wholeness of salvation and emphasis on the salvation of the soul.

³⁴ Miroslav Volf, 'Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26 (1989), 447-67.

³⁵ See the important discussion by the Hispanic Pentecostal ethicist, Eldín Villafañe, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 218.

While it is the task of missiologists and theologians to critique the abuses of the notions of the ‘Full Gospel’ and ‘material salvation’, it is also their responsibility to help the global church to rediscover the holistic nature of salvation in Christ. To that, the Pentecostal vision makes a unique contemporary contribution.

Church and the Spirit of Koinonia

The notion of *koinonia* and communion ecclesiology is a hot topic in current ecumenical conversations and studies. Pentecostals have been slow to formulate their ecclesiology.³⁶ They have rather gone out to plant churches! What, then, is the Pentecostal take on this issue? On the one hand, there is no denying the fact – noted at the significant ecumenical encounter between the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals by former Yugoslavian Pentecostals Peter Kuzmic and Miroslav Volf – that ‘Pentecostal soteriology and pneumatology point... unmistakably in the direction of an *ecclesiology of the fellowship of persons*’.³⁷ Pentecostals speak of the church as a fellowship; theologically put, for Pentecostals the church is a charismatic fellowship, a fellowship of persons, the body of Christ.³⁸ On the other hand, in a dynamic opposition to this communion orientation, much of Pentecostalism especially in the Global North and as a result of missions work from therein, has tended to foster the hyper-individualism of the post-Enlightenment mentality.

Having confessed that ‘with their individualistic understanding of Spirit baptism ... [Pentecostals] have lacked the conceptual framework in which to understand its connection to the church’s communally gifted life’,³⁹ the Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia rightly issues this important call: ‘The Spirit is the Spirit of communion. Spirit baptism implies communion. That’s why it leads to a shared love, a shared meal, a shared mission, and

³⁶ See further my ‘The Church as the Fellowship of Persons: An Emerging Pentecostal Ecclesiology of *Koinonia*’, *PentecoStudies* 6:1 (2007), 1-15 (online journal: <http://www.glopent.net/pentecostudies/2007>). An exciting collection of essays on Pentecostal ecclesiology focused on the Full Gospel template is: Chris Thomas and William Kay (eds.), *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Five Fold Gospel* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2010). Similarly, the theme issue of the *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 11:4 (2011) on ‘The Ecclesiology of the Pentecostal Churches’, guest edited by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen.

³⁷ Peter Kuzmic and Miroslav Volf, ‘*Communio Sanctorum*: Toward a Theology of the Church as a Fellowship of Persons’ (unpublished Pentecostal Position Paper Read at the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, Riano, Italy, May 21-26, 1985), 2.

³⁸ See further, V.-M. Kärkkäinen, *Spiritus Ubi Vult Spirat: Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue (1972-1989)*, *Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft* 42 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1998), 100-21.

³⁹ Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 203.

the proliferation/enhancement of an interactive charismatic life'.⁴⁰ Since no believer compasses the wholeness of *charismata*, the fullness of God can only be experienced in solidarity, *koinonia* with others in the church body.⁴¹

In the fourth phase of the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal International Dialogue (1991-1997) the *koinonia*-building aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit through charisms, empowerment, and other energies was wonderfully highlighted:⁴²

The life of *koinonia* is empowered by the Holy Spirit; in recent times many have experienced that power through 'the baptism in the Holy Spirit'. This presence of the Spirit has been shown in a fresh activity of biblical charisms, or gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8-11) reminding all Christians to be open to charisms as the Spirit gives to everyone individually, whether these gifts are more or less noticeable. Some of the charisms are given more for personal edification (cf. 1 Cor. 14:4a), while some provide service to others, and some especially are given to confirm evangelization (cf. Mk. 16:15-20). All of them are intended to help build up the *koinonia*.

Eschatology and the Imminent Expectation of the Return of Christ

As mentioned, Pentecostals took their cue from the first chapter of the Book of Acts. Following the verse 1:8, the most-often quoted passage among Pentecostals – 'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth' (RSV) – there was the eschatological promise. This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven' (v. 10). The theological reasoning was simple and profound: finish up with the work of witnessing and then the Lord will return. In the matrix of integral Spirit-Christology, the eschatological motif was also part of the Full Gospel template.

The premillennial eschatology of the Pentecostals posited the urgent task of world evangelism at the end of time before the imminent return of Christ. One Pentecostal missionary writing from China expressed this well, as she said at the beginning of a new year that their hearts were 'thrilling with the thought "He is coming soon". Oh! may we win many souls for the Master... How evident it is that we are in the last days; the general indifference, coldness, deadness, and iniquity waxing worse and worse. Yet, praise God, here and there – a gleam of light'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 205.

⁴¹ Frank D. Macchia, 'Sighs Too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 65.

⁴² 'Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness: Final Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue (1990-1997) between the Roman Catholic Church and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders', IV, #27.

⁴³ Cited in Anderson, 'The Vision of the Apostolic Faith', 298.

Mission, Victory, and Suffering

One of the persisting challenges to a movement such as Pentecostalism is to find a balance between the mentality of ‘overcoming’ and suffering, between the patience of sticking with the disappointments of life and the expectation of God’s ‘supernatural’ intervention.

Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity has (re)introduced to Christian spirituality an ideal of victorious Christian living, an intensive faith expectation, and emphasis on spiritual power to overcome problems in one’s life. The attitude of ‘overcoming’ is characteristic to Pentecostal and charismatic preaching. Often there is a heightened expectation of divine intervention, even in situations that seem impossible.⁴⁴

Indeed, rather than suffering and pain, Pentecostals have highlighted themes such as victory and healing. As a general observation, one has to admit that there is precious little talk about suffering in much of Pentecostal literature.⁴⁵ One may thus wonder, to cite the title of my earlier writing, if ‘Theology of the Cross’ [is] a Stumbling Block to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality’?⁴⁶ This is all the more astonishing when one takes into consideration the fact that even in the midst of victories and deliverances,

The first Pentecostal churches suffered at the hands of mainline Christian denominations. Their people comprised the poor, the uneducated, those from the margins of society, and the oppressed – in contrast to the rich, the influential and the powerful who occupied the pews of main line churches. The hostility these Pentecostal churches faced from established Christendom and the outside world made them look up with even greater earnestness; thereby enhancing their own spirituality, their spiritual equipment for service, their zeal to suffer for God and their hope in an imminent future with God.⁴⁷

The Indian Pentecostal theologian Gabriel Reuben Louis laments that today’s Pentecostalism is neglecting the cross and looking for Christ’s benefits mainly for the sake of this-worldly goods and enjoyment. While the theme of suffering, he continues, ‘may not be that relevant for a

⁴⁴ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘Theology of the Cross: A Stumbling Block to Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality’, in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (eds.), *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Russell P. Spittler* (London/New York: T & T Clark International/Continuum, 2004), 150.

⁴⁵ It is illustrative of this tendency that neither the recent major missiological treatise on Pentecostalism, e.g., Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), nor the most important Pentecostal systematic theological presentation, Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) have the term ‘suffering’ in their index or any discussion of the theme.

⁴⁶ Kärkkäinen, ‘Theology of the Cross’.

⁴⁷ Gabriel Reuben Louis, ‘Response to Wonsuk Ma’s “Towards an Asian Pentecostal Theology”’, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2:1 (1999), 81; Ma’s study appears in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1:1 (1998), 15-41.

Pentecostal theology in a rich and prosperous West... [it is] in a poor and miserable Asia'.⁴⁸ Rather than assigning all or even most suffering to the spirit world, Louis contends, contemporary Pentecostalism should rediscover the important lesson from their forebears: 'It is human to suffer; it is human to experience pain; it is human to be despised, forsaken and oppressed. This was what our own fore-fathers in the Pentecostal faith went through, and this is what most of the people of Asia go through even today'.⁴⁹ The omission or downplaying of the theme of suffering among Pentecostals is of course not limited to the Asian or western contexts; similar kinds of charges have been leveled for example against African Pentecostalism.⁵⁰

On the other hand, there are significant efforts underway by Pentecostal theologians and missiologists to address more intentionally the theme of suffering in human life and Christian experience. While acknowledging and strongly endorsing the Pentecostal mentality of overcoming, the Pentecostal biblical scholar and missiologist William W. Menzies, with wide experience from the Asian context, admits that healings are mysteries and 'Good people are not always healed'. As a consequence, he suggests a biblical theology of suffering for Pentecostals.⁵¹ This task has been taken up by another Assemblies of God biblical scholar, Martin William Mittelstadt, who has written on *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke-Acts*,⁵² focusing his study on the topic seldom discussed by Pentecostals who otherwise have launched major investigations on this most treasured part of the New Testament.

The Pentecostal theologian-missionary of Puerto Rico, Samuel Solivan, has contributed a significant theological treatise titled *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation* in which he attempts an outline of Hispanic Pentecostal theology through the lens of suffering and liberation,⁵³ and the Sudanese

⁴⁸ Louis, 'Response to Wonsuk Ma', 83.

⁴⁹ Louis, 'Response to Wonsuk Ma', 83.

⁵⁰ See further J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 218, 228-32.

⁵¹ William W. Menzies, 'Reflections on Suffering: A Pentecostal Perspective', in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (eds.), *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Russell P. Spittler* (London/New York: T & T Clark International/Continuum, 2004), 141. See also the important essay by the British Pentecostal biblical scholar who has written extensively on healing, Keith Warrington, 'Healing and Suffering in the Bible', *International Review of Mission* 95.376/377 (2006), 154-64.

⁵² Martin William Mittelstadt, *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke-Acts: Implications for a Pentecostal Pneumatology*, Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 26 (London/New York: T & T Clark International, Continuum, 2004).

⁵³ Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 14 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

Pentecostal Isaiah Majok Dau has reflected on *Suffering and God* in the context of the tragic civil war in his homeland.⁵⁴ With all their emphasis on the power of God in healings, exorcisms, and other kinds of ‘power encounters’ as well as the vibrant expectations of God’s desire to intervene miraculously, Pentecostal theology needs to embrace the view of the loving, passionate and compassionate God who weeps and anguishes over the suffering of his children and whose fatherly heart is broken because of the brokenness of life.

The presence – and hope-filled and patient embrace – of suffering in the Christian life and ministry is wonderfully embodied in the life of the world’s largest congregation, the Yoido Full Gospel Church of Seoul, Korea, Paul Yonggi Cho. In a collection of sermons titled *When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong*, the lead sermon reflects on the presence of sufferings – in the form of the ‘thorn in the flesh’ (2 Cor. 12:7-10) – in the life of St. Paul, who also claimed divine revelations, abundance of mercy, and extraordinary victories. Pastor Cho urges ‘that we should be motivated in our lives of faith in God to let all the thorns of difficulties and trials become opportunities through which we can receive His blessings’.⁵⁵ Knowing that these sufferings in the life of the Christian minister may turn out to be God’s blessings, Cho advises us not to resist them with our own strength.⁵⁶ ‘Pastor Cho’s Pentecostal theology of hope is an interesting mixture of bold faith-expectation, the kind of ‘stubborn’ faith of the woman in the Gospel of Luke (18:1-8) approved by Jesus, and obedient submission to endure suffering and pain as coming from the hand of a good God’.⁵⁷

In Lieu of Conclusions: Challenges and Chances for the Future

Whither Pentecostal missiology? Attempting to ‘prophesy’ about the future of this diverse, non-organized, and dynamic movement – or better: network of movements – is a risky business. What might be more useful is to try to reflect on some promises for the future as well as major challenges.

Pentecostal mission better continue seeking for a balance between various dynamics built-in into its matrix such as between: an intense eschatological expectation and the focus on the work in the Now preaching the Gospel and minding social concern and justice sticking with its own unique distinctive features and opening up to a more robust ecumenical

⁵⁴ Isaiah Majo Dau, *Suffering and God: A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003).

⁵⁵ David Yonggi Cho, *When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong*, A Sermon Series 3 (Seoul, Korea: Logos, 2003), 72.

⁵⁶ Cho, *When I Am Weak*, 72.

⁵⁷ V.-M. Kärkkäinen, ‘March Forward to Hope: Yonggi Cho’s Pentecostal Theology of Hope’, *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 28:2 (Fall 2006), 258.

openness continuing rely on grassroots lay leadership and developing academic ministerial training models

Other such polarities undoubtedly could be added to the list. But that short listing already makes my point. A ‘balance’, however, does not mean ‘compromise’ or ‘watering down’ distinctive features. Balance may also mean ‘radical middle’, a robust attempt to hold on simultaneously to two (or more) seemingly opposing tendencies. Take for example the first polarity above. An intense eschatological ethos may energize and make more dynamic the work of missions in the Now. On the other hand, a deep engagement in the manifold missions work may help eschatology avoid escapism. And so forth.

Number of emerging and impending challenges such as the relation to other religions, the social concern, ‘powers’, and, say contextualization, are being discussed in this volume. Work in those areas and related ones, done by Pentecostal theologians coming from diverse global contexts offers unprecedented prospects for the future of Pentecostal mission.⁵⁸



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⁵⁸ For an exciting collection of essays by a highly diverse group of Pentecostal scholars, see Kärkkäinen (ed.), *The Spirit in the World*. Useful for Pentecostal missiological reflection is also Amos Yong & Clifton Clarke (eds.), *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission: Towards a Renewal Theology of Mission and Interreligious Encounter* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011).

‘YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER’: EMPOWERMENT IN PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

This chapter examines the theology of empowerment in Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity with attention to the range of understandings of the concept within the movement. An understanding of the person and power of the Holy Spirit may be gained from the biblical metaphors used to describe his presence. In the first place, Pentecostals generally understand the Holy Spirit to be God’s continuing *presence* in Christ as work in the world, especially the church. Jesus told the disciples prior to the withdrawal of his physical presence from the earth ‘I will not leave you orphans’ but ‘I will come to you’ and Jesus did indeed return in the form of the Spirit. God’s presence, which includes the manifestations of his power in Jesus Christ, is felt in through the working of the Holy Spirit.

There are therefore several metaphors used to describe the power of the Spirit including ‘breath’, ‘fire’, and ‘wind’. All three metaphors are related to ‘energy’ and so the Spirit is associated not just with power but also vitality. To that end, those who are filled with the Spirit of God and function within those gifts are described as ‘charismatic’ and idea which also connotes the manifestation of power through the graces of the Spirit. According to Jürgen Moltman, ‘the gift of the Spirit comes from the countenance of God when it is turned towards human beings and shines upon them’ bringing ‘inward assurance in living and new vital energies’.¹ These new vital energies result from the empowering fire of the Spirit or from the movement of the Spirit as breath and wind. The Hebrew word *rûach* and Greek *pneuma* which means ‘spirit’ both have the underlying sense of breath or wind in motion. When seen in terms of the work of the Spirit, it is that movement that produces the energy which demonstrates the power of God in things, communities and people.

The understanding of empowerment as a pneumatological terms, I seek to point out, also informs the nature of Pentecostal ecclesiology. It is with the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology in mind that Yves Congar, for example, called for the need to integrate reflection on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the human person with reflection on the

¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1992), 45.

activity of the Holy Spirit in the church.² Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity is very much an experiential movement and generally the source of empowerment is considered to be the Spirit of God working within and among his people. In fulfilment of biblical promises, Pentecostals advocate, the Spirit transforms and grants gifts and graces or *charismata* to believers and the ecclesial community. In the words of St. Paul, 'to each grace has been given as the Spirit apportioned it' (1 Cor. 12:7; 4:7).

The Spirit endues with power for mission and inspires worship with dynamism and his energizing presence. What distinguishes Pentecostal worship from that of other traditional denominations is that Pentecostal worship usually takes place within a very expectant atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit is expected to move in visible and sometimes even 'violent' ways. Here is how the late Christian G. Baëta of Ghana described what was understood as 'signs of the Spirit' within early renewal movements in Africa:

[Rhythmic] swaying of the body, usually with stamping, to repetitious music (both vocal and instrumental, particularly percussion), hand-clapping, ejaculations, poignant cries and prayers, dancing, leaping and various motor reactions expressive of intense religious emotion; prophesying, 'speaking in tongues', falling into trances, relating dreams and visions, and witnessing, i.e., recounting publicly one's own experience of miraculous redemption.³

Pentecostal gatherings, as evidenced in the description above, can be characterized by anything from animal noises such as we had in the Toronto Blessing, to uncontrollable screams, emotional cries and sobbing, moans, spontaneous prayers and ecstatic jumps to quiet, sober and reflective moments. In those reflective moments people stand still to hear the voice of the Spirit relayed in prophetic messages, revelations and words of knowledge. Sometimes in the quietness of Pentecostal worship, the Spirit suddenly feels like a blowing wind knocking people off their feet and throwing them on to the floor. All this is to say that in the presence of the Spirit, power is felt and so in Pentecostalism, we encounter a stream of Christianity in which the issues of power and empowerment are considered to be signs of the presence of the Spirit of God.

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Power and Empowerment

The expression 'empowerment' coming from the word 'power' relates to the ability to accomplish various tasks. To be empowered, therefore, is to be resourced or made capable of achieving aims and accomplishing feats that

² Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

³ Christian G. Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of Some Spiritual Churches* (London: SCM, 1962), 1.

would otherwise have remained difficult or impossible to undertake. Christopher J.H. Wright links these notions of 'power', 'empowerment' and the work of the Holy Spirit in the following observation:

[Power] simply means the ability to do things...Power is the capacity to accomplish goals, or to influence the outcome of events and processes. ...Power, then, is effective action, making a difference, influencing events, changing the way things are or will be. So it is not surprising that the Spirit of God in the Old Testament is commonly linked with power, for the biblical God is nothing if not effective in action and bringing about change! ...The Spirit of God is God's power at work – either in direct action, or empowering people to do what God wants to be done.⁴

The Pentecostal-charismatic theology of empowerment, as briefly outlined, resonates with the observation that Wright makes here from the perspective of the Old Testament. We will see in this chapter, as mentioned briefly in the opening paragraphs, that in Pentecostal-charismatic thought and experience, the presence of the Holy Spirit is always synonymous with the authority and power of God. To that end the Holy Spirit, as Gordon D. Fee notes, is *God's empowering presence* among his people.⁵ Similarly David Martin points to the fact that the heart of the 'distinctive appeal' of Pentecostalism 'lies in empowerment through spiritual gifts offered to all'.⁶ In addition to these understandings, I argue, with the rise of the new Pentecostals in particular, empowerment has come to mean something more than the mere exercise of *charismata* within the context of worship and ministry.

The process of empowerment may begin with the experience of the individual believer as described by Juan Sepúlveda:

The constitutive act of the Pentecostal movement is the offer of a direct and particularly intense encounter with God which makes possible a profound change in the life of the person who experiences it. ...Through the Holy Spirit, God makes himself directly accessible to the believer who seeks him, thus destroying the necessity of every kind of external priestly mediation.

The reference to a believer's direct accessibility to God through the experience of the Spirit is important because that is what gives Pentecostalism its distinctive ecclesiology. With access to the Spirit of God without the necessity of 'external priestly mediation', each member of the body of Christ is potentially a recipient of gifts and graces and when deployed properly in the service of the church these graces help to make the community of believers charismatically functional. Thus personal

⁴ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2006), 35, 36.

⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

⁶ David Martin, *Pentecostalism: the World their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002),

1.

charismatic experiences have implications for the empowerment of the whole Christian community:

The new person, who is incorporated into the Pentecostal community through conversion, receives, and is acknowledged by the church to have received, a gift which will enable him or her to begin to participate in the carrying out of the evangelizing mission of the church. In this way, Pentecostalism carries into practice in a very radical way the idea of the 'universal priesthood of the believers'.⁷

The Pentecostal-charismatic openness to divine intervention in terms of signs, wonders, and empowerment as in the daily exercise of spiritual gifts or charismata, as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen writes, is key to the phenomenal spread of the movement.⁸ Thus Pentecostal spirituality is usually characterized by the affirmation of the power of the Holy Spirit and the normalization of charismatic experiences in Christian life and worship. In the light of the normalization of charismatic experiences in Christian spirituality and mission the Holy Spirit is seen as the source of empowerment for Christian ministry in all its forms. Thus Pentecostal ecclesiology demonstrates far more interest in apostolic power than in apostolic succession.⁹ Whereas apostolic succession means for the episcopal traditions an inheritance of priestly authority, in Pentecostalism it is interpreted to mean functioning in the power of the Spirit in the same way that the apostles did following the experience of the biblical Pentecost.

Power, Signs and Wonders

Corporate worship offers an important context in which to observe and participate in the Pentecostal-charismatic understanding of apostolic succession as empowerment. The Holy Spirit in his strength and power can move people and worship in unpredictable directions. Thus during worship people like to wait in expectation because they are in the presence of God. We will look further at some important biblical references on the relationship between the movement of the Spirit and power later in the appropriate section. However to set the tone for our discussion, consider St. Luke's description of what happened to the physical space and the persons of the Apostles when they gathered to pray to God to show his power following persecution at the hands of the Sanhedrin. First, they requested God to 'enable' them to speak his word 'with great boldness' and to follow this up

⁷ Juan Sepúlveda, 'Reflections on the Pentecostal Contribution to the Mission of the Church in Latin America', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 100, 103.

⁸ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Theology in the Third Millennium: Taking Stock of the Contemporary Global Situation', in Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (ed.), *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), xiv-xv.

⁹ David du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade me Go: The Astounding Move of God in the Denominational Churches* (Oakland, CA: David J. Du Plessis, 1963), 13.

with 'signs and wonders': 'Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus' (Acts 4:30).

In other words, the apostles requested God to empower them not only to preach the word but also to perform signs and wonders. These signs and wonders would then provide proof of the power of the God in whose name and by whose authority they were ministering. This prayer has an Old Testament precedent when Moses requests the *presence* of God to accompany Israel on its journey in order that 'outsiders', through the manifestations to generated by such a *presence* would see Israel as bearing God's identity (Ex 33:12ff.).

Second, the result of the prayer offered by the disciples was a quaking of the physical space – an indication of the presence of an external force or power – and the filling of the apostles with the Holy Spirit. The incident is also described in a way that puts the emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit: 'After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly' (Acts 4:31).

Such biblical episodes contribute to the sense of expectancy that is characteristic Pentecostal worship. This sense of expectancy with the coming or descent of the Spirit – God's empowering presence – has inspired many Pentecostal choruses such as this one from Ghana's Church of Pentecost. The chorus sustains the metaphor of the Holy Spirit as the *fire* of God:

Fire; Fire; Holy Spirit You are Fire
Come and do your work; God's Fire
Come and accomplish your tasks
Come and fulfil your mission in my heart
Fire, God's Fire, come and do your work in my heart.

In addition to 'fire', the other major biblical metaphors of the Spirit, especially 'wind' and 'breath' have to do with movement and action both of which require energy. Thus the Holy Spirit is sometimes seen as God's power in action and when he is present, he moves people and things through her energizing force.

In considering the Pentecostal-charismatic theology of empowerment, we must not be restricted by classical Pentecostal notions of the Spirit with its emphasis on enabling people to pray or prophesy in tongues, perform healing miracles, and cast out demons. All that amounts to important understandings of empowerment. In classical Pentecostalism with which these traditional notions of empowerment are associated, Jesus Christ is Saviour, Baptizer in the Spirit, Sanctifier, Healer, and a 'Soon Coming King'. The classical Pentecostal emphasis on the *parousia* or Second Coming of Christ demanded the urgent conversion of the nations to God and the spread of the fires of the Spirit among all peoples. After all, as most early classical Pentecostals argued, the promise of the Spirit was for

empowering the disciples for mission in Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. Allan Anderson explains this classical Pentecostal sense of mission in his work, *Spreading Fires*:

Based on the whims of the Spirit, missionaries scattered themselves within a remarkably short space of time to spread the ‘fires’ wherever they went – and these fires were somewhat unpredictable and out of control.¹⁰

Elsewhere in *Spreading Fires* he also points to how, although mostly untrained and inexperienced in the art and science of mission, early Pentecostal missionaries simply thought of mission as ‘foreign mission’:

Their only qualification was the baptism in the Spirit and a divine call, their motivation was to evangelize the world before the imminent coming of Christ – and so evangelism was more important than education or ‘civilization’.¹¹

This was so because in Pentecostal thought generally, as explained earlier, the Holy Spirit is associated with power and one of his critical ways of operating is to ‘empower’ people for the work of God. This sense of empowerment was so strong that following the 1906 Azusa Street Revival under William J. Seymour, early Pentecostals went out as missionaries with zeal to other lands believing that the Spirit would grant them the ability to preach in the languages of those places. Many were disappointed when their missionary zeal and optimism did not materialize, at least, not in the way they expected.

Empowerment in Contemporary Pentecostal Experience

To appreciate the meaning of empowerment in its full breath, we need to combine its meaning in classical Pentecostal thought with its broader understanding in contemporary Pentecostal discourse. Contemporary or neo-Pentecostalism refers to the historically younger and theologically versatile new Pentecostal churches, movements and transnational organizations that started emerging from the mid to late 1970s. These are the groups that Donald E. Miller refers to as ‘new paradigm churches’ within the North American Pentecostal context.¹² They possess a very modern outlook and are led by a very charismatic and gifted leadership. Neo-Pentecostal movements also tend to have a special attraction for upwardly mobile young people; they make innovative uses of modern media technologies; and they interpret Scripture in ways that accommodate those things that conservative evangelicals or classical Pentecostals may describe as worldliness. Among these are their fashion consciousness and the flaunting of personal wealth as signs of God-given prosperity.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5.

¹¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 27.

¹² Donald E. Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

New Pentecostal churches and movements are oriented towards motivational or empowering messages directed at achieving success in this world. Contemporary Pentecostals have tended to capture the process of Holy Spirit empowerment in terms of 'anointing'. In Psalm 92:10, we read: 'You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured upon me'. The favoured King James Version of African Pentecostals renders the second part of the verse, 'I shall be anointed with fresh oil'. Interpreting this passage, one African charismatic pastor notes:

When the anointing comes upon you as a servant, demons will acknowledge the power of your spiritual horn...when the character of the Holy Ghost is rubbed on you, you lose your carnal identity and take on His spiritual identity. This puts you in a position to receive overflowing anointing for power demonstration.¹³

In other words there is a connection between the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the positive changes that take place in life and ministry. Thus contemporary Pentecostals generally believe that without the empowering effects of the anointing, mission and ministry become meaningless powerless exercises undertaken in futility because they lack palpably enduring results. Through the anointing which is symbolized by the application of olive oil, Pentecostals believe, the Spirit transforms people and empowers them to overcome the flesh.

Neo-Pentecostals therefore, do not just emphasize speaking in tongues and operating spiritual gifts, but also preach upward mobility and redemptive uplift inspired by messages of possibilities and prosperity. This means that in new paradigm Pentecostalism, salvation may be presented as something that is as existential as it is eschatological although that which is eschatological, remains subdued in preaching. In the new types of Pentecostalism, André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani note:

[Believers] no longer retreat among themselves in order to maintain the purity of their beliefs and their moral rigor.... Salvation is now resolutely this-worldly, and the evidence of new life has become as much material as spiritual.... [The] notion of transformation has been broadened to include the possibility of material change in everyday life.... Biblical verses mixed with popular self-help discourses exhort converts to identify the sources of their frustration and suffering and embark on a process of continual self-overcoming. The image of salvation at the heart of this process increasingly means upward mobility and personal success.¹⁴

Nevertheless whether we look at it in terms of spiritual or socio-economic empowerment, the bottom line is that in Pentecostal-charismatic

¹³ Eastwood Anaba, *Releasing God's Glory from Earthen Vessels* (Accra: Design Solutions, 1994), 20.

¹⁴ André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (ed.), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 7.

thought, ministry and mission are expected to occur in the power of God's Spirit. The two understandings are not mutually exclusive. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of revitalization and empowerment and achievement in terms of personal ambitions and aspirations in the same breath.

Pentecostalism and World Missions Conferences

Thus a key Pentecostal criticism of World Missions Conferences has been the neglect of the Pentecostal dimension of the global Christian enterprise, especially the lack of adequate emphasis on the power of the Spirit in mission. David J. Du Plessis, the South African charismatic, who in the 1940s through the 1950s became something of a Pentecostal ambassador to the world ecumenical movement, includes the following account in his various testimonies:

In 1951 the Lord spoke to me and clearly told me to go and witness to the leaders of the World Council of Churches. In my prayers I said: 'Lord, I have preached so much against them. What do I say to them now? They will not listen to me. Their churches have put our people out of their fellowship. That is why we have now a separate Pentecostal movement. These churches were not willing to listen to the testimony of those who speak in tongues'. But the Lord kept telling me to go and witness to them.¹⁵

God's Spirit, Moltmann explains elsewhere in the work cited above, is felt as *vitalizing energy* through which 'the eternal God participates in our transitory life, and we participate in the eternal life of God' and so the community of God's people serves as 'an immense out-flowing source of energy'.¹⁶ The reference to energy brings the need for power into play so Moltmann tries to make the point that the experience of the Spirit results in personal and communal empowerment.

Pentecostalism in the southern hemisphere receives disproportionate attention because first, although Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon, it provides the single most visible evidence of the shift in the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity from the North to the global South. The phenomenal growth of Pentecostal-charismatic churches and movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America has helped to make contemporary Christianity a non-western religion. That is itself a process of empowerment as the former recipients of missionary largesse now become missionaries to the West with the rise of non-western immigrant churches in the various diasporas. What connects this development to our subject matter of empowerment therefore is that, in the non-western world as Martin observes, Pentecostalism has amounted to a religious mobilization of 'the damned of the earth'.¹⁷ In contrast to the developing world where it

¹⁵ Du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go*, 13.

¹⁶ Moltman, *Spirit of Life*, 195-6.

¹⁷ Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 3.

mobilizes large masses, Classical Pentecostalism Amos Yong notes, 'is unlikely to be a major power in the developed world because it represents the mobilization of a minority of people at the varied margins of the world'.¹⁸

Second, most studies on Pentecostalism in the non-western world have had a historical, sociological or anthropological focus. That means they have tended to downplay the critical internal theological factors that account for the significance of the movement. But Pentecostal theology usually revolves around experiences of the Spirit and the manifestations of his power in miracles, signs and wonders, prophecy, healing, visions and revelations, and other such pneumatic phenomena. Amos Yong therefore cautions that the 'religious draw of Pentecostalism should not be underestimated' and that 'physical, emotional, and spiritual healing; access to the supernatural; tongues as a sign; the centrality of music and song; oral, narrative, and vernacular modes of communication; the empowerment of women; networks of support, solidarity, and skill development – each of these is either essentially religious or includes a specifically religious dimension'.¹⁹ Similarly Kalu draws attention to the religious significance of Pentecostalism:

It is the presence of the Spirit that explains the possibilities of miracles, healing, and power. These pneumatic resources of the gospel were available in the contemporary life of believers and were not mere creedal assent.²⁰

What Kalu and others outline above, are deeply religious activities through which the weak and foolish things of this world have been empowered by the Spirit to shame the wise and the strong, as St Paul makes the Corinthians understand. When Edinburgh 1910 met, the fear was that Africa for instance was going to turn Islamic but by the middle of that century Pentecostalism in its various African expressions had helped to ensure that this did not happen by helping to redirect the face of Christianity towards the current 'pentecostalisation' of the faith that we are now witnessing. The reason is that there is something in the experiential nature of Pentecostalism that resonates very powerfully with African traditional religious ideas and sensibilities.

Third, the emphasis on the non-western context is important because many of these manifestations of charismatic power resonate very strongly with primal religious ideas. Harvey Cox describes it in the following words:

[Pentecostalism] has succeeded because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony

¹⁸ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on all Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 32.

¹⁹ Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, 34.

²⁰ Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called 'primal spirituality', that largely unprocessed nucleus of the psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of purpose and significance goes on...They have enabled countless people to recover, on a quite personal level, three dimensions of this elemental spirituality...'primal speech', 'primal piety', and 'primal hope'.²¹

The resonance between Pentecostal religion as a religion of power and the African primal imagination which is also undergirded by the idiom of power is revealed in a statement by late Ghanaian/African theologian, Kwame Bediako. He notes that whereas primal religions generally conceive of religion as a system of power and of living religiously as being in touch with the source and channels of power in the universe, Christian theology as inherited from the missionary West seemed on the whole, to understand the Christian gospel as a system of ideas.²² The non-western primal universe is one which is alive with different types of transcendent powers. The human realm which as associated with all kinds of limitations thus relies on benevolent transcendent powers for protection against malevolent forms of supernatural power including witchcraft, and other demonic influences on human life.

The rise of indigenous prophets in Africa whose charismatic and fiery ministries in confrontations with powerful traditional shrines and witchcraft account in part for the later success of Pentecostal forms of Christianity on the continent. Ogbu Kalu explains the importance of these twentieth century indigenous charismatic prophets as precursors of modern Pentecostalism in Africa:

These prophets tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives. They were closer to the grain of African culture in their responses to the gospel and so felt the resonance between the charismatic indigenous worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldview. In 1910, the year that European missionary leaders gathered in a conference on The Mound, Edinburgh, to map the future of mission in Africa and the rest of the world, Wade Harris trekked from Grebo Island through the Ivory Coast to the Gold Coast, baptizing, healing, teaching new choruses, and charismatizing the religious landscape. The charismatic fire that he lit became more important for the future of Christianity in Africa than the grand Edinburgh Conference of 1910 that shut out African voices.²³

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Thus at a time when historic mission denominations simply dismissed witchcraft for example as a figment of folk imagination or psychological delusion, indigenous African prophets armed with nothing but their experiences of the Holy Spirit, felt empowered to deliver people from those

²¹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 81-82.

²² Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: the Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 106.

²³ Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), x.

spirits of the African world that had survived in the Christian imagination as demons. Pentecostal access to and experiences of the Spirit have an empowering effect on people. Thus African Pentecostals from very early on recognized the powers of the African world and crafted a theology of salvation in response to them. They creatively wove the Christ figure into the African universe as the ultimate *Agyenkwa*, Savior, as the Akans of Ghana refer to Jesus. African Pentecostals argued from an intense reliance on the Bible that Christ redeems from demons and inimical spiritual forces.²⁴

Empowerment: Biblical Perspectives

In the Old Testament, as we noted from Wright above, we encounter the Holy Spirit as the source of power. He was the Spirit who brought order out of the primordial chaos; as 'breath of God', he made it possible for the lifeless model of the human person to become a living being; and he empowered the prophets and judges to undertake mighty assignments. In the century and half between the conquest of the Promised Land and the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, charismatic judges led Israel's tribes, and saved them in critical situations. In these stories, Jürgen Moltmann points out, the real, active and determining subject is always Yahweh's *ruach*.²⁵ 'Yahweh's *ruach* came upon Othniel' (Judg. 3:10); and upon the saviour Gideon (6:34). 'Yahweh's *ruach* began to stir Samson' (13:25) and gave him such strength that he 'tore the lion asunder' with his bare hands (14:6) and 'killed thirty men' on the way to Askelon (14:19). Israel's prophets were also evidently itinerant preachers possessed by the divine Spirit. In the early history of Israel, ecstasies (1 Sam. 10:5-6; 19:20-24), unusual wisdom such as was given to Joseph (Gen. 41:38), and right judgment are all put down to God's Spirit.

The Spirit of God brought life to dry bones in a valley; and as God's *presence* the Spirit was instrumental in making Moses the successful leader that he became (Ex. 33). Indeed in Zechariah 4:6, the relationship between the Spirit of God and power comes out forcefully in the text 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord'. Thus the Spirit of God is God's power at work either in direction, or empowering people to do what God wants done. Power goes with ability. Thus the empowerment of God's people through his Spirit provided a certain charismatic ability that enabled judges and prophets either to conquer the enemies of Israel or declare the word of the Lord with fearless boldness. From the perspective of the Old Testament therefore, it is clear that the Spirit of God is synonymous with Power. Two further examples will suffice to make the point. First, later

²⁴ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, ix.

²⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 43.

Israelites were in no doubt that God had been very powerfully active through his Spirit in the life and work of Moses. In the following passage, a later prophet reflects on the Spirit of God and acts of power in the Mosaic era:

Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people – where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses’ right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the open country, they did not stumble; like cattle that do down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name (Is. 63:11-14).

The point being made in this text is the fact that it was the Holy Spirit that made it possible for God’s people to succeed under Moses by coming to their aid at their most difficult moments including ‘dividing the waters’ and providing them guidance.

The second example comes from Ezekiel 37 where the prophet is given a vision of very dry bones in a valley. It was a mental picture of God’s people at their wits end as they cried: ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off’ (Ezek. 37:11). The response of the Lord was that it was going to take nothing but the power of his Spirit to accomplish the task:

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you back from them; I will bring you back from the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live’ (Ezek. 37:12-14).

It takes power to be able to open graves and bring lifeless bodies back to life. Besides, the prophet was himself empowered by God to rise above human limitations and unbelief to prophesy the breath of God into lifeless and dry bones. This process of empowerment of God’s weak, vulnerable and despondent peoples is best understood in the light of the fact that when Ezekiel prophesied, the dry bones came to life as a ‘vast army’ (Ezek. 37:10). An army is a symbol of strength, toughness, and endurance.

The relationship between the Holy Spirit and power continues in the New Testament. The most important surprise for Mary was how it was possible for her to conceive without first going through the laid down biological processes for conception to occur. She very rightly asked the question: ‘How will this be...since I am a virgin?’ The response that Mary receives is not dissimilar to what the Prophet Ezekiel received when faced with a valley of dry lifeless bones. Mary was told, the Holy Spirit, that is the ‘zeal of the Lord’ or the breath/wind of the Lord shall accomplish this:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God (Lk. 1:35).

The language that is used here, 'the Holy Spirit will overshadow you', sounds very much like the language used on the Day of Pentecost regarding how the disciples were going to bear witness to the gospel: 'you will be clothed with power from on high'. In both instances, the word 'power' is used. 'The power of the Holy Spirit will come upon you', Mary is told, and later on in the Acts of the Apostles the disciples are told, 'you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you' (Acts 1:8). The relationship that exists between signs and wonders and mission in the New Testament has become very much a part of contemporary Pentecostal religious culture and mission. Two texts in particular speak to this relationship. The first is what happened when Philip went to Samaria under the leading of the Holy Spirit:

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in the city (Acts 8:4-8).

The second text relates to how miracles of healing, exorcism and deliverance associated with the apostolic ministry accompanied the ministry of Paul:

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and evil spirits left them (Acts 19:11-12).

In these two passages, the preaching of the word of God and the ministry of signs and wonders were inseparable in the Acts of the Apostles and, as Pentecostals often like to point out, also in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Obstacles that prevent people from realizing abundance of life in Christ are in Pentecostal hermeneutics cast as 'strongholds'. Such strongholds are expected to be 'pulled down' by the authority of the risen Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. That power amounts in one sense to authority or empowerment to deal with physical and spiritual impediments to mission. The Bible for Pentecostals is the authoritative word of God and what it promises is expected to be appropriated for the expansion of God's kingdom.²⁶

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Empowerment and Mission

Against the backdrop of the scriptural evidence adduced here, the reasons for the inseparable connection that Pentecostals normally make between the Holy Spirit and Empowerment are not difficult to find. First, we noted at the

²⁶ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Pulling Down Strongholds: Evangelism, Principalities and Powers and the African Pentecostal Imagination', *International Review of Mission* 96, 582/583 (July/October, 2007), 307.

beginning that anytime we encounter the Spirit of God in the Scriptures, we also find God's power at work within and among his people. The power of God is not only seen in the activity of the Spirit but we also see him empowering ordinary people – including menservants and maidservants – to manifest charismatic power. One of the cardinal texts of Pentecostalism makes this clear:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, there will be deliverance (Joel 2:28-32).

Second, Jesus made a connection between the Spirit of God being upon him and the anointing that enabled him to bring liberation, release, healing, and deliverance to people:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk. 4:18-19).

Third, when Jesus promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, he linked the event with the 'power' they needed to minister and disciple the nations:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8-9).

The idea of mission comes into the Pentecostal understanding of empowerment because in both the experience and teaching of Jesus Christ, the granting of the Spirit and the mandate to preach the gospel comes in the same package. We read from the Gospel according to St. John:

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'. And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven' (Jn. 20:21-23).

Wherever it has appeared, it needs to be added, Pentecostalism has usually presented itself as the religious and theological alternatives to dry denominationalism, ecclesial hegemony and over-clericalised and powerless Christianity of the older mission churches. The belief is that it takes the empowering presence of God, felt through the experience of the Spirit as evidenced in Scripture to move his people and the church into action, especially in mission.

Thus Harvey Cox notes how in the case of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival led by William J. Seymour those early modern Pentecostals did not

think they were forging a radically new form of Christianity. Rather they thought of the movement in terms of renewal and that is, restoring originality and 'purifying a church that had become diluted, dehydrated, and despoiled'.²⁷ 'The Spirit of Life', John V. Taylor writes elsewhere, 'is ever at work in nature, in history and in human living, and wherever there is a flagging or corruption or self-destruction in God's handiwork, he is present to renew and energize and create again'.²⁸ This work of the Spirit is seen in a process of renewal and empowerment, especially of people as they work for God.

The Holy Spirit makes us charismatic by empowering us with his graces and he also inspires worship, grants power for casting out evil spirits, healing the sick, and helps the Spirit-filled to speak mysteries unto God through the grace of 'speaking in tongues'. 'Speaking in tongues' plays a very 'democratizing' role in worship. It is a religious experience that allows people to pray in 'non-rational meditative language' that is not mediated. Paul held tongues speaking in the highest esteem as a means of communicating with God. To that end his reference to 'inarticulate groaning too deep for words' in Romans 8:26-27 must be understood as referring primarily to glossolalia.²⁹

Within the Pentecostal-charismatic Christian context therefore, the best way in which these process of empowerment are understood is through the ability to pray in an unknown tongue, especially if seen within the context of Romans 8:26,

In the same, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Speaking in tongues constitutes, for most Pentecostals, important evidence from Scripture is that the Spirit is a source of empowerment. Harvey Cox captures the relevance of glossolalia as a distinctive mode of religious expression for Pentecostal worship in the following observation:

Not only is the ultimate mystery indescribable and its ways unsearchable. Not only is the infinite God unapproachable in mere human language. The even deeper insight of ecstatic utterance is that, despite all this, human beings can nonetheless speak to God because God makes such speech possible. Prayer itself is an act of grace. We are unable to pray, but the Spirit 'maketh intercession'. Our corrupt and inadequate language is transformed by God's love into the tongues of angels...the 'excruciating pain' of linguistic atrophy,

²⁷ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 102.

²⁸ John V. Taylor, *The Go Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM, 1972), 27.

²⁹ This point has been forcefully argued by Frank D. Macchia, 'Sighs too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Issue 1 (1992), 47-73.

desiccation, and banality is transfigured, if only momentarily and episodically, into free flowing praise. No wonder the people one sees and hears ‘praying in the Spirit’ in Pentecostal congregations and elsewhere frequently appear so joyful.³⁰

Some of my own most profound moments in Pentecostal worship have occurred when people who possess that grace have sung in tongues. In my experience, ‘singing in the spirit’ during worship which invariably means ‘singing in tongues’ can lift both the singer and the listeners to another level of spiritual experience. It is an overwhelming and edifying experience that makes the presence of God palpable if it occurs during worship. The phenomenon changes the atmosphere of worship to the extent that the very presence of the living God becomes real. In the following quotation, Tom Smail describes the phenomenon of ‘singing in the Spirit’ in the context of worship as a form of collective religious experience:

Singing in the Spirit by-passes the rational faculties; it reminds us that alongside the praise of the renewed mind there is the praise of the renewed heart that when, it is being evoked by the Spirit, expresses not simply our superficial feelings, but engages the deep primal emotions at the hidden center of our being in our self-offering to the living God. Such praises is direct, spontaneous and simple. It escapes from a complicated conceptuality and a second dependence on such liturgical resources as prayer-books and hymn-books, and responds in immediacy and freedom to the contact with the living Lord that the Spirit makes possible and, in joyous serenity, rejoices and mediates upon his poured-out grace and his revealed glory.³¹

Smail’s description of speaking in tongues in fact reiterates Paul in 1 Cor. 14:14, ‘For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful’. The last expression of the verse, ‘unfruitful’, is a word which as Ralph Martin explains, ‘implies that the human intellect in this kind of ecstatic praying lies dormant, contributing nothing to the process of articulating thoughts into words... It suggests an enraptured fellowship with God when the human spirit is in such deep, hidden communion with the divine Spirit that “words” – at best broken utterances of our secret selves – are formed by a spiritual upsurge requiring no mental effort’.³²

In addition the Spirit brings things into being, gives supernatural revelation and knowledge, gives strength to the weak even to the point of helping them to ‘mount up with wings like eagles, and transforms weaklings into giants. Thus according a very well-known charismatic leader from Ghana, Eastwood Anaba, of the Fountain Gate Chapel,

³⁰ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 96.

³¹ Tom Smail, ‘In Spirit and in Truth: Reflections on Charismatic Worship’, in Tom Smail, Andrew Walker, and Nigel Wright, *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1995), 109-110.

³² Ralph P. Martin, ‘Aspects of Worship in I Corinthians 14:1-25’, in Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (ed.), *Charismatic Experiences in Christian History* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 74.

The Holy Ghost baptism opens the door for us to enter the realm for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. It also blesses our lives with a mighty deposit of divine ability.³³

Pastor Anaba also understands and explains gifts in terms of the principle that informs 'empowerment' and that is ability:

Spiritual gifts...are supernatural abilities of the Holy Ghost borne within the Spirit-filled believer due to the presence of the Holy Ghost in him. It is worthwhile to explain that the Holy Spirit is a Person and therefore resides in the believer with all His ability, wisdom and power.³⁴

In other words when the church meets for worship the Spirit is expected to manifest his presence through the phenomena that I cast as 'signs of the Spirit'. One of the things that make worship in Pentecostal/charismatic services distinctive is that participants worship in expectation. This distinctiveness of Pentecostal worship is explicable in terms of the integration of charismatic experiences into Christian gatherings. The hallmark of 'excellent gifts' according to Paul is to edify the congregation. The creation of space for the use of spiritual gifts enables spontaneity in worship and encourages people to freely functional in their gifts of grace to bless and edify fellow worshippers. This integration of spiritual gifts in worship raises the issue of participation. In the description that Paul gives of worship in 1 Cor. 14:26, 'there appears to have been a great deal of Spirit-led spontaneity on the part of the whole community'.³⁵

Authority and Power

In the light of the reference to Spirit-inspired Israel as a 'vast army' in Ezekiel 37, it is not surprising that contemporary Pentecostals for example image the nature of their movement in militaristic idioms. At one time or the other, the charismatic Pentecostal preacher preaches in military uniforms and in Ghana, one of its key leaders refers to contemporary Pentecostals as 'God's End-time Militia'. What he means is that they are late comers without theological sophistication and training and yet they have been empowered by God to undertake assignments in mission requiring a sense of professionalism and the manifestations of signs and wonders that come only from the Holy Spirit.

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The African independent church worldview of the Holy Spirit as God's power in action has survived in contemporary non-western Pentecostalism. Pastor Steve Mensah is the founder and leader of the Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry in Ghana. In a sermon on Philippians 2, he compared

³³ Eastwood Anaba, *Operating Spiritual Gifts* (Accra: Design Solutions, 1995), 14.a

³⁴ Anaba, *Spiritual Gifts*, 16.

³⁵ Gordon D. Fee, 'The Holy Spirit and Worship in the Pauline Churches', in Gordon D. Fee, *Listening to the Spirit in the Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 95.

the authority of the believer, following the experience of the Spirit, to that of a policeman on traffic control duty. 'When the policeman raises his hand, every vehicle must stop because he has the authority of the government behind him'. Similarly, he noted, 'every believer who is filled with the Spirit has power over demons, principalities and powers'. When the believer 'raises his hand', according to Pastor Mensah, 'every knee must bow': 'sickness knee, poverty knee; and all other knees'. In these hermeneutics, 'the knee' was used as a metaphor for anything that obstructs life and prevents people from enjoying the blessings of God and fullness of life. The point is that the Holy Spirit is the source of power and through him the Spirit-filled believer has been empowered. African Pentecostals give expression to this understanding of power in the words of the popular chorus: 'we conquer Satan, we conquer principalities; we conquer powers; sing hallelujah'.

Empowerment is more than just the shift and elevations that come with belief in Christ. The average Pentecostal-charismatic person is aware of his or her empowerment through the 'authority' and 'power' that the Spirit grants the believer over supernatural powers and evil. Eastwood Anaba tells about countless people who perish because of their unwillingness to 'speak the word of faith'. In one example of how faith works, he tells a story that was reminiscent of the encounter between the disciples of Jesus and demon-possessed boy and how Jesus intervened. One day whilst preaching at a neighbour's church Anaba tells of how an insane man walked in and stated disturbing the meeting. 'The Holy Ghost told me to go down and put the mad man to sleep by touching him with my finger....I put my finger on the man. He immediately dropped on the floor and collapsed for about five hours until we finished the meeting. The power is not in the screaming but in faith in the word of God. He comments:

The authority of the believer in dealing with demons is based on the mandate Jesus gave the church....The Bible says that whatsoever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. The word whatsoever means that there is no problem the believer cannot handle. Impossibility should be ruled out of your vocabulary....We have the mandate to change our environment by speaking the word of faith....We have the mandate to set the oppressed free and our boldness in the exercise of our authority is crucial to the blessing of humanity.³⁶

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In the Pentecostal-charismatic traditions under study here, there is usually no dichotomy made between the physical and spiritual forms of empowerment. This is a movement that shares the primal imagination that we live in a 'sacramental universe' in which the physical is a vehicle for spiritual realities. What this means that the source of empowerment lies within the supernatural and therefore access to that realm is critical for

³⁶ Eastwood Anaba, *The Workability of Faith* (Bolgatanga, Ghana: Desert Leaf Publications, 2004), 38.

strength, grace, vitality, security, well-being, prosperity and success. Indeed life, especially when it throws up misfortune against people is seen in terms of warfare and it explains why Paul's thought that 'we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers' (Eph. 6:12).

The first thing that Paul encourages the Ephesians to do in the midst of the struggle against unseen powerful forces of destruction is to 'put on the whole armour of God'. Critical to the wearing of this armour is the encouragement that the Ephesians must unceasingly: 'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints' (Eph. 6:18).

In other Christian traditions 'pray in the Spirit' can mean something different. Pentecostal-charismatic Christians are adamant that it means to 'pray in tongues' and this is a form of prayer that is very much cherished in that tradition. In contemporary Pentecostal thought, praying in tongues is not just a means of demonstrating that one has been baptized in the Spirit. In addition to all else, it is seen as 'one of the most potent 'weapons' against both physical and spiritual attacks. Thus during deliverance sessions in particular, it is possible to 'confuse' the demons and Satan by praying in the 'language of angels' because the devil, it is widely believed, cannot understand the language of tongues and thus is unable to intercept it the way Daniel's prayers were intercepted.

There have been testimonies in Ghana of even armed robbers and muggers taking to their heels when prayer has been offered in tongues. On a British Airways flight from London to Accra in August 2004, we were faced with a very terrible turbulence over the deserts. As children cried and women wailed with others screaming, a fairly elderly woman sitting right in front of me, burst out in tongues and prayed so loudly in the phenomenon regardless of the wonder on the faces of especially our European passengers. After praying for a close to five minutes the turbulence calmed. What part the tongues played in the calming of the storms would be difficult to tell but I had no doubt in my mind that the woman believed that it had saved the situation.

Empowerment and Ecclesiology

At the beginning of this essay, I referred to the fact that empowerment through the Spirit informs Pentecostal-charismatic understandings of ecclesiology. The significance of tongues in Christian worship, we have also just noted, is related to the use of what St. Paul describes as *charismata pneumatika*, 'spiritual gifts' especially in the context of worship and ministry. When Paul refers to 'spiritual gifts', he is talking about gifts of grace used in ministry that come from God the Holy Spirit. What is most notable in all the available evidence on worship in the Pauline churches is, the common denominator, the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor. 12-14 Paul refers to all the various activities discussed there as 'given by the Holy

Spirit'. So for example The Holy Spirit dispenses the gifts of the Spirit as he wills (12:11).

It is through the experience of the anointing that individuals come to receive and recognize their 'ministries' as apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors. The emphasis on the experiences of the Holy Spirit and the open access to his graces creates conditions in which people can lay claim to different ministries including the traditional ones listed above and even more. People can be led to begin new evangelism projects or independent itinerant ministries and churches sometimes based on the impartation or anointing received from another 'man of God' as Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha.³⁷

Worship activities within Pentecostalism are double directional – toward God, on the one hand, and toward the community, on the other. So for example, prayer represents speech that is directed toward God and prophecy represents speech directed toward the community. Similarly, the singing in Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:18-20 involves 'teaching and admonishing one another' while also 'offering thanksgiving to God'.³⁸ Participation in worship is therefore a participation in ministry because the essence of ministry is to be open to the Holy Spirit. Those who are open to the Spirit then become mediums of his grace to others. When worship as ministry touches others, they are always edified and the purpose of gathering as God's people is also fulfilled. The implication of this for Pentecostal ecclesiology is that any member of the community could be empowered to minister to others through a process that I have often described as the democratization of charisma.

Images and Symbols of Empowerment

We have also seen that Pentecostals sometimes understand empowerment in terms of the 'anointing' of the Holy Spirit. Anointing in Pentecostal discourse thus refers to the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit in life and ministry. Contemporary Pentecostals in particular have instituted 'anointing services' as sacramental processes during which members and leaders may be anointed with oil for all kinds of purposes ranging from healing to the impartation of Holy Spirit power for success and effective ministries. According to Pastor Eastwood Anaba, whose work I cited earlier, 'by the anointing we receive supernatural energy to live our lives beyond our physical and mental abilities'. There are races to run, battles to fight and journeys to undertake he notes, and all these may seem too challenging naturally. However by the anointing, he concludes, 'all things are made possible'.³⁹ Thus the olive oil

³⁷ Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Elijah's Mantle: Ministerial Formation in Contemporary African Christianity' *International Review of Mission* 94, 373 (April 2005), 266.

³⁸ Fee, *Listening to the Spirit*, 96.

³⁹ Anaba, *Releasing God's Glory*, 23.

has become an important symbol of empowerment in contemporary Pentecostal understanding of mission. The advantage of the 'anointed person' according to Anaba 'lies in the fact that he has an abiding presence of God in and around him'. In fact it is the anointing that is supposed to facilitate the transformation of the weak into the strong. In contrast to their enemies, Anaba writes, who depend on skill, oratory, eloquence and acumen, the anointed have more power because a person with anointing can even overtake a chariot as Elijah overtook the chariot of Ahab (1 Kgs. 18:45-46).⁴⁰

In African Pentecostalism, the eagle and the globe remain important symbols of empowerment. The globe represents the international ambitions of modern Pentecostalism and the dove represents the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The strength of the eagle as a bird, its ability to live long, soar in the skies and most importantly have a very far reach, symbolizes for Pentecostals what the Spirit can make out of people. It is a bird that represents in Pentecostal-charismatic thought the power to conduct mission in the uttermost parts of the earth. Most of the leaders of contemporary Pentecostalism in Africa, if one is careful to listen to testimonies, are persons who have come from nowhere and whom the Lord has taken somewhere in terms of achievements in life and ministry. Most of them talk and preach about their humble beginnings and lack of theological sophistication and yet have been raised by God to influence a wide range of people including members of governments and the political establishment. Some in the leadership identify with Paul's 'scum of the earth' imagery and in particular his reference to how God chooses the weak and dishonourable things of the earth to shame the wise.

Conclusion

In Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity prayer is the principal means of empowerment for the Christian. Thus the basic justification for the existence of the Pentecostal movement that older ecclesial traditions have failed woefully to deliver the spiritual and charismatic experiences prophesied about in the Bible and which so many seekers long for. The whole Pentecostal phenomenon has to be credited for reminding the traditional mission churches of the importance of experience and empowerment in Christian faith and life. Here I reiterate the words of James D.G. Dunn that the restoration of *experience* means the rediscovery that when we talk of the Spirit in biblical terms we are talking about the inspiring, transforming, and empowering *experience* of the grace of God in the life of the believer and the church. Contemporary Pentecostalism challenges us 'to recognize the importance of the emotional and non-rational in a fully integrated faith and

⁴⁰ Anaba, *Releasing God's Glory*, 24.

life, to give place to these less structured and less predictable elements in our worship'.⁴¹

The Pentecostal-charismatic emphasis on empowerment remains true to the biblical tradition, the work of the Holy Spirit as we have come to know it, and the actual experiences of people within the movement. It has implications for individual lives and ministries and for understanding Pentecostal ecclesiology including dynamism in worship and the worldwide significance that the movement has acquired. The symbols of empowerment that we have referred to such as the olive oil, the dove, the eagle and the globe, all represent a movement for which the Holy Spirit is theologically speaking, the *presence* and power of God among his people. In that sense the Pentecostal-charismatic movement presents itself as the visible manifestation and example of the truth in the words of Jesus 'and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth'.



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⁴¹ James D.G. Dunn, 'Ministry and the Ministry: The Charismatic Renewal's Challenge to Traditional Ecclesiology', in Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (ed.), *Charismatic Experiences in Christian Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 81.

**‘EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE, BUT NOT
EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL’ (1 COR. 10:23):
PNEUMATOLOGICAL CHRISTOLOGY OF THE
PAROUSIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST AND (AB)USES OF
SPIRITUAL POWER IN NIGERIAN PENTECOSTALISM**

Innocent Ogueri Aguwuom

Introduction

The interaction of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian forms and the forms of the older historic confessional churches in Nigeria is characterized by mutual polemic. This is especially the case with the Roman Catholic Church. In this polemic, Pentecostals criticize what they regard as the ‘spiritless’ forms of the Roman Catholic Church while the Catholics in turn criticize what they perceive as misrepresentation of the Holy Spirit as an agent of confusion in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Both accusations sometimes or to some extent appear to be justified by emergent details. Also, both criticisms have to do with approaches to the Holy Spirit’s power (charisms) and empowerment. They are therefore understandable in relation to the concept of ‘freedom of the Spirit’. The concept of ‘freedom of the Spirit’ is essential to the dynamism of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in its diverse expressions worldwide. The connection is forged by what has been identified as an ‘ideology of experience’ in Pentecostal-Charismatic conversion. According to this ideology, the knowledge and power of God are manifestly accessible and relevant to believers’ conscious lives. It presents a scheme in which Christian conversion becomes a personal encounter and experience of God rather than intellectual assent to some doctrinal formulation.¹ Christian conversion and life are cast in experiential terms – relevantly, a direct personal experience of and empowerment by the Holy Spirit of God.

This experiential appropriation of the Christian faith in modern times followed a gradual rediscovery of the active role of the Holy Spirit and pneumatology beginning with traditions of radical reformation and evangelical revivalism. This culminated in the event of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity since the beginnings of the 20th century. In actual

¹ See Killian McDonnell, ‘The Ideology of Pentecostal Conversion’, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 5 (1968), 105-126.

practice, the experiential dynamic of 'freedom of the Spirit' has constituted a source of strength as well as of weakness for Pentecostals and Charismatics. The implied tension makes the appropriation of the Spirit's power entangled most times in contradictory ambivalence. On a positive side, 'freedom of the Spirit' is identified as the 'spiritual freedom to "incarnate" the gospel anew into diverse cultures', and being Pentecostal or Charismatic becomes connected with an active affirmation of this spiritual freedom.² In effect, the feature of 'freedom of the Spirit' rendered Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity flexible and adaptable, and often with transforming effects, in diverse socio-cultural contexts³ as well as in the context of global world systems.⁴ To a great extent it accounts for the dynamism and spread of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Negatively, the feature of 'freedom of the Spirit' easily becomes a cover or pretext for all imaginable forms of excess in the name of experience of spiritual power and manifestation of spiritual creativity. This twist to the Pentecostal-Charismatic experiential dynamic has warranted fears that it could degenerate into some Christian variant of the 'contemporary celebration of "feeling" and the endless search for new sources of arousal and exhilaration.'⁵ There is also the danger of outright abuses of the Spirit's power and 'freedom of the Spirit' for legitimating negative upsurges of the self.

Such extreme manifestations may warrant criticisms of misrepresentation of the Holy Spirit as an agent of confusion, but should they justify a principled ruling-out of personal experiential appropriation of

² Juan Sepulveda, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism and the Chilean Experience', in Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: A Global Perspective on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1999), 111-34.

³ See Allan H. Anderson, 'The Gospel and Culture in Pentecostal Mission in the Third World', *Missionalia* 27 (1999), 221; Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origin and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 133, and Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 147.

⁴ André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 3-4.

⁵ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 313. Tony Walter and Steve Hunt remark on this feature of unending spiral of yearning for ever new spiritual experience among Pentecostals, 'for spiritual experience to be sufficiently noteworthy to be taken as evidence of God's power acting in the world, this year's experience must cap up with last year's. To use charismatic jargon, 'to be on the cutting edge of where God is at' requires a constant cranking up of experience into the evermore wonderful and miraculous, a process that cannot go on forever and is in imminent danger of collapsing in on itself.' See 'Introduction: The Charismatic Movement and Contemporary Social Change', *Religion* 28 (1998), 220.

the Holy Spirit's power? When does openness to and experience of spiritual power turn into abuse and when does control of abuse of spiritual power degenerate into stifling of the Spirit? How best can the tension inherent in the concept of 'freedom of the Spirit' be sustained without pandering to the extremes of either abuse or stifling of the Spirit? In response to the above problematic and particularly the polemical tones in which it finds expression in Nigerian Christianity, a Pentecostal-Charismatic ministry – the Parousian Church of Christ – in Nigeria proposes some answers in their vision of Christian theology and practice. This paper is an analytical presentation of this response to the problematic tension in the concept and practice of 'freedom of the Spirit' from the angle of the pneumatological Christology content of the teachings and practices of the Parousian Church of Christ.

Abuses of the Spirit's Power in Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity

Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Nigeria began with indigenous charismatic revivals within the Anglican evangelical tradition between 1910 and the 1940s.⁶ Some of the churches that developed from these revival movements extended invitations to western classical Pentecostal groups who adopted their churches as basis for their missions in Nigeria. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity drew a fresh impulse that launched it to greater visibility and salience in the Nigerian religious scene from 1970 when the revival of evangelical student movements assumed a definite Pentecostalist turn. This revival generated many independent Pentecostal-Charismatic ministries. By the second half of the 1970s the Charismatic Renewal movements of the older Christian denominations entered Nigeria. From the end of the 1970s a combination of various factors, ripple effects of the civil war (1967-1970) which awakened indigenous religious needs and dispositions, greater influx of foreign Pentecostal influences, socio-economic breakdown, failure of the older mission churches to adequately contextualize their church forms, and powerful moves of the finger of God engendered a proliferation of the movements. By the dawn of the new millennium, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity made a revolutionary turn into a popular religious culture that effectively is realizing a vernacularisation and contextualization of Christianity in Nigeria. Today, it commands a vast and amorphous public that cuts across all social strata and religious affiliation and constitutes the salient phase of Christianity in Nigeria.

⁶ For a concise introduction to these earliest charismatic revivals in Nigeria, see Deji Ayegboyan and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective* (Lagos: Greater Height Publications, 1997); also Deji Ayegboyan and F.K. Asonzeh Ukah, 'Taxonomy of Churches in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective', *Orita* 34:1-2 (June & Dec, 2002), 68-86.

The rise to salience of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Nigeria within the time frame of two decades is a function of its inner dynamic of freedom of the Spirit. Nigerian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity therefore has its own measure of abuses of the power of the Spirit. Some Pentecostal groups in Nigeria in order to appear 'modern' adopt and permit many ostentatious practices that are culturally and spiritually unnecessary. Instances are encouragement of provocative dressing by women, use of faddish language that mostly feature western accents and slangs in speech, pastors frying their hair, excessive histrionics intended to enhance appeal, and whatever it might take to be trendy. A prominent Nigerian scholar classifies such innocuous baggage as 'mesmerist psychology'.⁷

There is also the legitimating of ambition to found churches on the basis of revelation and the democratization of spiritual power. This is an important factor in the proliferation of churches and ministries covering internal wrangling and rivalries, authority tussles, greedy ambitions, and raises the critical question of the necessity of inflicting 'on one square mile of a backwoods people as many as fifteen churches of different sects?'⁸ This expresses an extreme tendency in the church-planting strategy. An extension of this is the problems it poses for organization as some pastors lay claim to revelation to justify personal opinions including those selfishly motivated.

The experiential ideology also encourages the legitimating of excessive ambitions for material acquisition.⁹ There is also the question of flamboyant

⁷ Mark Okoro Chijioko, *Ugwumba: The Greatness of a People*, Ahiajoku Lectures (Owerri: Government Printers, 1989), 30-31. He does not really condemn these but characterizes what he describes as 'religious worship in which to quake at prayers to the point of self-flagellations and shout ostentatious 'amens' exultantly, almost, truculently' to be a 'churchism' that is contrary to 'signs of genuine humble communion with one's God in contrition'. He rejects this as the example of saintliness or devotion that should be allowed to dominantly engage the time of the youth.

⁸ See Chijioko, *Ugwumba*, 31. A detailed expression of this other side of the proliferation of Pentecostal-Charismatic movements in Nigeria is Fidelis K. Obiora, *The Divine Deceit: Business in Religion* (Enugu: Optimal Publishers, 1998), a work that is however burdened with a Catholic polemical bias that is almost vitriolic in its condemnation of everything about the Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Ruth Marshall-Fratani indicates how this problem generates abuse of the church-planting strategy by encouraging factionalism and schism, 'many popular churches began as small, intimate house fellowships, and many young Christians with pastoral ambitions now see the fellowships largely in terms of its potential to grow and become institutionalized'. See "'God is not a Democrat": Pentecostalism and Democratization in Nigeria', in Paul Gifford (ed.), *The Christian Churches and the Democratization of Africa* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 255.

⁹ Marshall-Fratani narrates the incident of Pastor Chris Okotie, one of the foremost prosperity preachers who bought a 0.8 million naira worth BMW for his wife and explained it in church on basis of James 1:17, 'Every good gift and every perfect

show of such wealth by many of the Pentecostal pastors and evangelists.¹⁰ This is the extreme side of the prosperity message used by some Pentecostal pastors who exploit people to enrich themselves. There is the general impression that some are driven to found churches for economic reasons since they are sure of getting followers. Some Pentecostal church founders, like Tenitope B. Joshua of The Synagogue of All Nations Church,¹¹ are being accused of practicing occultism in their churches.

Further fallout of the experiential ideology in the appropriation of spiritual power is assumption of a high ground of experiential spiritual/religious frame. This degenerates into actual problems of fomenting interpersonal dissensions, destroying kinship relationship structures and promoting the culture of individualism by explaining every problem situation as evil attack and naming actual persons – who mostly are family relations, friends, co-workers, or still one's perceived enemies – as responsible.¹² It also manifests in exclusive interpretation of the born-again experience and conscious generation of alterity by demonization of other religious or Christian forms. The demonization of the older Christian churches and Islam are seen as damping ecumenical endeavours¹³ and efforts at dialogue with Islam.¹⁴ The condemnation and campaign against traditional religious and cultural forms by some Pentecostals and Charismatics is also perceived as retrogressing the developing process of culture-gospel interface,¹⁵ and portending a critical disruption of identity on

gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights'. See "'God Is Not a Democrat'", 258.

¹⁰ *Newswatch*, a popular news magazine in Nigeria, recently ran two cover features that represent the aspects of power and financial prosperity in Pentecostalism in Nigeria today. The first titled, '50 Most Powerful Pastors in Nigeria', *Newswatch*, 5 August 2002, 20-30; and the second titled, 'The Most Highly Paid Pastors', *Newswatch*, 22 December 2002, which details the financial attractions and involvements in Pentecostal crusades in Nigeria.

¹¹ For some details about T.B Joshua's theology and practices, and assessment of these, see Bill Randles, 'T.B. Joshua of Lagos, Nigeria' (<http://www.bibleguide.com/articles/english/tbjoshua.htm>), access 2 August, 2002. Also, an interview with T.B Joshua with commentaries by the internet based Let Us Reason Ministries, 'Clueless in Nigeria?' (<http://www.letusreason.org/Poptea8.htm>), access 2 August, 2002.

¹² See Hackett, 'Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (1998), 261; Chijioke, *Ugwumba*, 31.

¹³ See Mercy A. Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995), referred to in Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Estranged Bedfellows? The Demonisation of the Aladura in African Pentecostal Rhetoric', *Missionalia* 28 (2000), 122.

¹⁴ See I.M. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan: IFRA, 1995).

¹⁵ See Adrian Hastings, *African Catholicism: Essays in Discovery* (London: SCM, 1989). Also P. Kemdirim and M.A. Oduyoye (ed.), *Women, Culture and*

those who swallow it. This is creating so many problems on the ground making it difficult to appreciate the objective significance of the movements.

The Need for and Calls for Stemming the Tensions

The above shows that the flow of strength and weakness from a specific feature of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, the practice of freedom of the Spirit, entangles the experience and appropriations of the Spirit's power in inherent ambivalence. In the Nigerian context, it creates difficulty in appreciating the effect of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in the general society. A constructive assessment will show that the Pentecostals are succeeding in permeating all spheres of life and that Pentecostalism represents a significant factor in the economic and political aspects of the national life today.¹⁶ It has succeeded in colonizing the religious sphere: supplying the language, personnel, ritual settings, shaping the questions and articulating the answers in the way that the older churches are not doing. Precisely because of this, the movements are succeeding with their language of prayer, righteousness, power and prosperity. The dominance of the pentecostalist language on the popular spaces has set religiosity in Nigeria on a fast lane. It is as if any Christian group or religious group that wants to be relevant must pentecostalise, that is, adopt the language of Pentecostalism at least to some significant extent, because that is where the people are. There is, therefore, no doubt that Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is breeding a good number of saints, good Christian women and men, whose spiritual quests are earnest and honest. These are making some change in the society. But the problem is that the wave of crime and corruption in the society in which Pentecostal outfits are implicated appear to far out-weigh the voluminous religiosity.

An illustration of this disparity between voluminous religiosity and living out of the religious principles in practice is seen in the following observation of a concerned Nigerian. He worries that after all the noise about being born-again,

[N]obody cares to bear the fruits of God's Spirit, namely, love for one another, sense of service and responsibility to God and fellow man, sincerity and accountability, social justice, etc. This is the reason why most prostitutes

Theological Education (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 1998), 35, refer to the Pentecostals in the observation, 'Today we have Christian missions in Africa who pour spite on African culture in its totality because of the negative aspects and yet subject their women members to exclusions and marginalizations said to be demanded by the Bible.... They are establishing Bible Colleges and Universities and will soon flood Africa with a theology...making Africans hate themselves'. Quoted in Kalu, 'Estranged Bedfellows?', 121-22.

¹⁶ See Ogbu U. Kalu, 'The Practice of Victorious Life: Pentecostal Political Theology and Practice in Nigeria, 1970-1996', *Mission* 5 (1998), 229-55.

in Lagos go to Church on Sundays and all 419 practitioners are regular faces in places of worship and all past and present Nigeria leaders are very religious, in fact, fanatically so.¹⁷

Such feelings are encouraged by the signs of double standard in the practices of some Pentecostal pastors and members that flow from abuse of spiritual power.

The above tensions have generated discussions on Pentecostal-Charismatic 'critical tradition'.¹⁸ Simon Chan, a professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College, Singapore, calling for more systematic traditioning warns, 'when experience is inadequately conceptualized, what is communicated to the next generation is a constricted concept of experience, and this concept will in turn evoke an equally narrow experience'.¹⁹ Chan has in mind the developments in Toronto and Pensacola, where Pentecostal worship turns up wide-ranging manifestations that appear too spectacular and unnecessary, but his warning applies to developments we have seen in Nigeria. I think what Chan means by 'need for systematisation'²⁰ is a conscious and guided traditioning. Many Pentecostals are not unaware of the danger and so are awake to this need, even in Nigeria.²¹ The problem remains the limits of systematization and traditioning which will not compromise the inner dynamism of the Spirit

¹⁷ This comes from an e-mail exchange between Tonye David-West, a Nigerian political scientist who writes features for Nigeriaworld.com, with a friend of his in Nigeria captures aptly the state of ambiguity or tension that beguiles Pentecostalism in Nigeria. The above communication followed a bemoaning of the economic and social insecurity people are suffering in Nigeria and the confession that the only socialization in Nigeria is through the 'born-again' churches and their ever 'ingenious' pastors as well as through 'sharia gatherings'. See Tonye David-West, 'RE: The Harvard of Nigeria...', *Nigeria World Feature, Tonye's World* (<http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/publication/david-west/050701.html>), access 6 Sept, 2002.

¹⁸ See Walter J. Hollenweger, 'The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 7-17.

¹⁹ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Academic Press, 2000), 10.

²⁰ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, 24-31.

²¹ See for example, Bosun Emmanuel Ajayi, *Beware of Success: Calling the Church back to the Narrow Path* (Enugu: El 'Demak, 2001). Actual developments on this angle are sounded in the condemnation of the tendency to democratic decisions, which flows from difficulties to exact a decision in gatherings where all feel a subjective custody of the right knowledge by Pastor Adeboye, president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria in a 1993 leadership conference, 'Everybody must take orders from the commander-in-chief. No arguments, no debates.... God is not a democrat... I want the PFN to become an invading army. I don't want it to become a social club.... When God has spoken and we say this is the way we shall go, someone will say, let us vote. I can tell you, whenever you go to vote, the majority will vote for the devil'. Quoted in Marshall-Fratani, "'God Is Not a Democrat'", 257.

out of which flows the positive strengths of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity as well. The tension is not easy to resolve.

The tension stands out when one considers the historical horizon over which Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity stands out. Veli-Matti Karkkainen rightly points to a ‘pneumatological deficit’ characterizing Latin Christianity until the event of Pentecostalism. He describes this deficit as a sustained ‘ambiguous experience with charismatic and prophetic movements which led church leaders to try to control the work of the Spirit out of fears of chaos and lack of order’, without having hitherto worked out criteria for delineating what consists in heretical pneumatology.²² This became theologically normalized in the official pneumatology of the Roman Catholic Church. A recent presentation is by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger who traces it to Augustine. While reflecting on Augustine’s view on the relationship between spirituality and pneumatology, Ratzinger recalls that Augustine offers three conditions for speaking about the Holy Spirit: 1) It cannot be based on pure theory but must touch on experienced reality, 2) Experience alone does not suffice, but must be tested and tried so that ‘one’s own spirit does not take the place of the Holy Spirit, and 3) The originality of an individual theologian talking about the Spirit must be replaced by the communal discernment of the whole church, which is guided by the same Spirit.²³ From this, Ratzinger concludes that the importance of submitting one’s experience of the Spirit to the control and testing of the church is not to be overemphasized. The difficulty with this stance is that even the historic openness of the Vatican II Council’s *Dei Verbum* in encouraging the spiritual charisms is subjected to testing and approval of church authorities. The experience in Nigeria is that basing on *Dei Verbum* 12, Catholic Church authorities justify a counter-demonization of Pentecostals and Charismatics and a policy of containment in response to incidence of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian forms within it.

It is in the context of both extremes of excess and stifling in defining experience of the Spirit’s power that a Catholic Pentecostal ministry, which later became the Parousian Church of Christ, emerges and posits itself as a critique of both the ‘spiritless’ forms of the older Christian churches and the excesses in some of the Pentecostal-Charismatic forms.

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²² Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 18.

²³ Joseph Ratzinger, ‘The Holy Spirit as Communion: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine’, *Communio* 25 (1998), 325.

The Parousian Church of Christ and Experience of the Spirit's Power

The Ministry of the Parousian Church of Christ

The Parousian Church of Christ is a charismatic ministry that began within the Roman Catholic Church in southeast Nigeria. During its Roman Catholic days, it was known as the Family of Jesus Crucified Ministries. It was started by a Roman Catholic priest, Rev Peter Ifeanyi Anozia. Peter Anozia was ordained a priest in Rome in 1966. He studied theology, anthropology and sacred music. After his studies he taught apologetics and ecclesiology in the seminary for seven years (1970-1977). He was appointed to government services, first as director of youth services and later as director of culture (1974-1979 and 1985-1987). After teaching in the seminary, he took a teaching appointment at the Alvan Ikoku College of Education in Owerri. He taught music, ethics and acted as guidance counsellor (1979-1987). While in the Alvan College of Education, he came into contact with the members of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. According to Peter Anozia, this contact initially challenged his best intellectual experience and convictions especially about Christianity, though he responded to their activities with both scepticism and curious interest.²⁴ He later began an active charismatic prayer ministry with the group which met on Wednesdays at 8.00 pm in the nearby premises of the Government College Owerri. It was in the context of the busy life of teacher, guidance counsellor, government service worker, and challenges of the activities and practices of the Charismatics that Peter Anozia had his initial spiritual experience in August 1986.

Peter Anozia's dilation of his spiritual experience, which he identifies as baptism of the Holy Spirit, comes out in terms of an encounter with Jesus.²⁵

²⁴ Peter Anozia points to the bold fervours with which these young men and women charismatic members who did not study philosophy and theology engaged in evangelization, the exemplary holiness they tried to sustain in their daily living in the campus, and their daring in challenging priest and expert in theology like him towards the same measure of holy living informed by the Christian Bible. Of more intrigue to him were the phenomena of prophecy and speaking in tongues which he witnessed in their prayer sessions. He was able to recognize major spoken languages as well as dead languages like Greek, Syriac and Latin; yet these people never learnt these languages and did not understand what they were speaking. An interview with Peter Anozia, no. 1 (Brass Close Agbara Estate, Badagry Road, Lagos, March 3, 2004).

²⁵ Responding to a question on divine illumination, Peter Anozia explains this encounter with Jesus as the culmination of a gradual process which elicits an option for and commitment to Jesus that is irrevocable and involves every second of one's life. See Ambrose M. Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message: Peter Anozia* (Onitsha: Maranatha Educational Publishing, 1992), vol. 1, 22.

This leaves the impression that it is Jesus who gives him the gift of the spiritual charisms of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

Besides being an encounter with Jesus, there is also the undertone that yielding to the Spirit, the life in the Spirit so to say, is surrender to the indwelling of Christ's Spirit so that Christ himself will use the individual. The spiritual life becomes a submission of spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties to Christ in the Spirit.

The commissioning to begin the ministry came the following month in Rome on September 14, 1986, the feast of the exultation of the cross, while he was praying at the Temple for the Glorification of the Holy Spirit at Palestrina. According to Peter Anozia, he received detailed description about the name and objective of the ministry. The Family of Jesus Crucified is to be made up of men and women who are already genuinely dedicated to doing the will of God and living a life of holiness and perfection. They are in every place, among all peoples and of every Christian affiliation. They are distinguished by a mark of the *tau* on their foreheads and Peter Anozia was given the gift of recognizing them wherever he encounters them and engaging them. He will later describe the Family of Jesus Crucified Ministries as

a world-wide organization, established by the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to embrace men on whom the Lord has placed His seal; the seal which must be made manifest on the last day, on all who will be placed at the right hand of Jesus. The Lord has even now, placed that seal on some people, and has chosen them for the work of preparing mankind; for the second coming of Jesus Christ.²⁶

They are to live a Franciscan spirituality, characterized by poverty, joy, spreading the gospel and adopt the Sermon on the Mount as their constitution. Their work is to, through the Church, prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. In working with the Church, they are to strive to realize the unity of the Church of Christ. Because of the deep connection with the exultation of the cross and the Franciscan spirituality, the *tau*-cross which is the Franciscan sign is given to them as the emblem of their group.

The fullest theological and ecclesial grounding of the ministry took place between November 1989 and March 1994 while Peter Anozia was posted to St. Mary's parish Azumini. With the Family of Jesus Crucified ministry providing Pentecostal-charismatic verve in support of the normal Roman Catholic sacramental framework, Azumini became the most popular catholic charismatic pilgrimage site in the first quarter of the 1990s. When attempts to get Peter Anozia and members of his ministry to revert to the usual Roman Catholic way of doing church were not heeded, he was

²⁶ Cited in Gloria Ngozi Ahanonu, 'The Impact of the Holy Spirit in the Family of Jesus Crucified Ministries, in the Pentecostal Catholic Assembly in Azumini Ndoki, Abia State' (Bachelors thesis, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria, 1995), 61.

suspended and removed from the parish in a letter of 18 March 1994. The concern was that his involvement in 'Pentecostal Charismatism has had deleterious effects on his priestly functions'. The ministry re-established independently as the Parousian Church of Christ.

Pneumatological Christology in the Parousian Theological Scheme

KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH IN GOD

The understanding of the nature of God within the theological scheme of the Parousian Church of Christ is complex and is not systematically articulated. It is however easily perceptible since it is incessantly referred back to in the many messages – preached, recorded or written – that form the teaching style of the group. Peter Anozia does not make any effort to prove the existence of God. That there is God is taken for granted, it is a sublime truth imbued by a religious disposition that is native to him and became only strengthened by his spiritual experience; it therefore requires no further demonstration. This religious disposition, which holds that natural knowledge of God precedes the knowledge of faith arrived through reasoning, is a feature of Igbo indigenous religion. Peter Anozia already in his doctoral thesis defended in 1968 underlines that in Igbo religion the experience of the saving divine reality precedes knowledge of faith in that divine reality. The thesis further acknowledges that this insight is not precisely defined in Roman Catholic theology but has parallel in Jewish religious experience. In that thesis he writes:

Parting from the created universe, man (in this case, the Igbo) came to develop his idea of God the provident Creator. It does, however, indicate that deep down in the human soul is implanted a need for God which impels him to believe in, or search for God, before he reasons about it. It is worth remarking here that while the first Vatican Council taught that man by the use of the natural light of reason could arrive at the existence of God, it did not teach that *de facto* man did so. Nor did the Council teach that the natural knowledge of God must precede the knowledge of faith either in origin or in time. It merely implied that such a procedure was possible.²⁷

This means that like Israel, the Igbos rose from the God of history to the God of creation, from God as saviour to God as creator.²⁸

In his theological scheme, the above insight breaks down to a mix of both negative and affirmative language in presenting the nature of God. The negative language is seen in the presentation of God as beyond every possible effort of human intellection or reason to grasp Him.

²⁷ Ifeanyichukwu P. Anozia, 'The Religious Import of Igbo Names' (doctoral thesis, Pontificia Universtas Urbaniana 'De Propaganda Fide', Rome, 1968).

²⁸ Anozia, 'The Religious Import of Igbo Names', 232-34.

How do men find God, how do men find Jesus? No one can find God unless God reveals Himself to that person. No man by his own efforts can find God. God is infinitely beyond what any man can find. God is altogether transcendent. No man can find God.²⁹

This is an extrapolation of words of God in the Bible, 'my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways' (Is. 55:8),³⁰ and understands God to be beyond the determinative or over-determinating grasp of man. Even the will of God is equally cast in the same negative language: 'no one knows the will of God until it is revealed by God, because the will of God is God' and 'man's intellect can never arrive at knowing what God wants. It must therefore be revealed to man by God himself'.³¹ This last statement opens up the consideration that this God whose transcendence is beyond human rational capacity can nevertheless be known. But God alone makes it possible by revealing God-*self*. Anozia says:

Only God is God. There is no one else but God. God is everything. Nothing is, but God. Everything you see manifests God. Nobody can contest that. Only God is. Nothing could be but God. Everything that is, is a revelation of God. The plants reveal God. The rivers reveal God. The mountains reveal God. The flowers reveal God. Man in a special way reveals God, and that is so.³²

The above propositions are presented in affirmative language with nuances that suggest a struggle to avoid detracting from the ineffable sublimity of God. This means that God suffuses the whole of reality in such a way that to know the deep things of God one must have to know the whole of reality. God is therefore that excess to reality which the sensation or intellection of individual real things that nevertheless embody reality cannot grasp. In other words, everything exists in God without any specific existent thing exhausting God in such a way that God can be said to be *every*-thing and *no*-thing at the same time. The implication of this scheme for divine – human relations is that the otherwise inscrutable God is available and accessible to human experience as saving will-to-life. Three affirmative expressions capture all we are saying above: only God is God (no-thing and no-one else is God); only God is (and everything that is, is a revelation of God); and the will of God is God himself (the propelling force of all reality is the will of God).

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²⁹ See Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 1:24.

³⁰ The quotation is taken from *New International Version*.

³¹ Peter I. Anozia, *Discernment of Spirits*, Maranatha Prophetic Series 3 (Onitsha: Maranatha Educational Publishing, 1995), 14, 15.

³² See Ambrose M. Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message: Peter Anozia* (Onitsha: Maranatha Educational Publishing, 1994), vol. 2, 213.

GOD'S SELF REVELATION AND SAVING GRACE IN JESUS CHRIST

A second pillar of the Parousian theology is the belief that the human person needs experience of the saving will of God as a matter of necessity. The necessity for salvation is predicated on an anthropology that appreciates the lofty purpose of the human person in God as precedent to and more important than the incapacity of human persons to know and do the will of God on their own. As already noted, 'God made man for God's own purpose', and again 'man in a special way reveals God'. Peter Anozia derives these propositions from the biblical perspective that God made the human species in his image and likeness. In a message titled 'Born of God', he clarifies on this.

Man has been made by God to be like God. Image and likeness of God must be like God. Man is image of God truly when he is one with God, only then can he do good because God is doing it for him, because God in him begins to lead him to do the good.³³

This suggests that the ultimate purpose and meaning of human beings derive from God. Human beings must therefore tend towards God in order to understand themselves. Their fulfilment is in greater realization of the image of God which is their higher nature. The human person is not understood as simply a composite duality of body and soul, with the soul serving as the higher principle; but is a much more complex composite of body, mind (or soul) and spirit. The spirit is considered as the image of God in the human person constituting the life principle or force. The human spirit is therefore this higher nature where the human person shares in and realizes the likeness of the divine Spirit.

The experience of sin mars human persons from realizing their fulfilment in God. According to Anozia, sin is the pervasive influence of human self will (free-will) which is always in opposition to the propelling force of the will of God. In his own words, 'only what God does is in agreement with the will of God; anything you do of your own accord is sinful ... Free-will can only do what is sinful'.³⁴ In a passage of *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, where he responds to a question on 'Obedience and Doing the Will of God', he justifies this suspicion of human free-will by alluding to the fundamental corruption of human nature in the sin of Adam.

The will of God is that man should obey Him on earth even as He is obeyed in heaven. Christians have been thought by Jesus to pray accordingly, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven'. That is the will of God. It was so with Adam for hundreds of years before he sinned. And through this disobedience sin came into the world and sin became the legacy of all men –

³³ J.K. Alleluyanatha (Peter I. Anozia), *Born of God*, Gethsemane Message, Electronic Recording (Lagos: FJC Productions).

³⁴ Alleluyanatha, *Born of God*.

for there is a law of sin in every man who has descended from Adam, as the Bible makes clear to us.³⁵

Sin therefore is the failure to obey God, failure to do the will of God even when God has revealed it in the human spirit. It is the natural propensity of the lower nature of human person to will and gratify what the self wants and desires as against what God wills. Sin therefore distracts human beings from their higher purpose and fulfilment in God and they are helpless to change this situation. Only God can help them out because only God can do the will of God since the will of God is God and only God knows the will of God. So, human incapacity is salvaged by human purpose in God and only God can affect its realization.

God has provided this help in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Jesus Christ is at once human and divine person, who died on the cross to make the salvation of humanity realizable. He is the perfect and true image of God and through him all things were made; he is therefore the perfect and fullest revelation of God, and in him the entire creation is restored to their purpose in God:

Salvation is Jesus! Only Jesus can save! There is no salvation outside Jesus. When Jesus saves you, he sanctifies you...to be sanctified means to be justified! What does it mean to be justified? It means God is reckoning you now as being righteous. God is saying you are righteous. When God says you are righteous, you have been justified, you have been sanctified; and if you have been sanctified, you have been saved. Only Jesus can bring this about in us!³⁶

In *The Catholic Priest with a Message* he explains, 'No man has direct access to God. Therefore there is only one religion and Jesus is that religion. Through him everybody must come to God. There is no other way to God except through Jesus. Anyone trying to have access to God without Jesus is wasting his time'.³⁷ Jesus brings about this sanctification and Justification that leads to salvation through his unwavering obedience to the will of God by denying himself to the point of death on the cross. The great significance of the cross in this scheme is that it is an efficient example as well as potent symbol of complete yielding and obedience to the will of God. It atones for the disobedience of humanity and invites all women and men to appropriate this finished work of atonement by faith alone through total repentance. Anozia elaborates on this all-important necessity of Jesus for salvation in a message on repentance and holiness.

When Jesus abides in you, and you are in him, and he works while in you, what Jesus did is attributed unto you. This is the key principle for understanding prayer, and understanding how to work with God. It is what Jesus did, not what you do. Jesus has done everything on the cross. There is

³⁵ See Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 2: 67.

³⁶ Peter I. Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink: A Call to Repentance and Holiness*, Maranatha Prophetic Series 1 (Onitsha: Maranatha Educational Publishing, 1993), 32.

³⁷ Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 2: 208.

nothing left to be done. While you are in him, he uses you to help people, bringing the salvation won on the cross to reach all men. Then it is attributed unto you.³⁸

Nothing else is required of women and men of all times, places and races except to repent and believe in Jesus; then Jesus comes into them and begins to do the will of God in them.

The elaboration we cited above comes in the context of explaining what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth as Jesus prescribed in the Gospel of John chapter four: to worship in spirit and truth means to abide in Jesus. This insight makes the work of atonement achieved by Jesus to apply to all women and men of all times, places and races; of all churches, Christian denominations, and all religions. The implied indiscriminate application of the saving work of Jesus does not mean that everyone must become a Christian in order to know Jesus and for Jesus to be in them:

Only God is God. Jesus is God. He made all things and everything he made reveals him. Therefore, through the things God has made, the revelation of God has been made available to man. And the God you discover through creation is Jesus who made all things. Men may believe in God through the evidence of creation. That means they believe in Jesus. Do they call him Jesus? No! Not even the Jews call him Jesus. It is the Christians that call God Jesus. Therefore, you can believe in Jesus without knowing him by the name, Jesus. So, we are back to what we have said: there is only one religion, only one religion of God. It is Jesus. Whoever has any truth, that truth is Jesus. There are no two truths. Jesus said, 'I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life...'. So, there is no truth outside Jesus. Any truth anybody grasps is Jesus. Does the person know? He may not know. As we have said before, he may not call that truth Jesus, but if it is truth that he really grasps, it is Jesus. For all truth emanates from Jesus.³⁹

What we glean from the above is that just as only God is God, only God saves; and the salvation of God is Jesus Christ. The theological dynamics underlining Peter Anozia's understanding of Jesus Christ goes back to his doctoral thesis. In demonstrating the universal relevance of the eternally subsistent Word-incarnate he resorted to wisdom Christology etched in the sapiential literature and relevant New Testament passages (Mt 11:19; Lk. 11:49; 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 1:16-17 and Jn. 1:1-18). Jesus is therefore the personal manifestation of God's creative wisdom which at all times and in all cultures and places realizes God's salvific interest in the world.⁴⁰ His illuminating presence enables a natural religiosity in humans created in the image and likeness of God. The expression of this natural religiosity is according to socio-religious institutions determined by the diverse environmental configurations of the world which are nevertheless pre-

³⁸ Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink*, 26.

³⁹ See Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 2:208.

⁴⁰ Anozia, *The Religious Import of Igbo Names*, 257-64.

ordained by God in view of salvation in Christ.⁴¹ So, the divine wisdom or word that creates the universe is Jesus Christ: only God is God and Jesus Christ is God as well as the saving will of God available to all creation that came to being through him and is sustained in being in him.

From Peter Anozia's language, the salvation of God in Jesus Christ involves a two-way traffic. One is that Jesus is able to be in all things and without him they cannot exist. The other is that things, especially animate creatures with spirit are able to abide in Jesus (live a Jesus-controlled life). In the case of human beings, the first movement destroys their lapsarian nature with its law of sin and death and enables openness to the divine nature with its law of the spirit and the capacity (obedience of faith) for God. This is a function of the divine (Holy Spirit) Spirit who applies the creative and saving presence of Jesus (God) to each individual human spirit. It operates on level of natural knowledge and experience of God as provident and saving Spirit. By the second movement, human beings are able to, through a conscious renunciation of their sins and a faith-option, enter into Jesus (acceptance and acknowledgment). In Jesus, the new law of the spirit constitutes them in a new way into unity in Christ and into children of God: they become born of the Spirit, born-again, and born of God. The vision of salvation envisaged here is beyond the traditional *imitatio christi*, but proposes effectively embodying Christ (life in the Spirit) and being embodied in Christ in return (life in Christ). Put differently, by openness to a Spirit-controlled life, the human person becomes grafted by the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ and opens her or him to a Jesus-controlled life. The Holy Spirit is thus conceived as no different from the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ: the Spirit is Christ and Christ is God. In *The Religious Import of Igbo Names*, Anozia underlines that this faith-assent to Jesus as manifestation of the saving God is a function of humility and purity of heart which may be easy for simple ordinary people but difficult for the overly rational minded. It is not the fruit of metaphysical speculation but springs from internal feeling of need for a life-giving and saving God.⁴² In this constitutes the salvation of the human person.

Pneumatological Christology and the Experience of Spiritual Power

The understanding of God as well as salvation of all things in Jesus Christ seen in the above Pneumatological Christology shapes the vision of the Church in the Parousian Church of Christ. With God as the origin, purpose and ultimate goal of humanity; and salvation seen as not just the imitation of Christ but being embodied in Christ and embodying Christ in return, the Christian call and life assumes a vibrant meaning. Peter Anozia builds the

⁴¹ Anozia, *The Religious Import of Igbo Names*, 266-67.

⁴² Anozia, *The Religious Import of Igbo Names*, 278.

understanding of the Christian vocation and life on insights from the Johannine pericope of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:1-24). He develops this in the first part of his message on the Christian call to repentance and holiness published under the title, *Give Me Water to Drink: a Call to Repentance and Holiness*. In that first part on 'repentance', he interprets the prescription by Jesus Christ, 'yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth'.⁴³ He reads these verses to yield the motif of the entire passage and its importance in understanding what constituted Jesus' way to the Father and so what Jesus meant the Christian life to be.

In this reading of the passage, Samaria is seen to stand for disobedience and infidelity to God, and so represents humanity's common experience of the spiral of disobedience and unfaithfulness to God, privation and death: 'all of us are Samaritans, for none... can claim he never sinned'⁴⁴ and 'God sent Jesus because we are all sinners doomed to death'.⁴⁵ In other words, the human mind and spirit ruled by the laws of sin and death do not satisfy. Jesus' demand of water that does not definitively satisfy from the woman is taken to imply a demand for the human mind and spirit rendered unsatisfactory by sin – disobedience to God by preference of self-will to the will of God. The call to the woman to go and call her husband is seen as an invitation by Jesus to face and acknowledge her sinfulness. This is presented as a vital step in the embrace with Jesus Christ. Facing up to one's sinfulness in the encounter with Jesus and accepting oneself as one really is – disobedient to God and so deviating from one's true purpose in God, incapable of effectively changing this fate, and so doomed to death – opens one up to drink of the water which Jesus has to offer. The salvation, the living water, which Jesus offers freely (Is 55:1) is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of God which alone satisfies:

What is 'living water'? It is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Jesus, the third person of the blessed Trinity. That is the water that Jesus offers you. If anyone is thirsty; surely you are thirsty for life. Come and drink. Water is life. Life is the Holy Spirit. The spirit of Jesus alone vivifies.⁴⁶

This gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus offers free of charge to those who repent regenerates them, renders them like himself – the only true image of God, – enables the capacity of their spirits for God, and in the language of Paul makes of them first born sons of God in Jesus Christ.

In the above exegetical scheme the Holy Spirit, the spring of living water capable of welling up to eternal life (Jn. 4:14) in those who drink it,

⁴³ Jn. 4:23-24.

⁴⁴ Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink*, 17.

⁴⁵ Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink*, 16.

⁴⁶ Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink*, 21. Cf. Jn. 7:37-39.

which Jesus gives is indeed himself. God's gift of salvation to humanity is God himself made manifest in Jesus Christ and continually available in power through the Holy Spirit; and women and men embrace God's gift of salvation by yielding to Jesus. Jesus Christ thus becomes the sacrament of God's encounter with humanity: in him God became human and in him humanity is drawn into God. To worship God in spirit then is to abide in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit; and to worship God in truth is to let Jesus worship God for us in us so that what Jesus does is attributed to us. For Anozia and for the Parousians, worshipping God in truth is to fear God enough as to obey Him in all things, at all times and in all places; and this is possible only in Jesus and when it is done by Jesus exactly as he wants to do it.⁴⁷

The vision of the Christian vocation and life that emerges then is a life totally surrendered to the guidance of Jesus in the Holy Spirit. Anozia presents this understanding in various formulations. Responding to a question on 'Obedience and Doing the Will of God' in *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, he says, 'when man is led by the Holy Spirit, he is a child of God (Romans 8:14), and if you are led by the Spirit, you are led into all truths, and you will do the truth into which you have been led'.⁴⁸ In the final part of that response he unequivocally identifies the Christian life in the Spirit as a vocation to be God in order to obey God perfectly.

Perfect obedience can only be given to God by God. Only God obeys God perfectly. That is why God wants us to obey Him on earth as He is obeyed in heaven. That is perfect obedience. It means man must become God in order to obey God perfectly. Man's ability to become God is Jesus. In Christ man can become God and through Christ man can obey God perfectly.⁴⁹

A true believer is therefore, one who actually does what God wants, by letting Jesus do it for her or him. The Christian life is thus a vocation to worship God in spirit and truth by dying to one's self: surrendering to Jesus in the Holy Spirit as the constant milieu of one's daily existence as a Christian.

This perception of the Christian life shapes the Parousian understanding of church, liturgical worship, Christian piety, and prayer activities. It is life in the Spirit, entered into by experience of baptism of the Spirit, but effectively lived as life in Jesus since the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. It renders the believer open to indwelling by Christ so that it is Jesus who does all things at all times and circumstances in the believer. In practical terms, spirit-filled living is constant consciousness of the reality of Christ living and acting in oneself. It is not much about the human person, but about Jesus and his Spirit. In this scheme it becomes difficult to relax or have a high opinion of oneself on account of the experience of the Spirit's

⁴⁷ Anozia, *Give Me Water to Drink*, 27-31.

⁴⁸ Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 2:67-69.

⁴⁹ Chukwudum, *The Catholic Priest with a Message*, 2:73.

power. The openness to and actual experience of the Spirit's power is lived out as a kenotic spirituality – total submission to Jesus who alone as God does the will of God in the spirit-led worshipper or believer. Discernment of spirits is therefore accepted as crucial. Spirit-led life is a life of constant discernment since the active person is not the believer but the Spirit of Christ – the human person must be kept low and in check at every moment. There is the one difference from the Roman Catholic demand for discernment that rather than presented as the preserve of those in authority positions of the church, every believer in whom Christ lives and so is living in holiness is worthy of carrying out the discernment. This is a function of a different understanding of church.

**Concluding Remarks: 'Everything is Permissible –
But not Everything is Beneficial' (1 Cor. 10:23)**

This Pauline caveat fully reads, 'Everything is permissible – but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible – but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others' (1 Cor. 10: 23-24). The caveat may not directly pertain to experiential appropriations of the Holy Spirit's power. But it avails the inner dynamic of life in the Spirit (life in Christ – life in God as life in death) envisaged in the Parousian pneumatological Christology. The allusion to the believers' freedom of conscience and will may adequately represent the wind of the Spirit which blows where it wills and applies the power of God – Christ – to all. But the permissible power of the Spirit is not a permissive force, the law of the Spirit is life and love – 'no one should seek his own good, but the good of the other'. The example Paul sets for the spiritual life that holds the good of the other pre-eminent is Jesus Christ: 'be imitators of me as I am of Christ' (1 Cor. 11:1). For Paul, the power of God and the wisdom of God which the Spirit makes appropriate for believers is Jesus Christ. This is the understanding at the core of the Parousian scheme. Only Jesus knows what is beneficial and constructive (builds up life) for all in the administration of divine power. The Spirit applies the divine power to each individual believer but it is only Jesus acting in each individual gifted believer who directs the power to the divine purpose of what is beneficial and constructive. For the Parousians this is not a theoretical, in the sense of a fine theological, point but a real spiritual disposition lived out in terms of self-denial and committed submission to what Jesus wishes to do and actually does in them. The Spirit-led life and Christian practice is not about what they do, but about what the Spirit of Christ is able to do in them. Christian spiritual discipline in this scheme becomes continual pursuit of humility and holiness which alone assures the constant presence of Jesus Christ in one's life. The experience of the Spirit's power is here predicated on active humility and holiness of life. In relation to the problematic of freedom of the Spirit and experiential appropriations of the Spirit's power, the active openness to Spirit-led

practices is capable of balancing the rift between a Christological surplus and pneumatological deficit; while the active understanding that it is the life of Christ to be lived by Christ himself is capable of checking abuses by shifting emphasis from the charisms and power to holiness of life which at once assures the power as well as directs it with the necessary charity.



PENTECOSTAL EVANGELISM, CHURCH PLANTING, AND CHURCH GROWTH

Julie C. Ma

Introduction

The extensive spread of Pentecostal Christianity can be reasonably attributed to the missionary efforts of the historic Pentecostal churches, among others. The main *modus operandi* of Pentecostal mission has been straightforward evangelism and church planting from its inception. It takes almost every conceivable method, demonstrable of its creativity and zealotry. It also accompanies claims of the demonstration of supernatural power. The most common of them is divine healing, and it provides an outstanding inroad for the gospel. These evangelistic efforts always have the establishment of a vibrant local congregation as their goal. Leadership over such a process is not restricted to 'duly qualified' clergy, as they are convinced that any believer is called and empowered to be witnesses. Such a combination of strong theological affirmation and the priority given to soul-winning has produced an unparalleled army of evangelists and church planters wherever these eccentric forms of Christianity are introduced.

In this study, I will explore several key theological roots for Pentecostal energy for, and approaches to, evangelism, church planting and church growth. Then I will present practical strategies of Pentecostal ministries in evangelism, church planting and church growth, often using cases from different regions of the world. I will conclude the study by offering challenges, and new opportunities, to its soul-winning orientation of mission into the next century of the movement.

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Theological Groundings

From the very beginning, the Pentecostal movement has shown extremely focused attention to 'soul saving'. Several unique theological orientations can be mentioned as the impetus for its commitment to evangelism and its resultant church planting and expansion.

The Way Pentecostals Read the Bible

Pentecostals are known for their fundamental value of the scriptures. Often criticized for their 'pre-modern' approach, any critical study of the Bible, be it 'lower' or 'higher' criticism, has not been known until very recently. Drawing from various nineteenth century conservative Christian traditions, including the Holiness ethos of the United States and the Kweseck's High Life strain of Great Britain, among others, Pentecostals were often identified with Fundamentalism in their approach to the scriptures. As the movement spread, or new Pentecostal-Charismatic groups were 'discovered', whether in Africa or in Asia, they have also brought the same level of reverence towards the scriptures. Therefore, in a sense, this uncritical reading of, and reverence to, the scriptures is a shared value among conservative and Evangelical Christianity. They subscribe to authenticity of the entire scripture: the full acceptance of the biblical records as truthful and historical events, including the records of miracles and healings. However, Pentecostals are different from Fundamentalists in a critical area of Bible reading: Pentecostals believe that miracles and healings are also *for today*.

A by-product of this uncritical reading of the Bible *for today* is the matter of normativity. Since Pentecostals take the Bible as God speaking today, they tend to take recurring occurrences in the scriptures as *norms for today* as well. The classical Pentecostal contention of speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit is a case in point.¹ Besides the debate over the nature of modern tongues, the scriptural intent, for example, Luke's intent in including three events of Spirit baptism in Acts has been hotly debated both from within and without.

As far as the present study is concerned, the model of the early church has been particularly important for Pentecostals, as they naturally see it as the sacred norm. Consequently they developed a strong apostolic restorational impetus. Understandably Pentecostals observed and studied Paul's missionary activities,² and concluded that the core of this was evangelism and church planting. Against the established model of the church in the West at the turn of the last century, Pentecostals established a group of believers often in homes and storefronts patterned after Paul's church planting practice.

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Empowerment Theology

The most characteristic theology and experience of modern Pentecostalism has been 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he promised his disciples the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. This

¹ Gordon Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible* (London: Scripture Union, 1983), 100.

² Rolland Allen, *Missionary Principles: Paul's or Ours?* (London: Robert Scott, 1913), 59-64.

experience, Pentecostals claim, is identical with the experience of the early church recorded in Acts 2. As Luke makes it clear, Pentecostals have taken this in the context of the Lord's command 'to be witnesses...to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). This experience is critical for faithful obedience to the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:16-20. Baptism in the Spirit, according to Pentecostal belief, is essential to the fulfilment of the Lord's command. In fact, Christ explicitly commanded his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were clothed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). This is also what John the Baptist foretold that Jesus would grant to his followers. The link between effective evangelism and the Spirit's empowerment, therefore, has been firmly established in the minds of Pentecostal believers.

From this fundamental notion, several things can be observed when it comes to evangelism and church planting as the core of Pentecostal mission. The first is the primacy of evangelism, often through verbal proclamation. It is obvious in the theological perspective of Pentecostal evangelism that all humanity is lost and is under the judgment of eternal retribution unless reached with the good news of the gospel (Lk. 13:3-5; Rom. 2:12; 5:12, 2 Thess. 1:7-8; Peter 3:9). Therefore to reverse this, the message of Christ's forgiveness and salvation is the first step. Witnessing is the main tool for the expansion of a Christian presence from Jerusalem, the whole of Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The reading of Paul's missionary activities also confirms this focus on evangelism through verbal proclamation.

Also implied is the accompaniment to evangelism of the supernatural manifestation of God's power. The 'power' that comes with the Spirit's presence is often understood in terms of miracles and healing, as attested in the book of Acts. When the disciples spread the gospel, they were full of the Holy Spirit. They met every day to pray and praise and further experienced signs and wonders (Acts 5:12-16). To Pentecostals, the supernatural intervention of God primarily has a salvific purpose, as the healing of the crippled in Acts 3 led to a mass conversion.

The third is the notion that the Holy Spirit is the initiator of mission, as the church was born through the advent of the Spirit. This portrays an ideal relationship between the Holy Spirit and his human agents in fulfilling God's mission. Even though early Christians came from lower social strata, the book of Acts shows that they were responsible for the explosive geographic expansion of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. As they set foot in a community, they became effective witnesses to the good news of Jesus, and in many places believing communities were established in the form of house churches. One obvious fact is that the gospel bearers in Acts were expected to and did experience the accompanying presence of the Spirit whether in their preaching, teaching, healing, or casting out of evil spirits. This makes the mission of God's people indeed the mission of the Holy Spirit, *missio Spiriti*.

Such total reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance and ministry is the hallmark of Pentecostal mission, although we have also seen equally the tragic fallouts of powerful Pentecostal preachers in our days. This dependence on the Spirit, if and when coupled with a careful nurturing and spiritual formation whether in an institutional or personal context, will ensure great success in Pentecostal mission.³ We have to remember that we do not do the mission, but we have been graciously invited to be partners of God in labouring for his kingdom. It is God's Spirit who empowers human agents in this missionary equation.

Eschatology

The preceding two theological beliefs provide a powerful combination for Pentecostals to be missionary people. And their focus on evangelism is patterned after their reading of the records of the early church.⁴ Yet they had another formidable inspiration from their understanding of human history: the expectation of the immanent return of the Lord.

In the early days of the Pentecostal movement, this expectation was drawn out of the popular scheme of historical view called dispensationalism. Theologically incongruent with the continuation of the apostolic expectation, namely supernaturals for today, Pentecostals learned from it the coming of the Spirit as the sure sign of the 'end of the end time'. The empowering Spirit would prepare the last great harvest before the close of human history as we know it. There is a realized eschatology which fuelled the already scorching evangelistic zeal among Pentecostals. A statement by Thomas F. Zimmerman, the head of the growing US Assemblies of God in the third quarter of the last century, reflects this engrained eschatological orientation of Pentecostalism: the firmness of imminent destiny and judgment that waits for the world is a 'coming retribution that will be both universal and final'. Out of this reality he declared, 'Men must be told'.⁵

This eschatological mind-set firmly shaped Pentecostal mission thinking and practice. F. Macchia recalls: 'The Pentecostal movement in its early decades was driven by a fervent eschatological expectation of the soon-coming kingdom of God. The basic tasks of biblical interpretation and proclamation gained the forefront of a vigorous effort to evangelize the world before the arrival of Christ in judgment and salvation'.⁶

³ E.g., Melvin Hodge, *A Guide to Church Planting* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), 23.

⁴ L.G. McClung, 'Evangelism', in Stanley M. Burgess & Eduard M. Van Der Maas (eds.), *International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2003), 617.

⁵ McClung, 'Evangelism', 618.

⁶ Frank D. Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology', in Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Doug Petersen

Although such an eschatology would expire sooner or later, this realized eschatology contributed to the missionary ethos of Pentecostal churches. The first was compelling urgency for mission. The churches and individuals set mission as their urgent priority. The Azusa Street Mission, for example, became a missionary deployment centre from the very beginning. Missionaries as well as the supporting churches were united in their eschatological urgency. This resulted in many heroic works, which went beyond their expected coming of the Lord. At the same time, this understanding of a brief window of missionary opportunity caused them not to pay much attention to institutional matters, such as the development of denominational structures, Bible schools or even permanent church buildings. Any new denomination was practically a fellowship among like-minded believers and to effectively undertake missionary work.⁷ This urgency prompted Pentecostal missionaries to establish national leadership as soon as possible so that the task of evangelism could be maximized. Training schools were opened to produce national evangelists and church planters, sometimes predating ones in the States. This rapid establishment of national structures and leadership has become a hallmark of Pentecostal mission.⁸

Pentecostal Evangelism

As mentioned above, verbal proclamation has been the foremost evangelistic tactic of Pentecostal mission. A Pentecostal scholar, Mel Robeck notes,

...there is more to evangelization than social intervention, for evangelization has always had proclamation as its primary component. When Jesus sent his disciples out, He sent them 'to *proclaim* the Kingdom of God and heal' (Lk. 9:1-2). There was first proclamation and then there was action. When Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost and addressed the people, he *proclaimed* the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the plan of God, and as a result people were brought to a place of decision regarding what they would do with Jesus.⁹

In the Pentecostal movement, proclamation in evangelism is an essential way of spreading God's Kingdom and bringing people to Christ.

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(eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum 1999), 8-9.

⁷ The establishment of the US Assemblies of God in 1914.

⁸ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (SM: Gospel Publishing House, 1993), 132.

⁹ Cecil M. Robeck, 'Common Witness: Evangelism in an Ecumenical Context Celebrating Edinburgh 1910' (the keynote address presented at the meeting of the Christian Churches Together in the USA, SeaTac, WA, January, 2010), 2. The full text is available on <http://www.christianchurchestogether.org/audio/Robeck-Keynote.pdf>.

Consequently, especially due to their eschatological orientation, social concern did not stand by itself as an aspect of Christian mission.

There are diverse ways of evangelism: personal evangelism, door-to-door evangelism, street evangelism, evangelistic services with altar calls, open air, tent and stadium evangelism, radio and television evangelism, movie evangelism, and internet evangelism.¹⁰ This section will discuss two particular approaches of Pentecostal evangelism which made enormous impact for the spread of Pentecostalism: 1) public evangelistic gatherings, often called ‘crusades’ with a heavy emphasis on healing, and 2) the use of mass media. This discussion will be followed by the issue of proselytism as a consequence of zealous Pentecostal evangelism.

Open Air Crusades: Healing Evangelism

Healing crusades were favourably used during the early stages of the Pentecostal movement and brought marvellous results. A case in point is in Myanmar: the evangelistic meetings of Harvey McAlister in the 1950s and Mabel Willetts in 1961 were remarkable with supernatural manifestations, the baptism of the Spirit and the common Pentecostal experience of healings. It was reported that the Holy Spirit had fallen on a group of people in the congregation, which has developed into a ‘veritable deluge’.¹¹ This occurrence was a characteristic for the church as a future leader experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Early in the 1970s, Hau Lian Kham and Myo Chit made a prominent contribution in the renewal and revival movement. Kam Cin Hau’s evangelistic ministry during 1987-89 was profound, with unique experiences of crying and laughing and being slain in the Spirit. At another evangelistic meeting in Suangzang during May 1988, the village priest, who was sick to the point of death, experienced God’s healing touch and instantaneously converted during these evangelistic meetings. Yet, at another evangelistic meeting in Tedim town during July and August 1988, around five to seven thousand attended the service. Again the move of the Spirit was so strong that many people came to the Lord, received healing, were ‘slain in the Spirit’, and were speaking in tongues. These evangelistic meetings were celebrated with singing and dancing ‘in the Spirit’. Many children became Christians during these meetings, and more than thirty of them went out for evangelism to nearby villages.¹² The Assemblies of God of Myanmar had a membership of 84,158 by 2000. The church has stood strong

¹⁰ Robeck, ‘Common Witness’.

¹¹ Glenn Stafford, ‘Convention Time in Burma’, *Pentecostal Evangel* (July 23, 1961), 11.

¹² Chin Khua Khai, ‘The Assemblies of God and Pentecostalism in Myanmar’ in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds.) *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2011), 211.

with an emphasis on mission, which became the leading force for the growth.¹³

John Sung's charismatic healing evangelism in Malaysia and Singapore among the Chinese from 1935-40 had a great impact. Between the 1930s and 1960s, Hong Kong actress Kong Duen Yee, known as Mui Yee, played a significant role in a Pentecostal revival movement. Her stress on the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues created quite a stir among the Chinese people. During 1936-37, a movement of large tent evangelistic meetings spread in Kuala Lumpur by Assemblies of God missionaries. Many young people experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and made a commitment to full-time Christian ministry. In 1960, the Bible Institute of Malaysia was instrumental in the growth of the Pentecostal movement. The graduates from 1960-80 were primarily pioneers, evangelists and church planters.¹⁴ Healing experiences of people played the key role in attracting new members and subsequently the congregation grew in number.

In current days, such open-air mass gatherings are not as popular as they used to be, particularly in the west. But in some parts of the world, it is still effectively used today and many Pentecostal evangelists hold large open-air evangelistic meetings in many places in the global South. Almost always these evangelistic campaigns come with an emphasis on healing. Some of the modern-day Pentecostal evangelists are Reinheid Bonke of Germany and David Yonggi Cho of South Korea. These days mostly such meetings are held in stadiums, convention halls, sheltered buildings like school auditoriums or athletic fields.

Media Evangelism

Pentecostals from the very beginning have effectively utilized mass media. The publication of *The Apostolic Faith* of the Azusa Street Mission was the principal tool for spreading the Pentecostal message far and wide. Almost interactive, the monthly newspaper printed news of Pentecostal outbreaks in many parts of the world, as much as it did reports of Pentecostal missionaries. This publication, however, was but one of hundreds printed, mailed and shared at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States of America. Although this was a widespread practice especially among Evangelicals, Pentecostals have most effectively used it.

When radio became a new communication technology in the 1920s, Pentecostals along with Evangelical evangelists were the first religious groups that tapped into this new tool. Unlike newspapers, radio took the message to the far corners of the world instantaneously. Radio broadcasts were initially a complementary medium to the print media. But soon its

¹³ Julie Ma and Allan Anderson, 'Pentecostal (Renewalists) 1910-2010', *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 100-101.

¹⁴ Khai, 'The Assemblies of God and Pentecostalism in Myanmar', 211.

speed and mass-distribution ability overtook the place of newspapers and monthly journals. Missionary reports were quickly shared on radio waves. This medium also allowed the sending of gospel messages to countries where propagating the Christian message was illegal or restricted. Radio programs were for evangelistic purposes for both non-believers and for spiritual formation for believers. These works continue even in the current day, now significantly in the developing world. Radio systems such as Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) often carry messages and teachings of Pentecostal leaders throughout East and Southeast Asia. ‘Mike’ Velarde, the leader of the nine-million strong Catholic Charismatic group, Eli Shaddai of the Philippines, began as a gospel radio broadcaster.

The advent of television technology also ushered in a new class of Pentecostal evangelists. Most known ‘televangelists’, a portmanteau of ‘television’ and ‘evangelist’ first coined by *Time* magazine,¹⁵ have been Pentecostal-Charismatic in orientation. Oral Roberts and other huge broadcasts around the year of 1957, reached 80% of the possible television audience through 135 of the nearly 500 stations in the United States.¹⁶ This phenomenon for the first time demonstrated the possibility of a virtual church, going beyond the geographical concept of the church. Oral Roberts is just one of many who built their own ‘churches’ through television.

At least 800,000 of the most loyal supporters have become permanent ‘prayer partners’ and receive monthly prayer letters from Oral. ‘Are you suffering?’ asked a recent one. ‘Is pain raging through your body? Is your marriage falling apart? Does it seem that no one cares? I want to help you get the answer you need. I want to pray with you’. Each day, whether in Tulsa or travelling, Roberts gets a thick, typed list of the names and needs of all those who write with requests. He sometimes prays for them spectacularly – from a 200-ft. Prayer Tower that rises like a giant top out of the Oklahoma soil. Those in a hurry may call in to a 24-hour telephone watch at the Tower, where prayer counselors are always on duty to give spiritual comfort.¹⁷

Around the 1960s and early 1970s television replaced radio as the main home enjoyment channel, but also corresponded with a further increase in evangelical Protestant Christianity, especially through the worldwide television and radio ministry of Billy Graham. Many renowned televangelists began during this period, cultivating their own media networks, news disclosure, and political influence.

Benny Hinn began to be involved in television ministry during the mid-1980s with the broadcast of his church’s Sunday worship service. The show was marked by Trinity Broadcasting Network and soon became one of the

¹⁵ *Time*: 75th Anniversary issue, March 9, 1998.

¹⁶ David E. Harrell Jr., ‘Healers and Televangelists after World War II’, in Vinson Synan (ed.), *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Nelson, 2001), 331

¹⁷ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,905738-2,00.html> *Time*: Religion: Oral Progress, Feb. 7, 1972.

network's most well-received programs. Recently Hinn's *This Is Your Day!* programme had an audience of over 60 million homes worldwide. Hinn became a well-acknowledged author in the 1990s with his first book, *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, published by Thomas Nelson in 1997. It sold nearly a quarter of a million copies within several months and still is on the best-seller list. Hinn's television programs keep on making a strong emphasis on dramatic healing testimonies. He also holds monthly miracle crusades around the world. He has international offices in Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, India, Fiji, and the Philippines.¹⁸

His healing ministries and claims, however, have attracted a good dose of criticism,

By 1990 this interest caused two anti-cult groups, Christian Research Institute and the Watchman Fellowship, to criticize not only Hinn's theology but also his healing claims and lifestyle. The *Orlando Sentinel* printed an article exposing Hinn's opulent lifestyle. He responded through a *Publishers Weekly* article, saying 'God wants all his children taken care of'. He defended his expensive home as necessary for security reasons. In response to sceptics who voiced doubt concerning the claims of healing during his crusades, Hinn worked to substantiate healing testimonies. The criticisms of Hinn's 'word of faith' religious teaching and onstage theatrics came to a head in 1993. Christian Research Institute's Hank Hanegraaff and televangelist James Robison contacted Hinn personally and warned him that his ministry would fail if he continued 'in his slaughter of the innocent sheep'.¹⁹

Hinn was greatly challenged by Robison's reprimand and changed the emphasis of his ministry significantly. After a short period of time he radically changed the essential components of his message.

Nowadays there is the proliferation of Christian TV programs. On a Sunday morning, in Lusaka, Zambia, practically more than half of the available TV channels carry Christian programming. In the United Kingdom, a host number of African, particularly Nigerian, Christian programs complete with Muslim, Sheikh and Hindu programs.

The latest technological advent has been cyberspace. Whether Pentecostals will excel with this new medium is yet to be seen. It is partly because everyone is tapping the potential of this technology. There seems now the democratization of technology in the world of religion.

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Proselytism in Pentecostal Evangelism: Is It an Issue?

Mel Robeck in his study 'Common Witness: Evangelism in an Ecumenical Context-Celebrating Edinburgh 1910' elaborated the charges and risks of proselytism among Pentecostals in the process of evangelism. It is an

¹⁸ G.W. Gohr, 'Hinn, Benedictus', *The International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements*, 713-15. See also, M. Bearden, 'Benny Hinn', *Publisher Weekly* (Feb. 10, 1992).

¹⁹ Gohr, 'Hinn, Benedictus'.

important area I feel needs to be discussed in this paper because Pentecostals have been accused of being ‘sheep-stealers’, although they have done evangelistic work. It notes,

Proselytism is a very real problem for all of us. It is a problem because all of our churches are guilty of proselytism at some level. This may come as a surprise to some of you. While it is apparent that some churches engage in proselytism more actively than others, it is still the case that all of our churches are guilty of proselytism at some level. Proselytism is a problem because our definitions of what constitutes proselytism often differ. The reason is that we have developed these definitions in isolation from one another. Proselytism is basically a self-serving activity. And the result of our independence from one another is that what may be evangelism for one person or group constitutes proselytism for another person or group.²⁰

The sociological meaning of proselytism is so often influenced by the media and is frequently invoked by states as well as by many non-Christian religious groups.²¹ Within a religion, it is commonly called ‘sheep stealing’, that is the recruitment of church members from another church. Proclaiming the gospel to those who are in other faiths, in this sense, is defined as evangelism, not proselytism. Definitely this form of witnessing is against the message of the gospel and is an outright sin against fellow believers in Christ and against fellow denominations.²² However, such activities are not always evident, as some times they are subtle and discreet.

Pope John Paul II referred to proselytizers as ‘ravenous wolves’ in his renowned address to the bishops of Latin America gathered in Santo Domingo in 1992.²³ Many interpreted this as a direct criticism towards the explosive expansion of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in the continent, often through the conversion of Catholics into Pentecostal faith. That proselytism was a major issue in the Vatican-Pentecostal theological dialogue, therefore, is not surprising. Robeck’s statement is quite significant as he has been a co-chair of the Vatican-Pentecostal dialogue for many years. ‘We can also recognize that proselytism is in play when we manipulate, cajole, or in other ways coerce people to change their ecclesial allegiance’.²⁴

My brief evaluation from the above noted discussion goes, that Jesus Christ gave his disciples including current churches the great commission,

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²⁰ Robeck, ‘Common Witness’, 26-27.

²¹ Martin E. Marty and Frederick E. Greenspahn, *Pushing the Faith: Proselytism and Civility in a Pluralistic World* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 27.

²² According to Robeck, this is the official position of the World Council of Churches as well. See Jacques Matthey, ‘Evangelism, Still the Enduring Test of Our Ecumenical-and Missionary Calling’, *International Review of Mission* 96, 382-383 (July-October 2007), 366-57.

²³ John Paul II, ‘Opening Address to Fourth General Conference of Latin American Episcopate’, *Origins: CNS Documentary Service* 22:19 (October 22, 1992), 326.

²⁴ Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas: San Jose, Costa Rica 4-8 June 1996 (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1996), 83.

go to nations, baptizing and making them disciples of Jesus. People who are saved by the blood of Jesus are given the task of preaching the gospel to those who are unsaved, including people in other faiths because only through Jesus Christ can all human beings come to a saving knowledge of Christ. If our act of evangelizing non-believers is defined as proselytizing, we have almost no hope of winning nations, thus fulfilling the great commission is impossible. On the other hand, a withdrawal from active evangelism at the cost of political correctness is another violation of the Great Commission of the Lord.

When the situation is examined more closely, this issue is not that straightforward and is often quite complex. As seen in the papal criticism, charges are often raised by territorially defined historic churches such as Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This historic definition of being Christian has been constantly challenged by more denominationally oriented churches, which tend to ignore historically defined. The former has often been Christendom in the past, thus, the state and the church are often inseparable in their influence, their relationship to each other, and their territories. Not everyone in this territorially defined Christianity, to the eyes of free churches, is necessarily a bona fide born-again believer who has gone through a personal conversion experience. This missionary activity in traditional Christian territory, as a result, is viewed as converting Christians from one church to another. In such cases, a typical Pentecostal response to the charges of proselytism is that they reach out to those who are no longer actively practicing Christians. Also when the historic churches fail to meet the spiritual needs of people, they are then attracted to the Pentecostal vibrant expressions of Christianity; and for those who come to satisfy their spiritual hunger, no church should refuse their presence.

This discussion clearly suggests that a right answer lies somewhere in between the two arguments. The key to easing this conflict will be increased contact between churches for fellowship, dialogue and understanding of each other. If a new church, such as a mission-minded Pentecostal group, can find ways to strengthen the older but weaker congregations, instead of sheep-stealing, a church cooperation through mission can be achieved. This brings both ends to learn to appreciate the work of the same Spirit in each other, but in different ways.

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Church Planting and Church Growth

This section will bring two topics: church planting and church growth as part of Pentecostal mission. Several cases, along with my own experience, will be the basis for our observation.

Context of Pentecostal Growth

As an Asian writer, I will bring the Asian context into our current discussion. Asia represents approximately 5,265,897,000 billion people, or 9.9% percent of the world's entire population.²⁵ The variety in culture, religion, politics, and the economy is so enormous that it is almost impracticable to oversimplify the region in any meaningful way, and so varied is the history of Christian presence. Most of the Asian countries, just as African and Latin American countries, were subjected to colonial rule. Socio-political oppression and economic hardships were common place; lack of adequate healthcare and education cast a dark shadow over the future of nations. However, since the end of the second world war, with the independence of many countries, countries have achieved a varying degree of progress. In the midst of rapid social changes, Pentecostal Christianity has earned a broad appeal especially among socially marginalized grassroots. This 'primal' spirituality of Pentecostalism has been exceptionally effective in reaching out to animistically-oriented Asians. It is therefore not unexpected that today, almost one-half of Asian Christians are Pentecostal.

With zealous evangelistic activities, Pentecostal congregations have mushroomed in shanty towns of urban centers and deep mountain villages. Their emphasis on healing and miraculous intervention of God has made Pentecostalism a faith of hope. The accelerating speed of urbanization gave birth to large Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, including the massive El Shaddai Catholic Charismatic ministries gathering in large parks in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia and even in Europe, the Reign of God in many market places throughout Brazil and beyond. Many of the surging Chinese house church groups are believed to be Pentecostal and Charismatic in their beliefs and practices; and so are much of what is known as African Independent Churches. Although it is difficult to argue that they are fruits of western Pentecostal missionary efforts, today Charismatic Christianity is no longer defined by the historical links with North American roots. In fact, people with worldviews that recognize the existence of the spiritual world have been particularly open to Pentecostal beliefs, including healing and exorcism.²⁶ For similar reasons, areas where established religions such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism are strong, Pentecostalism has been relatively less successful.

Church Planting in Tribal and Rural Settings: Personal Experience

Pentecostal church planting, as mentioned above, is a logical outgrowth of evangelistic activities. The northern Philippines is mostly rugged mountains

²⁵ 'Future of Religions', *Atlas of Global Christianity*, eds., Todd M. Johnson & Kenneth R. Ross (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 45.

²⁶ Ma & Anderson, 'Pentecostals (Renewalists) 1910-2010', 100-101.

except coastal lines,²⁷ and due to its remoteness, and also due to its persistent religious beliefs and practices, Spaniards, in spite of their more than three centuries of colonial occupation, had limited penetration into this gold-rich region. Roman Catholicism had better success in reaching out to large towns, but were virtually non-existent outside of large townships. The era of Protestant mission, particularly Episcopalians, Seventh Adventists and Lutherans, began at the turn of the twentieth century, after the United States assumed colonial rule from the Spaniards after the sea battle at Manila Bay. Although the Protestants had a better appeal to the mountain population, still their success was marginal.²⁸

However, both Pentecostal missionaries and national workers have recorded an impressive achievement among the same tribal groups since the end of the Japanese War towards the middle of the last century. A pattern is quite discernible: 1) an evangelistic team visits a village to conduct normally informal evangelistic activities, often talking to village folks; 2) along with the introduction of the Christian gospel, prayers for healing are offered for the sick; 3) as a result of such activities, often with the testimony of divine healing, a Bible study begins in a house; 4) as the group grows in size, a humble structure is erected to serve as a worship place, and 5) as it further grows, a permanent structure is built with congregational leadership also established. Often, nearby villages are soon reached by Christian witnesses and the same cycle begins anew. Our personal involvement with many tribal villages affirms this.

Several unique characteristics of Pentecostal church planting have surfaced throughout its history. First, as mentioned above, supernatural manifestation, particularly healing was the key component to draw people to the Christian message. At some point Pentecostal healing crusades were a regular feature in the City of Baguio, the capitol of the mountain provisions known as the Cordillera region. Also, sickness being the urgent and everyday life concern, it is natural that their traditional religion includes many rituals for healing.²⁹ The second is the role of personal witnessing. In closely knitted small rural communities, especially with the

²⁷ The mountains in Northern Luzon, Philippines are divided into seven provinces where thirteen major tribes are inhabitants, with countless numbers of minor tribes under them. Interestingly, all the tribes, both major and minor, speak their own dialects and maintain their own distinctive customs. For instance, in Benguet Province, two major tribes, Ibaloi and Kankana-eyes are living. The Assemblies of God concentrated its mission in this province in the early stages through church planting and evangelism. The church planting continues to expand even at the current time.

²⁸ A brief historical survey of these churches is found in Julie C. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 73-99.

²⁹ This element is further explored in J. Ma, *Mission Possible: Bible Strategy for Reaching the Lost* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2005), 18-22. Also a story from the region is included in 62-68.

whole village practically the network of an extended family, words of mouths spread very quickly. What is particularly noted is Pentecostal believers' eagerness in sharing their experiences. Although never theologically articulated, this unusual ability must have been drawn from the empowerment theology of Pentecostalism. Even today, public testimony is a regular feature of Pentecostal worship, and this unique time of sharing serves as a theological formation process, while the whole body of Christ, both laity and clergy, contributes to the spiritual life of the church.

The third is the usual zeal for evangelism. A young church, as it develops, may see in its early stage the rise of a group of laity, including youth, who can reach out to nearby communities with the Christian message. Along the border between Benguet Province and Ifugao Province lies the rugged mountain range, whose peak is Mt. Pulag. In this area, a small tribal group called Kalango-yas live with their distinct language, beliefs and customs. When a congregation was established in the early 1990s in Sebang, Benguet Province among Kankana-ey tribe, a group of youth began to organize a weekly evangelistic visit to Cocoy, a Kalango-ya village, a good five-hour walk distance along a mountain trail infested by the armed Communist rebel group known as the New People's Army. Within a year, another congregation was formed primarily through the evangelistic zeal of the youth of the nearby tribal church.

The fourth is the prompt rise of church leadership from within.³⁰ With egalitarian theology of ministry and personal experiences at the center of one's religious life, it is not difficult to expect the rise of a committed group of Christians. As illustrated above, zealous youth commit themselves to evangelistic activities, while soon a mature community leader surfaces as the church leader. Although often lacking any formal theological education, regular contacts with evangelists, missionaries and fellow Christian workers in the district or sectional levels serves as the conduit for information, theological and ministerial formation. In fact, due to their 'localness' in the contextual and social settings, and often their voluntary services, the congregations not only service, but more often strive in both vitality and evangelistic outreach. The fifth is the 'reproductive process' of the evangelism-church planting pattern. Pentecostals are known for 'reproduction' and even multiplication of themselves. Within three years, both Sebang and Cocoy churches established a large congregation in Docucan, another Kalango-ya village, soon followed by a fourth congregation in a small village. We were able to witness the birth of the fifth church in a decade since the planting of the Sebang Church. Often called 'daughter churches', they continue this reproductive pattern, which

³⁰ The preparation of national and local church leadership has been identified as one important factor of Pentecostal church expansion by Melvin Hodge, 69-70.

eventually saturates the entire area with Christian, and in this case, Pentecostal witness.

Although this presentation may be an anecdotal piece of information, it offers a partial explanation of the expansion of Pentecostal Christianity throughout the world. Pentecostalism has found its home among people with 'tribal' worldviews. W. Hollenweger refers to this as the 'black oral root' of global Pentecostalism,³¹ along with orality and spontaneity. My own research reveals a stark similarity between tribal and Pentecostal worldviews.³² Primary religious concerns include healing/health, blessing, disturbances by demons, dreams and visions, and other spiritual experiences. Pentecostal success in church planting among tribal areas may be partly explained by this factor. However, this can also result in a mixture of local religiosity and Pentecostal elements, giving rise to a host of borderline 'Christian' groups. My study on the Santuala group in the same Cordillera region is a case in point.³³ In fact, the proliferation of such 'more Pentecostal but less Christian' groups are of a significant theological concern.

Pentecostal Mega-Churches

In addition to the reproduction model of Pentecostal expansion, the mega-church phenomenon is another distinct feature of the Pentecostal spread. The appearance of mega-churches, normally congregations of several thousand members or more, caught the attention of the church growth advocates from the 1960s. A majority of them found among Pentecostal Christianity, mega-churches have been particularly evident in the non-western world. Although numerical growth is not always a proof of right beliefs, it certainly implies something obvious:

The numerical growth alone of these Pentecostal churches is cause for wonder: in 1900 there were only 50,000 Protestants in Latin America, none of them Pentecostal. By the 1980s they had grown to 50,000,000 (75% of them Pentecostal) and by the year 2000 it is estimated there will be 137,000,000. Already Guatemala is about 30% Protestant-Evangelical-Pentecostal. These are authentic Christian churches which are growing precisely because they understand and practice vital, essential aspects of Christianity which main-line churches have largely neglected. Sadly these groups communicate so poorly that the Pentecostal churches treat Catholics as if they were pagans in need of conversion, while Catholics regard these

³¹ W. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers), 18-24.

³² Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), 213-243.

³³ Julie Ma & Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2011), 209-225.

new churches as sects who have little depth, especially in regard to issues of social justice.³⁴

The first case is the Jotabeche Methodist Pentecostal Church in Santiago, Chile. Drawing 350,000 worshippers, the rapid growth of the Jotabeche Church has attracted both admiration of pastors and church-growth researchers, and criticism of the Roman Catholic church on proselytism. For the latter, the church argues the desperate search of ordinary people for answers to their spiritual and daily survival questions. The growth of this church is often attributed to several Pentecostal distinctives. First, it is the Baptism of the Spirit, with the members' charismatic gifts. Secondly, the people were saturated with a keen inner desire to evangelize. Every Sunday on the streets of Santiago 1,000 church members share the gospel and invite people to come to their church. Thirdly, furthermore, they pray for the healing touch of God upon people and for deliverance from evil spirits.

In Brazil, for instance, it is estimated that 60% of the people (nominally Catholic) are practicing spiritists, and 90% have at times participated in spiritist rites. The Pentecostals engage actively in spiritual warfare and pray for exorcism, while mainline churches, for the most part, take an intellectual approach and simply discourage people from taking part in superstitious practices which they don't see as a real spiritual threat.³⁵

Fourthly, people in the church believe that lay people, not just the pastors, are empowered to be involved in the work area of evangelizing and healing. Fifthly, their theological seminary is in the streets, rather than in an academic setting. In contrast to what we might assume, this apprentice system takes longer than receiving training in academic seminaries. One may start as a street preacher and go through different stages and he or she may be involved in pastoral ministry some 20 years later. Obviously, they are not selected because they have passed academic tests, but rather because they have qualities of leadership and pastoring through practical and tangible experiences. The pastor of Jotabeche Church, Javier Vasques, chosen by 40,000 votes, never attended classes in seminary, but acquired his experience as an apprentice in the streets of Santiago. His entire appearance, clothing and his style, identifies him as one with ordinary people who make up his congregation.³⁶

The second case is the Yoido Full-Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, the largest single congregation in the world. The founder, and now senior pastor emeritus, is David Yonggi Cho. Upon the completion of his

³⁴Francis MacNutt, 'Pentecostal Church Growth in Latin America', *Church Renewal*, May 1991 (http://www.christianhealingmin.org/newsletter/archives/church_renewal/Pentecostal_Church_Growth_LatinAmerica.php).

³⁵MacNutt, 'Pentecostal Church Growth in Latin America', *Church Renewal*.

³⁶MacNutt, 'Pentecostal Church Growth in Latin America', *Church Renewal*. See also Barbara Newman, 'Unity in the Holy Spirit', *Church Renewal*, Winter, 1991 on the same site.

theological education, in 1958 he started a ministry in a slum area of war-torn Seoul with Mrs. Jasil Choi, his future mother-in-law. In this time of desperation and hopelessness,³⁷ the five-member tent church began to grow rapidly to 600 members by 1961. 'Church growth accelerated after moving to Yoido, a newly built church on 23 September 1973. Its membership reached 100,000 in 1979; 200,000 in November 1980; 500,000 in 1985; 700,000 in 1992, and 755,000 in 2007'.³⁸

Several factors are generally acknowledged for contributing to the growth of the church. The first is Cho's messages of hope and healing ministry. In the social context of desperation, poverty and marginalization, his message of hope and God's miracles attracted many urban slum dwellers. His view of salvation is holistic, both spiritual and physical. The second is his emphasis on prayer (often with fasting).³⁹ In addition to the customary daily early morning prayer meetings, he introduced Friday overnight prayer meetings, and soon developed a large prayer mountain. The third is the cell group system with the mobilization of large numbers of women lay leaders. This was a radical and counter-cultural decision in a male dominant society. The cell-group system has brought empowerment and liberty to the status of women in Korea. 'Cell units conceived as sub-churches grew rapidly practicing worship, prayer, and fellowship'.⁴⁰ The cell-unit structure contributed significantly to the successful training and pastoral care of the new members. The fourth is a continuing emphasis on renewal both on personal and societal levels. Lately, the church has placed much stress on caring for the socially marginalized.⁴¹

Concluding Remarks

Classical Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Pentecostal-like churches have been vigorously growing throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Africa, for example, their growth has been extra-ordinary: Zimbabwe records an

³⁷ K. Min, *Church History of Korea* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1982), 470.

³⁸ Church Growth International, *Church Growth Manual 7* (Seoul: Church Growth International, 1995), 145.

³⁹ Younghoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development*, 97. See also Young-gi Hong, 'The Backgrounds and Characteristics of the Charismatic Mega-Churches in Korea', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (Jan 2000), 99.

⁴⁰ Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development*, 96.

⁴¹ International Theological Institute, *Yoido Full Gospel Church: Its Faith and Theology*, 139-40. See also Young-gi Hong, 'The Influence of Rev. Cho's Church Growth on Korean Society's', in Sung-hoon Myung and Young-gi Hong (eds.), *Charis and Charisma: David Yonggi Cho and the Growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church* (Oxford: Regnum, 2003), 203-208.

estimated one-fifth of the population as Pentecostal in 2000; in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Zambia over a tenth, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa slightly less than a tenth.⁴² Even in post-Christian Europe, David Voas of Manchester University, who investigated English Church Census data said Pentecostals were 'the fastest growing group within Christianity'. He expressed they are the third largest, behind Catholics and Anglicans, noting, 'Methodism, a branch of Christianity that originated in England and spread around the world, is dying in Britain'. He further contrasted, migration from Africa and somewhere else has led to growth in Pentecostal churches, where the worship mode is more colourful.⁴³

The study demonstrates Pentecostals being enthusiastically engaged in evangelism and church planting and subsequently church growth was brought about as a fruit of their labour. These particular ministries have been Pentecostals' focal point since its inception of the movement. They first and foremost relied on the work of the Holy Spirit for bringing souls, through prayer and evangelism, and supernatural manifestations. Vigorous evangelism through opening outreaches among tribal groups of people as a way of bringing non-believers has unceasingly been made.

It is clear that Pentecostalism has recovered something critical of the spiritual dynamism of the early church, and it is important for everyone that this dynamism continues in numerical growth and spiritual energy. If past history is any indication, the movement appears to be able to express its energy in diverse socio-religious contexts. And its unique theological tradition should find its creative expressions in varying contexts. Its liberating theology of empowerment for every believer should find more implications throughout Christian life and mission.

At this same time, just as all other Christian traditions and families, Pentecostalism comes with its strengths and weaknesses. The charge of proselytism was mentioned already, and two concerns may be registered for future reflection and contemplation. The first is the observation that Pentecostalism excels in personal and social crisis situations. Large congregations including ones introduced above have drawn their massive numbers from the socially marginalized and poor in every aspect. Expectations of God's miraculous intervention and supernatural healing are indeed good news for the poor. As churches grow, people achieve social upward mobility. Testimonies further reinforce their trust in a good and powerful God, and so the churches grow further. Crucial questions are then raised: will Pentecostalism show its resilience against secularism and

⁴² P. Johnstone & J. Mandryk, *Operation World: 21st Century Edition* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001), 21. See also Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2000), 34-7.

⁴³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6192785.stm> Pentecostal Church 'Sees Growth' Tuesday, 19 December 2006.

materialism; and will the society a Pentecostal congregation serves achieve a degree of social stability and economic prosperity.

Although hailed for recording a continuing growth in the western setting, around a decade ago, for example, the typical white segment of the US Assemblies of God stopped growing and even declined in some cases. It has been only the ethnic segments that continue to grow. It is an accepted fact that Korean Pentecostalism also stopped growing for some time, along with most Christian families. While Pentecostalism can withstand and even gain strength in adverse circumstances, it appears to be as helpless as any other segment of Christianity at the onslaught of abundance and secularism. Then, whether its hallmark pneumatology has been fully explored remains a critical theological question. Also relevant is cases of moral failure among Pentecostal leaders, coincidentally more among the flamboyant public figures. If the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, as they so passionately preach, has indeed affected their own private and spiritual life, then this is more than a moral issue, it is a theological issue.

The second is theological motivation for church growth as observed today. Church growth was never part of Pentecostal thought in its early years. The expectation of eschatological urgency drove Pentecostal believers to mission and evangelism. The emphasis on church growth, not as a natural outcome of evangelism, appeared only from the 1970s, when coincidentally eschatology slowly disappeared from Pentecostal pulpits and this vacuum was filled with the sudden surge of this-worldly concerns, including the prosperity gospel in North America. The church growth movement, originally envisioned in missionary settings, became a Christian version of the self-centered and success-driven cooperate world. In fact, the drive for the growth of individual congregations has often become the ultimate goal of the congregation's existence instead of a means to an end. In addition to nasty moral scandals, their conglomerate expansion through franchising produced a 'Wal-Mart effect' which practically threatens many smaller local congregations. Their expansion also reaches other sectors of society including mass media (including TV stations and newspapers), education, medical services, properties, and even simple investments. Unfortunately secular media has feasted on increasing incidents of financial mishandling, the upscale lifestyle of those 'charismatic' leaders, and involvement of family members in lucrative operations of church-related businesses among leaders of large churches.

The ultimate purpose for church growth should be the expansion of God's kingdom through witnessing and service, both here and at the ends of the earth. We need to learn from a Kenyan congregation which grew large and even bought a choice property for a new building. However, after much prayer and discussion, the church decided to dissolve itself and give rise to five smaller congregations throughout the city of Nairobi. After a period of careful planning and training of the whole churches, one large congregation disappeared and was reborn into five medium-sized ones. It is

a good time to think and move on to the idea of church multiplication, with a clear theological goal of mission. Then the growth of a congregation is indeed a unique resource for the expansion of God's kingdom. The celebrity status of the leaders of large churches can be avoided, and so can the many scandals.

The fundamental issue for everything in the Christian life, including church growth, is authentic discipleship. As followers, and the body of Christ, our call is to carry our cross and follow the self-emptying and all-giving Christ. How a 'power-full' ethos of Pentecostalism can be brought under the reign of Christ-like humility will be a priority challenge, both in theology and practice.

Pentecostalism may hold the key to the possibility of global Christianity growing over the one-third line of the world's population for the first time in its history.⁴⁴ As it has proven its effectiveness in its past century, let's believe that commitment of God's people and the creativity of the Holy Spirit will bring about another season of harvest throughout the world.



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⁴⁴ The only exception, according to *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 102-103. However, global Christianity has been from its beginning under the 1/3 line.

CHURCH GROWTH: REFLECTIONS ON YOIDO FULL GOSPEL CHURCH

Younghoon Lee

Introduction

The Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) began in a makeshift tent with five members in the suburban slum area of Seoul in 1958, and grew to be the largest church in the world in 2008 with a membership of 780,000 in just fifty years. In 2008, there was a transition in the leadership of the church when its founder Rev. David Yonggi Cho retired from the position of senior pastor after fifty years of ministry. It was then that I was elected and inaugurated to be the new senior pastor of the church. After which, twenty regional chapels of the church around the great metropolitan area of Seoul, consisting of 346,000 members, were separated from the 'mother church', and were granted full autonomy in January 2010. Nevertheless, YFGC has continually grown to over 490,000 in its membership as of November, 2013.¹

The overall argument presented in this study is twofold. First of all, I will trace the significance of YFGC's revival and historical growth over the past fifty-four years from the perspective of an insider. Here I argue that YFGC's growth is primarily a result of a) its successful embracing of the Pentecostal tradition, and b) embedding the Pentecostal tradition within the uniquely specific Korean context. This study will therefore not merely be another case of church growth; rather it will particularly highlight the influence of the Pentecostal movement on church growth. Secondly, in light of this historical development I would like to outline YFGC's directions for the future with respect to church growth which will also take into account the possible challenges it would have to face in this journey.

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The History of the Growth of YFGC

YFGC possesses the unique history of manifesting a continuous growth in its membership right from its day of inception till the present.² For the sake of

¹ 'A Monthly Report, Department of the Pastoral Ministry, YFGC, November, 2013.'

² For a detailed observation and analysis of the history and theology of YFGC, see Younghoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), 91-111.

convenience, YFGC's history of growth will be divided into three periods each of which however will focus on the particular location in which the church was located. Thus we will begin by narrating the history of church growth in each of these three periods.

The Pioneering and Growth of Daejo-dong Tent Church (1958-1961)

Pastor Cho, immediately after his graduation from the Full Gospel Theological Seminary, pioneered a church in Daejo-dong, a slum area of Seoul, by putting up a tent in a sesame field. In its very first meeting on May 18, 1958, there were five in attendance which included Cho himself. Although he was a distinguished graduate of a newly established seminary, it is worth remembering that at that time he was also a mere twenty-three year old inexperienced minister. His tent church suffered from many hardships as it was a small congregation with little financial resources. Nonetheless, in three years (1961) the church had exponentially grown to over five hundred in membership.

In spite of this growth the Daejo-dong tent church had to face many negative reactions from its neighbourhood. The neighbours were not only generally inhospitable but were also antagonistic at times during those initial years. During the early years of this young church, neither did it receive any dramatic increase in its resources which thereby limited its capacity to address the concerns of the people, both inside and outside the church, nor were there any momentous breakthroughs. Rather, it would not be wrong to surmise that, at that period of its history, the Church was in a desperate condition due to its hardships, both financial and otherwise.

At that time, there was a breakthrough with the occurrence of a significant miracle. A boy who had not been able to walk from birth and made his living by begging was healed after Cho and his church prayed for him. More miracles and wonders followed, filling the entire village with a new spiritual fervour and great anticipation. With each miracle a new wave of church members flooded into the tent church.³

The happenings with the tent church can be definitely described as a revival caused by the Pentecostal movement. As the church members received the Holy Spirit, experienced divine healing from their illnesses, and were recipients of blessings in their lives it brought many more into the

³ Cho emphasizes that the Holy Spirit transforms not only spiritual but all aspects of human life. Simon Chan calls this 'a practical pneumatology': '[W]hen Cho affirms that the Spirit gives power and boldness, righteousness, peace and joy, all these are not just a matter of talk but are actual experiences. There is always a real-life story to confirm the teaching'. See Simon Chan, 'The Pneumatology of David Yonggi Cho', in Wonsuk Ma et al. (eds.), *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry* (Baguio City and Goonpo: APTS Press and Hansei University Press, 2004), 99.

Church. In 1961, when the makeshift tent church was unable to accommodate all its new members, the church moved from Daejo-dong into the Seodaemun area, which was closer to the centre of Seoul. A new era in the life of the church was about to begin in Seodaemun.

The Growth of Seodaemun Full Gospel Central Church (1961-1973)

Cho established the Full Gospel Central Revival Centre in Seodaemun (central district of Seoul) in October, 1961.⁴ The miracles and wonders that had begun in Daejo-dong continued in Seodaemun as well with an increase in the number of divine healing and deliverance. These powerful works of the Holy Spirit caused an exponential growth of the church. After ten years, church membership grew to over 8,000 in 1968.

The Seodaemun church devised an organizational system for sustaining a continual church growth. The church passed down ministerial responsibilities by structuring a vast network of cell groups and their leaders. Cho was inspired by the advice of Jethro who recommended Moses to organize intermediate leaders who could lead smaller groups of Israelites with the authority entrusted by Moses. Likewise, he organized cell groups, combining several families according to the residential location of members, and commissioned women cell leaders selected and trained among lay members.⁵ Such a cell system continues to play a significant role in carrying out the lay ministry of the church even today. The Seodaemun period of YFGC experienced rapid church growth through the continuing Pentecostal dynamism reinforced by the vast mobilisation of lay leadership.

The Growth of YFGC in Yoido (1973-Present)

The Full Gospel Central Church in Seodaemun made a decision to move to the Yoido area in order to accommodate the increasing church members as early as 1968. The decision came however, in a challenging time with numerous objections and financial difficulties, particularly caused by the international oil crisis. The church overcame all challenges and finally consecrated a new church building, equipped with a main sanctuary with a seating capacity of 6,800 seats in September, 1973.

Then the church experienced an explosive growth with an increase in its membership reaching over 100,000 in 1979. Within a year, the membership doubled reaching over 200,000 in 1980. During the mid-1980s, the interiors of the main sanctuary were renovated with the increased seating capacity of 10,000. Also undertaken during this period is the construction of several

⁴ It was renamed as Full Gospel Central Church in May, 1962.

⁵ For the history and formation of the House Church Movement in Methodism and the cell system at YFGC, see Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 105-110.

auxiliary buildings which include dozens of smaller chapels and overflow spaces where people could participate in worship services through a closed-circuit TV system. As a result of this expansion, the church's membership reached 500,000 in 1985.⁶

Around that time, YFGC began to establish twenty regional chapels – or branch churches – in the suburban areas of Seoul and its vicinities, and equipped them with satellite systems for broadcasting live the worship services of the main church. When Cho retired in May, 2008, YFGC had 780,000 members, including those in these twenty regional chapels.

On the first day of January in 2010, these regional chapels became independent local congregations each serving the local community. Although this transition was a smooth process, understandably it reduced YFGC's membership down to 449,000.⁷ However, the church has continued to grow with its continuing emphasis on Pentecostal spirituality along with a strong emphasis on evangelism and discipleship of new members. This resulted in a membership of 480,000 as of August, 2012.

Factors Contributing to the Growth of YFGC

Contextual Factors

KOREAN SOCIETY IN FRUSTRATION AND DESPAIR

During the Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945), the Koreans had been deprived of all their rights: political, economic, social, cultural and even spiritual.⁸ While many young Korean men were forcefully recruited as Japanese Imperial soldiers, many young women too were forcefully enrolled into 'Military Sexual Slavery' to provide services for Japanese soldiers around the world. Middle-aged men had to serve either as military personnel or workers for the Japanese military operations. Agricultural produce and industrial products were taken to support its war efforts. In short, the Japanese colonists exploited both the Korean population as well as its resources. To make things worse, the Japanese cruelly persecuted the Korean

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⁶ Church Growth International, *Church Growth Manual 7* (Seoul: Church Growth International, 1995), 104.

⁷ This decision attracted wide attention of the Korean society and many newspapers covered the story: *The Chosunilbo*, Jan. 20, 2009; *The Dong-A Ilbo*, Jan. 21, 2009; *Kukmin Ilbo Daily*, Sept. 30, 2009; *MK Business News*, Dec. 22, 2009, etc. Korean churches in general praised this move by YFGC as an example of bringing change from the self-centred model of a single mega-congregation to a church growth model through multiplication.

⁸ For the persecution against Korean churches by Japanese imperialists, see K. Min, *Church History of Korea* [in Korean] (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1982), 278-92.

church. They forced all the Koreans to follow the emperor cult and worship their emperor. Many pastors and believers were imprisoned, tortured, and even martyred during the Japanese colonial rule.

Although, Korea was liberated from Japanese rule immediately after World War II in 1945, the Korean peninsula immediately entered into a bloody war with North Korea invading the South in 1950. The three-year long Korean War left many casualties of wounded people, broken families and material ruin. Above all, the Korean society was in complete disarray and filled with gloom and despair.

When YGFC was founded in 1958, the Korean society had not completely recovered from the wounds of the Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, which were still fresh in the Korean collective memory. Thus in the middle of the twentieth century, Korea had nothing but ruins and debris both materially and as a society. Furthermore, the area in which Cho pioneered the tent church (Daejo-dong) was one of the poorest slum areas in Seoul. Many from countryside came and settled as the urban poor. They were barely able to make a living under the hopeless conditions at Deajo-dong. From the socio-economic perspective, their need and desire for hope and improvement was strong, but there were no resources to meet such physical and social needs in the 1950s.

CHO'S EARLY DIFFICULTIES

His endeavour to pioneer a new church encountered many difficulties. In the early period of his ministry, difference between his message and those preached in the mainstream denominations was negligible. Cho was passionately preaching to his congregation that they could go to heaven and avoid hell if their sins are forgiven and they are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. However, his messages on heaven and hell appeared to fall on deaf ears. The people, suffering in abject inhuman poverty without any future hope, felt that they were already living in hell. To them, and to most Koreans at that difficult time, the God of heaven and hell was not relevant to them here on earth because that God did not even provide a bag of rice to them who were living in complete devastation, while promising eternal bliss in the distant future. Thus his evangelistic ministry did not produce much fruit.

Against this background of the hard realities of the Korean society and the lack of impact of his evangelistic endeavours, Cho felt a strong need for 'good news' for the poor. Through much struggle through the reading of the scripture, concerted prayers, and the real context he faced daily, he came to the conclusion that good news after death is only half of the gospel. The good news has to be holistic, addressing today's needs as well as the

future ones. Jesus' understanding of his mandate includes feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and giving hope to the discouraged.⁹

And life of Jesus clearly demonstrates that only through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, he was able to fulfil his mandate. Therefore, Cho brought about a paradigm shift in his ministry strategy and began to employ a Pentecostal-based ministry-paradigm which keenly sought the work of the Holy Spirit and was contingent on it. When he set up this new direction in his pastoral work with intentional focus of Pentecostal beliefs, the church began to experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit, often called 'baptism in the Spirit' with accompanying signs of speaking in tongues. The sick recovered from their illnesses, the unemployed began to get jobs, and those who were burdened with anxiety and frustrations began to revive and be hopeful. Due to these 'signs and wonders', local residents around the church began to accept the gospel, thus leading to rapid growth of the church.

THE CENTRAL MOTIVE OF THE GROWTH: THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

What were the central motives of YGFC including that of Pastor Cho for church growth? He obviously put a priority on church growth. However, as described above, while church growth itself was the goal of the church, it was mediated as it were as a natural consequence of the Holy Spirit oriented pastoral work or the Pentecostal movement. In other words, while the overarching motive of Pastor Cho led YGFC was church growth; it included the *modus operandi*, which was the Pentecostal work of the Spirit. By praying for a change of life-situation for those who were stricken with failures and disappointments in life, Pastor Cho came to carry forward the Pentecostal movement which consequently brought about church growth. Thus it can be summarized that the central motivation of church growth can be reduced to YGFC's growth as an organization. Rather, the church began to grow due to the strong emphasis on the preaching of the gospel mediated through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit began to work through the Pentecostal ministry of Pastor Cho and YGFC, which was inflamed by the passion for evangelical mission. As a consequence, the church was able to grow remarkably in spite of the harsh conditions.

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⁹ Although primarily interested in Cho's theological contextualization of Korean culture, Allan Anderson also pays attention to Cho's ability to address the context of everyday life of his congregation. See Allan Anderson, 'The Contextual Pentecostal Theology of Cho', in *David Yonggi Cho*, 143-50.

Theological Factors

PRACTICAL CHURCH GROWTH

YFGC's growth is based on Cho's incorporation of Pentecostal belief and spirituality, and his deep quest for the gospel's role in the church's contemporary context. This theological understanding was a result of the pastorally motivated theological journey of Cho and the church. This experience was eventually systematised and shared through its Church Growth International, but its crux is practical understanding and application. It was not dependent on well-designed church growth theories. One additional theological motivation for church growth is also found in the great commission of Jesus Christ: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...' (Mat. 28:19). The church took this mandate a simple command of the Lord which demands unquestionable obedience.

Cho once put church growth in the imagery of a dam: if a revival is rain, a church is a dam. Without a dam, the waters cannot be contained even by a heavy rain. Likewise, no matter how many souls are saved through a revival meeting, he observed, it is the local churches to embrace them, so that the fruit of evangelical mission can be meaningfully harvested. In Cho's mind, local churches are the centre of God's mission, including church growth.

THEOLOGY THAT ADDRESSES LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Compared to the lack of interest in theories of church growth, Pastor Cho's desire to cope with the real situation of church members was very great. In an account of his own theological formation, Pastor Cho states that 'Theology is made by the environment of life. Even though we believe in the same Jesus Christ, the poor and the rich see Jesus Christ from different angles'.¹⁰ This statement clearly indicates that the theology of Pastor Cho has been formed under the influence of his pastoral environment in which the poor, the sick and the socially underprivileged gathered together. Since he faced a harsh environment which required a practical agenda, his theology has been also coined as *Practical Pentecostal Theology* which embodied a concrete stance in the world.

Furthermore, Pastor Cho's theological proposals complemented the circumstantial challenges faced by his church, although it could be noted that classical Pentecostalism had some difficulties in responding promptly to the problems or issues of the pastoral environment of YFGC. For example, he added a 'fifth element' – namely, the Gospel of blessings – to

¹⁰ David Yonggi Cho, 'Admire the Revival' (Sermon preached at the Convention of Onnuri Church, 23 April, 2007).

the classical Pentecostal teaching on the 'Fourfold Gospel'. Pastor Cho has called this understanding of the five Gospels as the 'Fivefold Gospel'.¹¹

THE GOSPEL OF BLESSINGS

The 'Gospel of blessings' of Pastor Cho, corresponding to the second part of the threefold blessing mentioned in 3 John 1:2 – i.e., 'that all may go well with you', summarily represents the pastoral and theological stance of a Christian faith that is developed in the context of a practical life, thus a hallmark of Pastor Cho's 'Practical Pentecostal Theology'. The Gospel of blessings teaches that Christian faith brings about good things not just in the spiritual realm, but also in one's everyday life. While such a teaching can be seen as an attempt to apply the Gospel to the everyday environment of life, at the same time, it can be said that the environment of life too has inversely made a contribution to develop this understanding of a holistic Gospel. The message of the fivefold Gospel and threefold blessing has been a crucial factor in YFGC's rapid growth, because it interacted with the peculiar situation of the Korean society of the mid-twentieth century that was desperately in need of blessings, healing and the help of the Holy Spirit.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY VERSUS THEOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The theology of Pastor Cho cannot be reduced to a systematic which possesses a complete theoretical apparatus from the outset. It is rather a theology of an on-going process of adapting to the demands and challenges of pastoral circumstances. In this sense, Pastor Cho's theology can be legitimately termed as 'Pastoral Process Theology'. He confesses, "I have not been able to afford such theological luxury. I could not help holding God for my own survival, and people like me gathered together so that we were able to form such a large congregation, YFGC."¹² On one hand one is unable to directly relate the fivefold Gospel and the threefold blessing to YFGC's experience of church growth. However, on the other, when a positive attitude, faith leading to miracle, an intimate personal fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and prayer that firmly believes in getting answers from God, have been woven together with the basic structure of the fivefold Gospel and the threefold blessing, a lot of new believers have been added into YFGC, each one discovering the messages of Pastor Cho to perfectly fit the circumstances of their life.

¹¹ Cho's 'Fivefold Gospel' consists of the gospel of regeneration, of fullness with the Holy Spirit, of divine healing, of blessings, and of the second-coming of Christ.

¹² The Kukmin Ilbo, issued in Aug. 19, 2006.

The Effects of the Growth of YFGC and its Future

The Effect on the Korean Church

REIGNITION OF THE FORGOTTEN HOLY SPIRIT MOVEMENT

As YFGC, which has actively carried out the Pentecostal movement, has grown rapidly, the Holy Spirit movement that had once been at the centre of significant spiritual reformation in the earlier stages of Korean church history, but had been subsequently forgotten, has been ignited and brought to centre stage. As a matter of fact, it was the Holy Spirit movement that birthed the Korean church in the first decade of the twentieth century. Both the Wonsan Great Revival of 1903 and the Pyongyang Great Revival of 1907 that have been the driving force of subsequent revivals in the Korean church and thereafter characterized the spirituality of the Korean church were evidently powerful Holy Spirit movements. The fire of the Holy Spirit that had been turned on through those two revivals which also manifested the dominant signs of a Pentecostal revival, such as speaking in tongues and divine healing, had certainly been instrumental in the renewal of the Korean church. Moreover, it provided the necessary resources that enabled the Korean church to go through suffering such as the thirty-five-year long Japanese Imperial colonial rule and the three-year-long Korean War.

Unfortunately, this important tradition of Pentecostal revival was not successfully passed on to the next-generation churches. On the contrary, authoritarian Confucian culture had begun to exert a strong influence on the Korean church. As a result, the general atmosphere of the Korean church had become distanced from ardent Pentecostal faith which characterized its origins. Worship services had become similar to solemn rituals dedicated to God. There was a generally accepted prohibition to publicly express the joy and delight of grace – for example, the accompanying of praise with clapping. Speaking in tongues had been regarded as an unhealthy mystical phenomenon, and praying in unison was criticized as a disgraceful form of praying which an educated Christian would never practice. Furthermore, divine healing had been understood not as a grace available for the contemporary church but as a historical event that occurred only in the early church. Above all, the biblical teaching that a born-again Christian should experience the Holy Spirit in order to be empowered for daily living had almost been forgotten. In this way, the Korean church had been gradually estranged from the memory of the Pyongyang Great Revival of 1907.

Thus it should be of no surprise that when YFGC, founded in 1958, began to spread the Pentecostal faith, it was faced with different kinds of misunderstandings, despise, and even persecution. However, once YFGC began to experience explosive growth to become the largest church in the

world, misunderstandings have gradually transformed into understanding, despise into respect, and persecution into affirmation and imitation. Consequently, today, fifty-four years after YFGC was founded, it is undeniable that even the Korean churches which belong to the so-called 'mainline denominations' possess in their worship patterns some characteristics of Pentecostal faith.¹³ It is a significant feature of Korean Christianity of the early twenty-first century that almost all Korean churches, including many that belonged to the 'mainstream church' demonstrated at least a few features of Pentecostal faith, such as fullness in the Holy Spirit, ardent prayer, evangelism and spiritual passion, even while they continued to follow their inherited denominational traditions. In addition, Pastor Cho helped the Korean church at large to broaden their biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit by emphasizing the personality of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ It can be confidently asserted that the credit for reviving the Pentecostal fervour of the Korean church and for taking it back to its roots in the Holy Spirit revival movements of the early twentieth century undoubtedly belongs to YFGC.

SPREAD OF FAITH AND THEOLOGY OF BLESSINGS

As YFGC grew, and the message of Pastor Cho spread, the Korean church came to embrace the theology of blessings which had been alien to their theological heritage which was dominated by the theology of suffering. With regard to the understanding of God, the portrait changed from that of a strict and judgmental God to one who is good and loving. Historically speaking, the Korean church has experienced a lot of suffering. For example, during the brutal colonial rule, the Japanese empire enforced worship according to the Shintoism cult upon all Koreans. During the Korean War, the communists of North Korea persecuted the Christians. Likewise, the Korean church history is filled with many stories of martyrs shedding their blood for the sake of their faith. Against this historical backdrop it is but natural for suffering to be a dominant feature of Korean church. There was little expectation for blessings. The dominant picture of God the Korean church possessed was that of a God who helps endure suffering. However, they seldom knew God as also the one who blesses our embodied life and makes us enjoy good health. A God who ensures our holistic health, in that even as our soul is getting along well, everything else related to our existence also goes well with us.

It was against such a backdrop that Pastor Cho understood the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, not merely as the ground of the

¹³ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 50.

¹⁴ Younghoon Lee, 'The Life and Ministry of David Yonggi Cho and the Yoido Full Gospel Church', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7:1 (2004), 17.

forgiveness of sin, but also as the basis for healing and well-being. Furthermore, Pastor Cho's redemptive theology became the foundation for a holistic life of blessing lived under God. In other words, Pastor Cho's redemptive theology was at the heart of his theology of blessings. However, at that time, theology of blessings that emphasized on the good God who blesses all believers was unfamiliar to the Korean church. However, it soon began to spread throughout all the Korean churches in light of Pastor Cho's powerful proclamatory messages, as well as its accompaniment with signs and wonders, and the extraordinary rapid growth of YFGC. Accordingly, Korean churches that have been influenced by YFGC have been able to deliver a message that it is God's blessings through Jesus Christ that the Korean society, which desperately yearns to develop and prosper, really needs.

The Effects on the Korean Society

PROVIDING THE KOREAN SOCIETY IN DESPAIR WITH THE HOPE OF HOLISTIC SALVATION

Having suffered from the severities of the Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, the Korean society had been in total despair politically, economically, and psychologically. However, the hope-filled message of the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessings that had been so powerfully proclaimed by Pastor Cho and YFGC provided the Korean society with the necessary spiritual and psychological resources for the society to raise itself up again. Thus, both Pastor Cho and YFGC have exerted a great influence not just on the Korean church, but also on the Korean society as a whole mediated through the praxis of active Pentecostal faith. In this sense, the ministry of Pastor Cho may be compared with that of Pastor N. F. S. Grundtvig of Denmark who uplifted the Danes through a Christian movement and a spiritually-motivated education movement when they had been in a deep sense of loss of identity as the people of a vanquished nation.

Pastor Cho's message of holistic salvation was firmly based upon 3 John 1:3 – 'I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well' – and was different from the messages of the mainline Korean churches of that time. The latter seemed to address what belonged only to the spiritual realm, whereas the former offered a vision of holistic salvation and well-being that encompassed body, mind, and social relations, which included spirituality. Furthermore, Pastor Cho's teachings on Christian formation, which emphasized on the importance of positive thought and language, entailed a method for improving one's mental attitude. This understanding recognized the complexity of human existence and went beyond the simple dichotomy of belief/unbelief. He has consistently taught this method of actualizing the

power of belief in one's everyday life, thus making the Christian message relevant to the Korean society at large.

CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL STABILITY THROUGH THE 'MINJUNG' MOVEMENT

'*Minjung* theology' – roughly speaking, is the Korean adaptation of liberation theology – which focused on the uplifting of the '*minjung*', who are allegedly the people that were politically, economically, and socially oppressed. *Minjung* theologians demanded that the Christian churches should take social and political actions to protect the right of *minjung*. However, unlike their allegedly *minjung*-friendly theological stance, both the theological movement and the political activities of the *minjung* theologians failed to have any concrete contact with the everyday life of the weary *minjung* themselves: i.e., they either stayed within their ivory towers theologizing about *minjung*, or protested against the political elites of the authoritarian regime.

It was YFGC, whose congregation mainly consisted of the so-called '*minjung*', that actually met, comforted, and encouraged '*minjung*' to pursue a higher level of life. The '*minjung*' did not go to the classrooms of the elite *minjung* theologians or to the offices of the ideologically baptized *minjung* activists to resolve the problems of their daily lives and to find solace. Instead, they flocked into YFGC, where they were able to listen to a message of hope, and be taken care of by the prayers of ministers.¹⁵

Until Korea successfully attained both industrialization and democratization in the last couple of decades of the 20th century, although the Korean economy had been rapidly developed under the strict economic policy of the authoritarian regimes, the Korean society had not been stable because of the increasing gap between classes especially during the period between 1960s to the 1980s. In those decades, YFGC took the relatively lower classes of the Korean society as its primary target group for ministry and pastoral care, while, of course, the church attempted to embrace all the classes of the society. The rapid growth of YFGC obviously contributed a lot to the stabilization of the Korean society at that time as it kept strengthening the socially weak – or '*Minjung*' – by demonstrating a way for the salvation of their soul through the gospel of regeneration, a path to a life full of power, joy and thanksgiving through the gospel of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the possibility of financial improvement through the gospel of blessings, and a hopeful and developmental attitude to life through its teachings on positive thinking.

¹⁵ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 51-52.

DEVELOPING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIAL SERVICE

At a time when most Korean women had been housekeepers and their social activities had been considerably limited, the cell group system of YFGC contributed significantly to the Korean society by developing women's leadership. In the course of YFGC's explosive growth, the majority of its cell leaders and senior cell leaders were women. Furthermore, their roles in church activities had been hardly passive or secondary to that of the male pastors. Cell groups usually had a weekly cell meeting in the home of a cell member. A cell leader's task was to preach in those cell meetings, encourage and pray for his/her cell members. At the time when YFGC organized its cell group system, it was rather rare in the Korean society for women to be given any form of organizational leadership roles. However, at YFGC thousands of women were given leadership positions and bestowed with a great deal of authority. In this sense, YFGC made a huge contribution to the elevation of women's status by entrusting them with pastoral authority and responsibility.

From 1980 onwards, YFGC has also been instrumental in the development of the Korean society by means of its active participation in social services such as direct charity, education and journalism.¹⁶ The church has played a pivotal role in a variety of social services: for example, the sharing-with-others-movement in 1982, giving-blood-in-love-movement in 1988, establishment of Elim Welfare Center for the elderly without family and the education of the needy teenagers in 1988, the formation of an NGO group called 'Good People' in 1999, and more. In addition, YFGC has both raised and educated future leaders by establishing educational institutes such as Hansei University in Korea, and Bethesda Christian University in Los Angeles in the U.S. In 1988 the church also founded a daily newspaper company called *Kukmin Ilbo Daily* in order to diagnose the Korean society from a Christian perspective and to propose desirable directions for the society. YFGC also launched a movement to protect nature and involve in creation care by organizing the Christian Environmental Movement Mission in 1995 in order to carry on the mission of being good stewards of the environment and nature that God has given us.

It is primarily due to the rapid church growth that YFGC experienced that it has been able to perform all these wide-ranging, social services at a large scale for the Korean society. YFGC's growth made its church members have extensive social concerns and gave opportunities for them to actively participate in social activities. Thus YFGC has made a remarkable contribution to the positive transformation of the Korean society.

¹⁶ The 50th Anniversary History Committee, ed., *The Great Calling: Fifty Years of the Ministry of Hope* (Seoul: Yoido Full Gospel Church, 2008), 181-193.

The Effects on Churches around the World

The Korean Pentecostal movement with YFGC as its flagship church has maintained a strong relationship with major traditional western Pentecostal denominations both in terms of doctrinal position as well as organizational networks. This can be contrasted with the Chinese Pentecostal movement that draws attention for its rapid growth, yet is largely indigenous and has little connection with the western Pentecostal denominations.¹⁷ For the past half-a-century, Pastor Cho has been traveling around the world both as a conference speaker as well as participating in mass revivals, thus building close relationship with the leaders of western mainline denominations as well as Pentecostal churches. Such relationships paved the way for YFGC's growth to exert a strong influence on the churches around the world and not be ignored as merely a Korean regional phenomenon.

Leadership for World Mission and Next Generation Church Growth

The remarkable growth of YFGC has led churches around the world to have interest in the Pentecostal movement and in church growth. In 1976, Pastor Cho founded Church Growth International – or CGI – which has been ever since offering teaching and training for church growth to its members in 181 countries. There are many pastors around the world who too have experienced rapid church growth by researching the history of the church growth of YFGC, or by being mentored by Pastor Cho. The secrets of YFGC's growth have been passed down to the next generation of pastors from around the world.

YFGC's involvement in global evangelism and missions is based on its faith in the second coming of Jesus Christ, which strictly follows Classical Pentecostal theology. Propelled by eschatology, the church has installed many mission-fellowship communities that pursue missionary ministries in all the continents and in major countries around the world, and has established the department of Full Gospel World Mission in order to support these mission fellowship communities. Currently, YFGC has dispatched 703 missionaries, and runs seven theological seminaries and one university around the globe.¹⁸

YFGC is deeply networked with other global mission agencies and I was invited to the 2010 Edinburgh Missionary Conference as one of its main speakers. This can be seen as an indicator of the recognition by the world churches of the growth of YFGC and its missionary work as a representative case of the Pentecostal movement. Furthermore, it

¹⁷ Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 52-53.

¹⁸ Institute for Church Growth, ed., 'Church Growth led by Pastor Cho, which was in the Spotlight of the World', 46-49.

demonstrates the important role played by the Asian churches in world missions in the twenty-first century.¹⁹

Model of Prayer Movement

Not only has the rapid growth of YFGC attracted the attention of the world churches, but also the church members' ardent and earnest prayer life too has raised a strong international interest. One of the things that YFGC has emphasized on the most is prayer. The church always has a session devoted for 'praying in unison' in each service. Especially, in the services on Wednesdays and in the Friday night prayer meetings, a regular period of prayer in unison for about twenty minutes is allocated, and also the pastors pray for the church members by laying their hands on them during these sessions. Each district – or parish – of the church has a prayer meeting for the fullness of the Holy Spirit at the prayer mountain once a month.

YFGC stresses that without prayer, one cannot experience the works of the Holy Spirit. It believes that the first step for revival is prayer. Pastor Cho is well known for his encouragement to the Christians around the world to pray regularly. The ardent prayer movement of YFGC has challenged many churches around the globe whose interest in prayer has waned and particularly Pentecostal churches whose prayer life is not as enthusiastic as its sessions of praise.

Consistent Church Growth amidst Future Challenges

Slowdown in Church Growth in Korea

Since the end of the twentieth century, there has been an indication of a slowdown in church growth in Korea. According to the report of the National Statistical Office, the number of Protestant Christians had decreased by 1.6 % from 1995 to 2005.²⁰ While this may correspond to the general decrease in the Korean population, attention must also be given to the increase in complaints from the Korean society directed against the church.

Contemporary Korean society possesses an increasingly hostile attitude against the exclusive claims of the Christian Gospel partly due to the influence of religious pluralism. A rising antipathy to the evangelistic strategies of the conservative churches is inevitably connected to the slowdown in the rate of church growth. However, on the other hand, the

¹⁹ Yeonghoon, Lee, 'The Holy Spirit and Diaconia', 2011 Future Church Conference: Church and Diaconia (Seoul: College of Theology, Yonsei University/United Graduate School of Theology Yonsei University, 2011), 214-215.

²⁰ The total census of the population & household of the National Statistical Office, 1995, 2005

demands on the contribution of church to general society have been increasing, and equally the Korean society expects Christian individuals to live an exemplary life. To summarize this paradox, while the Korean society at large is reacting to the exclusive claims of the Christian Gospel, it continues to demand the social services and pious lifestyle of the Church and Christian individuals respectively. Although it cannot be claimed that this paradox is novel to this present age in Korean society but that it has existed in other societies in the history of Christianity, however, it can be asserted that in today's situation these social demands are getting more intensified which is a distinctive characteristic of the twenty-first century social response to the Church. The Korean church would have to wrestle with this paradox if it is to ensure consistent church growth in the future.

The Expansion of Holistic Salvation to the Whole Society

I would like to argue that in order to ensure consistency in church growth in the future, the Korean church should continue to satisfy the social needs of the Korean society. This however, does not mean that the church should implicitly accept the social demands imposed upon it without discernment. Although the church must do its best to resolve the conflicting demands of the society on her, the church cannot be degraded into a simple social service institute, deserting the message of the Gospel. While the church should listen to the voice of the society with respect to its demands on the individual believer's moral life, however, the church should not conform to the demands of religious pluralism of contemporary Korean society that expects a Christian to be a moral religious person who does not practice evangelization.

Nevertheless, it is true that both YFGC and the Korean church should continue to pursue a higher level of engagement with regard to social services at the community level, and also higher standards of holiness in individual lives which alone will, I argue, maintain consistency in church growth. In its service to the society, the church should not lord over it, but do everything with the attitude of humility. Moreover, individual Christians also must do their best in bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their practical lives just as much as seeking the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit.

YFGC focuses on the reinforcement of the social dimension of the Gospel by complementing the teaching dimension with a view to envision Christian salvation and life that is holistic in nature. On an autobiographical note, since my inauguration as the senior pastor of YFGC four years ago, I have given precedence to social almsgiving in the budget. While I was in office as the president of NCKK in 2011, I was instrumental in creating awareness about the problem of homelessness and raising support to address it in the Korean church. In addition, YFGC is actively involved in a variety of social services, such as (a) the relief work for people in disaster around the world through the NGO, Good People, (b) efforts towards

easing of tension and interchange and cooperation between the North and the South through the establishment of *Cho Yonggi Heart Hospital* in Pyongyang, North Korea, and (c) the support for North Korean defectors' settlement. The church and Christians should be good neighbors with the attitude of humility and service. If we can ensure this, then we can confidently assert that our future society will continue to openly listen to the message of the Gospel that the church preaches confidently.

Conclusion

The growth of YFGC is a monumental event in the history of world Christianity. It has been made possible only through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit along with the Full Gospel's enthusiasm for the Gospel. When the Holy Spirit worked, the church has been able to reciprocate by opening its eyes to the situation of the Korean society and the needs of its neighbors, and by preaching the message of hope based on the Gospel from a place of despair and weakness. When the church has preached the message of the fivefold Gospel and holistic salvation of the threefold blessings, the doors of the hearts of its neighbors that had been shut because of despair have been seen to open, and their lives changed resulting in an explosive growth of the church, which can be termed as nothing short of the miraculous.

The Holy Spirit who works today among the churches, which constitute the body of Christ, wants to open the eyes of the church to the life situation of its neighbors who are groaning with the problems and vices of the twenty-first century. Responding to this urgent call of the Holy Spirit will alone enable churches and Christians to serve their society with the attitude of humility, while keeping themselves sanctified and transformed. It is then that the Holy Spirit will continue to do his mighty work both in the churches and in the lives of Christians, whose consequence can only be the growth of the church of Jesus Christ in our world.

‘SILVER AND GOLD HAVE I NONE’: HEALING AND RESTORATION IN PENTECOSTALISM

Elizabeth Salazar Sanzana

Introduction

The words ‘restoration’ and ‘healing’ are part of life and identity of Pentecostal people. Although Christianity has always had these dimensions, Pentecostalism makes of this a crusade of evangelism and mission. For that reason, it is essential to deduce the dimension it has had for the mission, and how it has to be understood, starting from the emerging Protestant movements of recent decades.

The call to reconciliation that God does, his will of restoring and healing, proves that he offers us a life in its fullest measure. This subject calls us to reflect on, because we see every day the consequences of living in a fragmented world, which is against God’s unique creative work. For example, a few days ago, in the region where I live, a young man died because of Hantavirus, which is transmitted by a mouse that comes down to the cities looking for food, strayed from its habitat. An unfortunate situation, consequence of a lack of organization in urban development that does not consider the fauna of our forests; but this problem is just the top of the iceberg. Forests overexploitation, loss of wetlands, excessive emission of non-degradable garbage, pollution, and all typical problems of these abuses of natural resources, show that we have lived with a short-term, mean vision, of what environment is. Our habitat has been disturbed and now we are paying the consequences of centuries of indifference that need to be restored.

We note that diseases and disorders are at all levels, and even when we try to find solutions, most of them are drastic and arbitrary and do not consider the whole problem neither its roots; for all the problems we daily face, we cannot think that the solution is to kill animals that threat human life, lock thieves, stone prostitutes or kill whatever bothers us about this world. We live in an extreme reality where we find, every day, signs of loss in the habitat we live in, and the struggle between our desire for ‘progress’ and our survival as part of this cosmos.

In view of this deadly reality, what salvation means? What is healing? What did Christ restore on the Cross?

We start from the premise that healing and restoration are integral part in all aspects of life. However, we go further and challenge the holistic

approach against the social illness that affects our society and the systematic environmental degradation. We need to think about this call to reconciliation with God and his creation.¹ We wonder: Is the church healthy and restored enough to accept the challenge of reflecting this on the mission?

In the Acts of the Apostles there is a challenge for an everyday situation of healing and restoration, where we see a confession: Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk' (Acts 3:6, KJV).

We perceive that Pentecostal church is seen today in a wrong way, and people tend to expect things that this church cannot provide. 'We have no silver or gold', apostles said but *what they had*, thanks to the grace of God, was made available for necessity. What do we have today as Pentecostal church? Are we aware of what we have? In the freedom of God, how have we been blessed, as family of faith, so as to bless others? Is what we *do have* useful to what nowadays society needs? And are the things we do these days, as part of the body of Christ, pertinent to the world we dream? We want to appeal and reflect on what we are as Pentecostals and what we have to offer to a world that needs health and restoration.

What Do We Have?

As a confessional family, our roots are connected with suburbs and popular classes; our story was born in poor sectors of the cities; and we do not have silver or gold to meet the most urgent material needs. If we do not have economic solvency enough (which rules market offerings), we cannot meet the expectations of mankind and what is promoted as valid in the media. So, what validates our message? What do we have?

Even when many congregations try to adapt themselves and offer 'silver and gold', they live in a constant fear of failure. Economic prosperity is accepted as a synonym of blessing and the ephemeral becomes relevant in the Christian message, moving away from what the church of Jesus Christ must promote. The church, composed of those who have answered Christ's call, has no renown, wealth, or power to offer, because what God really has to share is not there.² Silver and gold are not what Pentecostal church can provide, by far; even when it could be solvent enough, it will never be what multinationals establish as economically successful. But its strength is the gospel, and its dynamics are centred in love, beyond whatever current society believes. The straight value of market drives our society to place

¹ E. Salazar-Sanzana, 'Grace and Reconciliation: A Relevant Topic for Today', in Israel Batista (ed.), *Grace, Cross and Hope in Latin America* (Sao Leopoldo, Sinodal: CLAI, 2006).

² Rene Kruger, *Dios o el Mamón. Análisis semiótico del proyecto económico y relacional del Evangelio de Lucas* (Buenos Aires: LUMEN, 2008).

purchasing power and economic prosperity as the core; but Gospel makes us focus on the risen Christ and his mercy and love.

The question we ask to ourselves is clear and challenges us to review our mission: Which are our strengths? From our Pentecostal identity, we review what constitutes our corporate identity and make us being together, thinking about the contributions we can make for God's mission today. It is necessary to insist that we recognize the strengths of other confessional families, but we believe that, as part of the body of Christ, we have our own specific strengths given by God, and these strengths make us different.

We are Community

Renewed communities represent a constant ferment in established ecclesiastical life. From its beginning, the church has been raised as a community living his faith and hope. To Pentecostals, faith is sealed in baptism of the Spirit, in a gathered community (Acts 1:8), to strength our life on Christ and to testify to the whole world and preach the gospel (Mk. 16:15). This collective reality as people of God enables us to understand that the call to become part of the body of Christ provides us 'wealth' drawn from rich diversity of faith communities. They spoke different languages and understood things in a variety of ways, but they understood between themselves that they were united people, so the world could believe that God have sent them (Jn. 17:21).

This invitation is to become part of a community, to be part of the family of God, the house of faith and to sit at God's table freely.³ It is an appropriation of a place and a right that gives us meaning and identity.

Being a community, as a response to what Jesus gave us, helps us to identify causes for division and rejection. Our communities meet in an open table in urban slums of the world, which makes Pentecostals a very accessible and dynamic people. Those who watch Pentecostal communities from outside understand that this reality makes us vulnerable. However, for Pentecostals it is a great strength when viewed from the dynamics of faith.

Being a community calls us to be more aware of our spiritual unity in a common mission and testimony, as a product of the Holy Spirit's work, but not as a marketing strategy. Being a community makes us understand that we are the body of Christ, enjoying God's sovereignty but avoiding the temptation of becoming 'heads'. Being a community make us live a daily Pentecost and understand that mission starts at home, with the care and love that connect us with others on the same way. There is a great strength in the multiple Pentecostal manifestations through history, in its dynamics and renewal, witnessing God's mercy and daily gracefulness.

³ Russel, Letty, *La iglesia como comunidad inclusiva* (San José /Buenos Aires: UBL/ ISEDET, 2004).

Knowing how to be church and community is the wisdom that defeats typical neoliberal individualism amidst a daily inter-subjective and interpersonal relationship. This dynamic overcomes selfishness, narcissist individualism and the inhuman way of being 'the mass', with interested associations in an anonymous society that pass through this world without knowing each other, without recognizing ourselves as the 'other'.

Finally, being a community in the Pentecostal family is to assume our diversity.⁴ Equality is lived through acceptance of all and being a true community with relationships built on the unity of the Spirit. Social class asymmetries and wounding stratification, gender, race, class and even age segregation, are defeated. Community concept is established, undoubtedly, when individualism and division characteristics of culture are overcome.⁵ This proper characteristic of Pentecostalism, sharing family and space, and living in a unity based on a common experience within the Spirit, can be understood as a counterculture.⁶

We are Pentecostals

As Pentecostals we love Holy Spirit within the unity of Trinity. The Spirit, together with God the Father and God the Son, is the missionary sent by the Father and the Son to give life and power to the church of God called to the mission.

This living spirituality we have, worked out in relation with the Spirit, provides us a dynamic, close and daily communication. We love the Holy Spirit and we pray for his presence, because without the testimony that the Spirit offers of Christ, our own testimony is vain. We know that without the Spirit conviction and confidence work, our preaching is vain. Without the Spirit gifts, guidance and power, our mission is just a human effort; without the fruits of the Spirit our lives do not reflect the beauty of the Gospel, thus we are nothing.

To be Pentecostals is to believe in this Spirit of life, Spirit of grace that makes us sense life in its plenitude and perceive all that is not just or saint. It makes us responsible and impetuous bearers of the glad tidings of

⁴ We must remember that the start of Pentecostalism in various places was an explosion of diversity; the clearest evidence of God's presence within these groups was that they could praise God in different ways in a common celebration. For Pandita de Ramabai (1858-1922) in India, see Amy Oden, *In Her Words: Women's Writing in the History of Christian Thought* (Abingdon: Estados Unidos, 1994).

⁵ Cf. Oden, *In Her Words*, 223: 'Through her study, Ramabai came to believe that the Hindu religion enslaved women, teaching that women were 'very bad, worse than demons', were to worship their husbands 'with whole-hearted devotion as the only god' and were denied attainment of Moksha, or liberation from Karma, unless they achieved through some meritorious religious act, reincarnation as a high caste man'.

⁶ E. Salazar-Sanzana, *Experiencia Religiosa Pentecostal e interculturalidad* (Santiago: CETELA/USACH, 2009).

salvation through risen Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches us to be saints, restores us daily with his clear message of comfortable work.

We are diversity

To have a diverse spirituality within the community is a great strength for Pentecostals. Division between human beings and the whole creation is product of a social conditioning and doesn't belong to God's plan. Pentecost joined what was separated in a common mission.

The Spirit's dance and its diversity of gifts are conceived as a community gathered in the same faith. If we look our communities in all continents, we can see that in each country diversity is the great wealth of Pentecostal community. To be one in Jesus Christ is strengthened by Pentecostal communities with all its peculiarities; differences are promoted while uniformity and standardization are faced up.

This diversity, considered in the church's history as a disorder and a threat to 'unity', is at the end, in Pentecostalism, what we are able to offer as strength to ecumenical movement. It is a table to which we are all invited, a table where the One who presides is the unique One for all of us; that shows Christ in his plurality because, as St. Paul said: 'nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me'.

To take diversity as strength helps us to understand in a better way our psychosocial reality and appreciate this diversity, especially in front of other confessional families. Differences are supported by relationships of power and the sense of competence or protagonism, but both are far away from what church Pentecostal pretends to be.

Unfortunately, the society in where we live reinforces and praises negative otherness since first socialization in childhood, as author Reardon says.⁷ This negative perception of 'otherness' starts even from the first religious socialization received by a child in this society. In Latin America, catholic religious context of conquest handed down hostility to anything different from Roman Catholic. This in turn was reversed when conversion happened, and the rejection to catholic rites and its symbols, creeds and customs still remains.⁸

When we study in depth this psychosocial elements and its influence in the genesis of our fear for diversity, sexist socialization is the first type of socialization given, which put us at disadvantage for an equal relationship. Some woman authors agree that Christian communities, in general, have fear of what is different, in such a way that they spend much time dealing with margins or limits, not trying to join with outsiders, but protecting

⁷ Betty Reardon, *Sexism and the War System* (New York: Estados Unidos, Syracuse Univ Press, 1996).

⁸ It is interesting to notice that among Pentecostals the symbols of the cross (empty), bells, candles etc., are not accepted because of their 'catholic' origin.

themselves from outsiders. That is, they lose their sense of being kind and friendly.⁹

We are poor and excluded

Although already mentioned as a specificity of Pentecostalism, nowadays we can not ignore that excluded population of all continents are answering the call of God and gathering together in Pentecostal churches. It's not a lesser fact that Pentecostal churches and communities have been refuges and welcoming spaces for migrants and displaced people in big cities, specially natives and country people. This affective spaces turn into refuge spaces in big cities. Moreover, communities offer a certain order to life, whether for socialization or for biblical teaching itself. This order and affection become an essential part of spirituality in Pentecostal communities.

Undoubtedly, these characteristics of being an unsophisticated community can be found also in other confessional families, but in Pentecostalism it is a permanent attitude in life. It is a way to understand, in some cases with an imposed austerity, the Christian way of life in the middle of a society hostile to spiritual matters.

Most of sociological discussions in the 60s showed us that the concern for Pentecostal rising was due to its development in popular classes, and that this approach would be overcome on the next two decades. This was meant mainly because of the second or third Pentecostal generations, who overcame their deprivation level and achieved a higher social class.

Recent investigations in our continent shows that, even when Pentecostal communities develop amidst places of poverty and social exclusion, they offer at the same time dignifying conditions that provide a sense of belonging, fidelity and deep human relationship among people.

Furthermore, this recognition of the founding experience (poverty and exclusion) makes that Pentecostal congregations continue being identified with the lower classes, although most of them had passed the gap of 'low class'. The restoration of the 'converted' person is transferred to his family and his descendants, and becomes a founding fact that integrates the religious experience of each member of the family. Thus, the identification with poor people is not an ideological issue, but an appeal of staying with suffering people, as their ancestors. Thus, working with prisoners, migrants, prostitutes, homeless and others, is not considered a social work, but evangelism.

Simplicity and austerity of some congregations should also be aligned as part of their identity. The church does not live its poverty as a penance, but the simplicity of the message, conveys in groups closer to this kind of simple communication. We must look this proximity to the mission of the

⁹ M. Kinnamon, *Truth and Community: Diversity and Its Limits in the Ecumenical Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988).

church in the middle of society not as a planned specificity but heartfelt, emotional. That is, Pentecostal communities identify themselves with lower classes, even if their congregations are professionals and middle class people, because their origin and their austerity connects them emotionally.

What Do We Have to Give?

We have much to offer as part of the body of Christ, understanding that we have received from God to give, to share with humanity. Even more, to know these strengths and specificities make us privileged communities to respond to the message of salvation and healing today.

The 'World Day of Prayer 2011' had Chile as the country-emphasis for which the world prayed. We were called to reflect on the passage in Mark 6:30-44: How many loaves do you have? It's a good question for the large Pentecostal family in its diversity and strength. Surely the leaders of other church denominations have placed their eyes on Pentecostals for their growth and numerical presence in the continent, and have been tempted to look to what is visible and not the most important. That is because Pentecostalism is conspicuous for its convening power and its numerical results, but it is time to understand that the Pentecostal family is not only that, but we are communities with a large hidden curriculum, which is not so evident in sermons and in speeches, but in practical ethics.

Peter said: 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you'. This challenges our life in Christ, in front of a biased gaze on Pentecostalism as a model of success in numerical growth.¹⁰ We know what constitutes us in a specific denominational family: children of God, baptized by the power of the Holy Spirit. For the current Mission, we are called to appreciate and recognize what we have to share.

We understand that the mission of God continues to the end of the earth and the church is in that mission with the help of the Holy Spirit. Throughout history the Church of Christ has always been challenged to define the mission. The Holy Spirit guides us every day into all truth and all justice, and helps us to discern.

The message of salvation

'In the name of Jesus' means that we are making the call to repentance and salvation. The centre of our message is soteriological. There is not another goal for those that have been called to the mission of God than to confess Christ and call to repentance.

Salvation is understood not only in terms of eternal life in the future, but present life which culminates in Christ, this glorious future at the end of

¹⁰ Samuel Escobar, 'Los evangélicos en América Latina hoy (I)', *Apuntes Pastorales* 22:1 (2003).

times. Life in Christ leads to a way of seeing what salvation means to me and therefore for others.

The additions of which we speak every day, require that we clarify what is the semantic core of our daily evangelizing practice, and it is our mission. Of this salvation preached derives health and vice versa, and many testify to have been healed, and then saved. This abundant life is the ultimate purpose of the Lord, and restores us to full life and future; this abundant life that starts from the day that Jesus Christ is revealed to the person.

The blessing of the Messiah who came to bring salvation and to heal wounds is continued by Christians, who can make 'greater things'. The healing authority of Christ is invoked to act through their sons and daughters that continue his work. They are part of the signals that the Kingdom of Heaven is present among us.

Health Message

Healing is a strength in Pentecostalism. The call to preach the gospel carries the message of the miracles performed by Jesus and the assurance that those who follow him would be enabled to do 'greater things' than those made by him. The challenge to be healing communities has been undertaken without much planning; however, to be ambassadors of the gospel of salvation and healing has led Pentecostal churches to create special spaces where the faith in prodigies and miracles accompany this eternal salvation given by grace through Jesus Christ. There are specific ritual actions that confess the healing Christ: laying on of hands, anointing with oil, prayer made over clothes of the sick person, prayer chains, vigil of intercession, among others. Our churches are places of healing and health for those who are suffering on the road. Many of us in the Pentecostal communities have eaten the healthy leaves of the tree of Life (Rev. 22:2). The promise of Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to be with us makes us understand that we are always within this inexhaustible source of health.

In Pentecostalism health goes beyond the recovery of individual health. It takes the social dimension and restores family harmony for the common good. That is why people confuses salvation and healing; for spiritual healing is salvation and body healing is restoration of the entire environment. A person who has been healed fully enjoys Christ's salvation, and opens the heart to understanding and faith while sealing it for the Day of Redemption.

This fact is very evident in the dynamic that occurs between the good received (health) and the social impact that this has. The healing of the paralytic is not only the possibility of walking again, but incorporates the whole family in this free joy, because disease has connotations beyond the affected individual. The same applies to the terminally ill, so that everyone around the person joins to the joy of this mercy received, including

physicians themselves who are touched by this situation and are incorporated in the good received, that defies science.

The Pentecostal hermeneutic horizon allows an approach to the biblical message and the specific topic on health / salvation from a similar background and experience of those communities and authors who produced the biblical narratives. Vulnerable situations of impoverishment, family and social disintegration is the framework where Jesus operates healings, which is a parallel with the reality that large populations throughout the world live today. Access to health, access to spaces and opportunities for health care are very low. The way health care is appreciated, utilized and promoted in the ministry of Jesus, is similar to what the Pentecostal community does.

Some early supporters and followers of Jesus came to him for healing. These early followers of Jesus, as well as many current Pentecostals, are nourished by the vision of a healing God, very close and concerned with human beings, as part of a community and also as individuals.¹¹ This healing that accompanies the life of the church is enough to live in abundance. Indeed, the hope of healing leads people to a restoration that allows a meaningful quality of life for the individual, its family and the community that becomes part of the experience. The question is about the sense that health takes in front of salvation, and the way we can understand it today as part of the mission, and not confuse the Gospel in its soteriological dimension.

That is, when we talk about healing today we are facing what would be a healing restoration of life, since many diseases that distress humanity are those for which medical science has no answers. Diseases afflict the health of the patient and his environment as well, frustrating hopes and dreams. That is why Pentecostalism sees that the importance of God as a healer transfers the miracle itself, it goes beyond the cure. That is, health makes it through the physical level to the spiritual level, from the concrete to the desired.

The inclusive message of Jesus called to salvation and the common good. Health miracles transformed people beyond what we call miracle in the traditional context. 'We should not understand this as metaphysical miracle showing the qualities of Jesus, but as a consequence, we can also imagine, of solidarity and love prevailing in this movement of the poor'.¹²

In no case is health a prerequisite or is required for the work of God, neither a further compromise. The healing is accompanied by the providence of God that puts His power and mercy to heal that specific person. It is part of the manifold grace of God. The concept of physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health is understood from the sovereignty

¹¹ Daniel Chiquete, *Haciendo camino al andar* (San José, s/e, 2007), 131.

¹² Luise Shottroff, 'Women as Followers of Jesus', in Norman Gottwald (ed.), *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 423.

of God that in his will allows health, which is nothing else than the direct intervention of God's power in life, to increase faith, seal his work, and to intervene in history with his gospel of love.

The diseases that God allows in some cases are understood as an evidence that helps to purify the soul and thus making us better Christians, or as a consequence of sin, and even as a direct attack of evil and focus on the spiritual cause. Whatever the case, the disease needs God to be overcome, we must understand that Jesus Christ on the cross gave us salvation and his blood has the power to heal our wounds. Whatever the reason: If the diseases are due to lack of faith, poverty and precarious environment, refusal or the need that his name is exalted, healing today occurs in churches in various surprising ways. There are multiple ways that the Holy Spirit uses to break with sin and unbelief. No doubt for some it can be just a touch of the Spirit of God, for others it is necessary mud and saliva (Jn. 9:1-12). But what is a clear testimony for Pentecostal communities is that God heals today as He did in his ministry on earth, with no difference in power and authority over history.

Restoration Message

The mission in history is understood as a restoration of full life. Health and salvation of a person are part of the restoring work of God, everything is made new. It is the good new in which a womb can breed again, the lame walk and the blind see, the voiceless are given words and justice is done to helpless, the powerless are empowered, it is a way to restore a natural order that God wants for the world. This restoration of health is not concreted only when the blind see and the dumb speak, as the mysteries of God have to do with a restoring which is concretized in the quality of life and the way persons integrate their abilities to the project of God.¹³ Restoration is not unconnected with the sovereignty of God, and reveals that his love is beyond what we understand as right or 'normal'.

Restoration, as we understand it, is what God is doing in order to reconcile man with himself, with his neighbor, with the cosmos and especially with Him. Thus we confess that this is what the Christian church today, not only the Pentecostal, is needing as renewal. We need to be open to a restoration that means deconstructing ideologies, re-establishing social relationships that have been built from the power, and start thinking that society can and should be different with God.

In restoration God is fully involved, who responds to the need of human beings when facing suffering. Not always things are made new, because to restore means necessarily to assume what it was: 'always sinners, but

¹³ It is no coincidence that we find in Pentecostal communities ministries of signs, schools for parents of autistic persons, children with mental disabilities, or ministers of God with physical disabilities.

repentant'. In this dimension restoring means being responsible for the consequences of our sinful attitudes in the past. Restoration is directly related to the will of the human being and the will of God.

This dialectical tension, as a characteristic of the restoration work, puts us in the sense of being the work of God in his sovereign process in which He has no memory of our sins, yet let us understand the living testimony of his ineffable grace. It is a paradox that helps us in the way of who we are as a people of God and our responsibility in contemporary discipleship.¹⁴

RESTORING WHAT HAS BEEN DAMAGED BY SIN

What does this change mean for Christians whose faith is intertwined with the glory and beauty of God's creation, but is put into question when that same creation is corrupted and changes in an irreversible way?

Climate changes and the changes in our own lives, that must be adapted to reality, frighten us. It is therefore essential to know that the grace God offers redemption and that this is bidirectional: it is vertical because it allows the restoration of human relationships with the Creator, but we tend to forget the other part of this relationship, which is horizontal, and aims to heal the damaged relationships between human beings with their own lives and the rest of creation.

It's a touch of God that strengthens us and starts a process of awareness of our own condition. Pentecostal identity is affirmed in this constant process of sainthood and daily restoration. However, as mentioned by Alvarez 'personal identity must be expressed through social holiness: a testimony to transform the world'.¹⁵ The way we have taken possession for centuries over God's creation, have meant that our irresponsible conduct as human beings is leading us to a nearly total dissociation with the cosmos.

Although some have warned about the urgent need to promote an ethic of social responsibility on the management of natural resources and the care and stewardship of creation, it is our indigenous brothers and farmers who have given us an example in how to live in harmony with it. The pressing need to restore good relations with the environment is part of what God wants and urges us to do.

This call for restoration is in opposition to the currently dominant school of thought that affirms the primacy of economy over nature. The current growth policy contributes every day to break this relationship between people and nature.

As Pentecostals we have had an epistemological shift in our theology in relation to ecology, for our own communities have incorporated this theme

¹⁴ Wolfgang Vondey, 'Pentecostal Identity and Christian Discipleship', *Cyberjournal of Pentecostal/Charismatic Research* (www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj6/vondey.html).

¹⁵ Carmelo Alvarez, *Alborada de tiempos fecundos. Una teología ecuménica y Pentecostal* (Ecuador: CLAI, 2006), 73.

as part of the testimony. A restoration that goes beyond spiritual life, and takes charge of social sins. Our communities have been driven to become instruments of restoration for the burdens of a troubled world that demands success.

As spiritual communities we have been refuge communities for people who have suffered psychological damage. The multiple diseases and disorders of today need to be intervened by healthy spaces and hope for an integral restoration of the people. As man stands against expectations, dreams and needs promoted by the media, humanity needs a strong voice that deconstructs these false hopes and happiness. The restoration given by God leads us to a restorative grace of dignity, of the centrality of God's love on lives, of freedom, of acceptance.

The restoration of lives driven by competitive spirits that destroy affection, lives full of confusion, lives that do not consider the one at their side, that do not integrate the different, that discriminate for a comfortable living. Therefore the Holy Spirit calls us to be instruments of life, that with his fruits we can stand in favor of good and that we can discern what God wants to restore His glory.

Overcoming what sin has separated is important to generalize care as a human value. Therefore, from the ethics of care we advocate ourselves as one humanity, in which the neighbor is the other as individual, not the other in general. The differences from the ethics of care are valued and respected. This opening to the wide diversity expands our ethic ability to accept our neighbor as the one who calls us to love, which is also a call to ecumenism.

URGENT RESTORATION OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS CREATION: PEACE ON EARTH.

One of the methodological efforts in theological study has been the attempt to explain the links between violence, peace building and care of creation. The holistic vision that derives from the recognition of the environmental crisis because of climate change, has economical, political and spiritual components, that lead us to trust God's desire for our world. As Pentecostal people we constantly emphasize the theme of life in the Spirit and believe in the gift of God to his people and his holistic transformative power.

We are sons and daughters of an awesome God who created the heavens and the earth and made us stewards of his work. The Spirit of Life, as a principle creator and sustainer of life in all its dimensions leads us to live fully in Shalom. So when it comes to restoration, we are integrating the desire of God to man. As Alvarez says: 'A life-giving spirit is not only strength but a manifestation of God in history and great convening to the unity of all people and cultures of the earth'.¹⁶

¹⁶ Carmelo Alvarez, *Alborade de tiempos fecundos* (Quito: CL.AI, 2006), 91.

The call of God to live in peace gives us the mandate to empower us as sons and daughters of God, against the principalities and potentates that have kept us in the midst of violence. God does not want the death of the sinner, but that he 'repents and live', and that is why the peace to which we are called leads us to fight for a just society, because this battle is just. It is not 'flesh and blood' as the word says, and no doubt that the paradigms in which we now move in society indicate that there is no place to live in peace without bombs or without the military power to guarantee it.

Restore social relations between races and classes and especially between men and women has been one of the strongest fighting carried out by the church of Christ (Gal. 2:28). Patriarchal construction, based on power, has led us to live separately and not in harmony as children of one God. To be restored to life means that we are equal human beings before God and that everyone, from his own specificity, has been invited to work in His mission.

This restoration also forces us to look at what the Holy Spirit has made with respect to race, class, ethnic groups. If we look today at the various Pentecostal movements in the world, they are experiencing wonderful restoration processes in the relations of human beings. Blacks, Indians, Hindu, poor, women, boys, girls and elders are called to a life in the Spirit, have become tools that have influence in society. Just remember the words of Pandita Ramabai¹⁷ in the last century, already mentioned, about what the Holy Spirit makes in life, rearranging our cultural and social conditions.

Moreover, today we cannot understand how God's restorative hand was in all what happened in Latin America with groups formed in the revival. This movement broke with the protocol of being a marginal religious minority, and became a massive expression of faith, that had an impact on the history of various countries. Advocacy continues to be a powerful testimony of what the powerful action of the Spirit can do in the lives of people.

This means that we are part of a movement that the Spirit has carried on to be recognized as a transgressor of the established order, and now we can not be astonished to see that because of the Pentecostal movements blacks and Indians came to the parliament and led women for civil charges.

We talk about restoration because what we observe in the life of the Pentecostal movement indicates that disturbed people receive new life, are dignified and empowered for the good of life, with a clear impact on their lives and their environment.

Conclusion

After doing this tour of what is Pentecostalism, by the grace of God, we can argue that the challenges are not easy for a growing church in the midst of a

¹⁷ Cf. Cita N°5

great religious skepticism. We recognize that it is a counterculture that burst in society endowed with gifts, and built 'community', which obviously had an impact on society.¹⁸

However, we are challenged because our society today lacks of good health and is expectant for good news in front of the cosmos unbalance. There is an evident inability to react to the actual consequences of an historic abuse of human beings and natural resources, beside the constant individualism that leaves humans outside their natural habitat, as beings in relationship. Our society is sick and needs the church to fulfill its role as a bearer of good tidings, that promotes a life of mutual caring.

We must explore what has been our history. The Pentecostal church has shown that it is possible to achieve a fair collective organization, that through its own affective dynamic can live in a community of equals, maintaining their specificities around the table of communion and love. Communion in the Spirit's power, salvation and healing for the sick and enslaved.

As Pentecostals we must rescue the potential to be the family of God, assisted by the Spirit, to live fully in the common good. We are healing and restoration spaces that have their real effect today. Society suffers from disability, and turns out and rejects those who do not have the ability to keep pace with the system, which are the ones to whom we owe our mission daily.

It should be mentioned that Pentecostalism in some cases has been reduced and discriminated because of healing (cure), prosperity (economic) and deliverance (exorcism) and seen as a magical and alienated religion. However, we can see that Pentecostalism has crossed the barrier of indifference to those that suffer and are marginalized from economical, political and cultural spaces, and has been concerned about the reintegration of people who have never been considered in society.¹⁹ There are no special social programs to incorporate prisoners and offenders of the law to society, nor alcoholics, or those with different disabilities, or migrants, but all of them can find a place in communities that give hope for life, dignity and affection, and eternal salvation. This helps us to focus on what the Kingdom of God is among humanity, which is not completely from here, and that is why we live timidly its signals and is not declared in its real dimension, which is eternal.

We have been empowered by God to restore the lives of people, to intervene in society and fight for the common good. This option, which seems a whim of God, is part of what we always see in the journey of Jesus through the villages and roadsides. Needy persons are marginalized by the

¹⁸ Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 184.

¹⁹ C. Mariz, 'El debate en torno del pentecostalismo autónomo en Brasil', *Sociedad y Religión* 13 (1995).

political, economic and cultural powers, that is why they are the ones who require the direct intervention of God in their despair.

It is this holistic restoration, new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, that encourages us to continue serving God in Spirit and truth. Spirituality becomes a mission and mission becomes spirituality that impels everyday living. The mission is lived from the transformation that the Triune God makes in the human being and his/her environment, sending the person back to society. For Pentecostalism mission theology and pneumatology are not separated, and therefore restoration in this process is not the end but a means.



PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

Opoku Onyinah

Introduction

A prominent issue in the twentieth century mission activity was the ability to combat principalities and spiritual powers. Right from the beginning of creation, there appears a fundamental conflict between God and a being, called Satan or the devil, in which humanity is involved. This being always tries to thwart the mission of God in people's lives. For example, this situation is pictured in the lives of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, in Job's life in the book of Job, in David's life, and in the life of Joshua the high priest. On earth, Jesus went through this experience where the devil tried to divert the course of his mission. The battle comes to a climax in Revelation where the devil attempts to exercise all his power against Christ and his kingdom. There is no mission of God without an attempt by the devil to stop it.

Consequently, throughout Church history, human beings have tried diverse means to deal with Satan and his powers. From this backdrop, this study examines how this concept of spiritual powers evolved from early Christianity to contemporary Christianity. It begins with a brief presentation of spiritual powers from biblical perspective. The writings of some of the church fathers are examined to see their views on spiritual powers. The understanding of principalities and powers from western perspective are also examined. These are examined to find out how these areas eventually developed into another level of spiritual warfare including territorial warfare in the twentieth century. The effects of territorial warfare are discussed as well as the role of deliverance in warfare. The roles that Africans, Asians, and South Americans place in this warfare are highlighted, and a finally a pastoral reflections and guidance are offered on the subject.

Satan and His Demonic Kingdom

The Bible is quite clear about a being, sometimes explicitly called Satan (e.g., Job 1:7-2:10; Mt. 4:10), the devil (Lk. 8:12; 1 Pet. 5:8), the adversary or

enemy (1 Tim. 5:14-15), and by other names,¹ who is powerful and presides over a 'kingdom' in league with other spirits that oppose God and his people. The Old Testament hints at the complexity of the spirit world (his kingdom) which implies some sort of hierarchical order and control.² For example, the author of Deuteronomy affirms God's sovereignty over the nations and contrasts it with sacrificing to the gods of the nations who are considered demons.³ The issue of hierarchical control receives special attention in the book of Daniel where a passage describes 'celestial powers' that have particular connections to the successive empires of Persia and Greece (Dan. 10:13-21).

The Synoptic Gospels also hint that there are degrees of strength among evil powers. For example, Jesus' response to the disciples' question after the healing of the epileptic boy, 'this kind cannot come out by anything but by prayer',⁴ suggests that there are different kinds of spirits, with varying degrees of resistance.⁵ Similarly, statements from the Beelzebub controversy such as, 'this man casts out demons only by the ruler of demons', and 'if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?' (Mt. 12:24, 26) suggest some sort of differentiation of power within the spirit world. Again, the parable in Mathew 12:43-45, regarding the possibility of a demon returning to its former abode with 'seven other spirits more wicked than itself', implies that there are degrees of evil among evil spirits.

Paul's terminology, 'principalities and powers', indicates an unexplained complexity of the spirit world, which hints about territorial powers.⁶ Thus, generally the Bible indicates a degree of inexplicable complexity in the spirit world. Against this backdrop, diverse approaches to combat these powers and principalities have taken place in the history of the church. These approaches will take our attention for now.

¹ These include the serpent (2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9), the evil one (Eph. 6:16), the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4).

² Keith Ferdinando, 'Screwtape Revisited: Demonology Western, African and Biblical', in Anthony N.S. Lane (ed.), *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realms* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 121.

³ Deut.32:8, 17. Generally, the Old Testament assumes that when the people of Israel compromised their relationship with the LORD God and served the gods of other nations they were serving demons. For example, such message is implied in the prophetic condemnation of setting up high places, sacred stones, and Asherah poles on high mountains (e.g., 1 Kgsk 14:23; Hos. 10:1-15; Jer. 44:2-6; Ezek. 6:13-14).

⁴ E.g., Mk. 9:29.

⁵ William Hendrickson, *The Gospel of Mark* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975), 352.

⁶ E.g., Eph. 6:12. In addition, the use of the term 'archangel' by Paul and Jude imply some degree of angelic hierarchy among the angels of God (1 Thes. 4:16; Jude 1:9).

The Universal Church Traditions

Early Hellenistic Church

In the search for identity for African Christianity, the African theologian Kwame Bediako postulates, ‘the phase of Christian history which offers the most instructive parallels to the modern African context is the beginning of Hellenistic Christianity in the early Roman Empire’.⁷ Bediako made this proposal because of the spirit world in which the early Hellenist Christians had to encounter and deal with. Accordingly, an examination of some of the writings of the leaders of the early church shows that there are remarkably close parallels to contemporary postmodern spirit world.

The Hellenistic Church saw the Greco-Roman religion as the abode of the fallen angels, which they considered demons.⁸ Against this background, the Hellenistic Church felt the need for every new convert to go through exorcism. For example, Henry Kelly points to the fact that Tertullian asked the question, ‘what man is there to whom an evil spirit does not adhere, even at the gates of his birth, waiting to ensnare his soul?’⁹ Consequently when someone became a Christian, the person had to renounce everything that had to do with the Greco-Roman religion and as such the Hellenistic culture and had to accept the Christian message as a radical alternative. The words of the renunciation itself have some parallels to the current one used by contemporary deliverance proponents which has to renounce every contact with satanic manipulations. For example, the Apostolic Tradition 21:9 reads ‘I renounce you Satan and all thy service and thy works’.¹⁰

⁷ Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992), 7.

⁸ For example, these are found in the writings of Justin Martyr, *The Fathers of the Church: Writings of Justin Martyr*, 1948, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1977), Dialogue with Trypho 79; Tatian *Oratio Ad Graecos and Fragments*, trans. Molly Whittaker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), Oration Ad Graecos 7-10; Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation to the Greeks: The Rich Man's Salvation and the Fragments of an Address Entitled to the Newly Baptized*, trans. G.W. Butterworth (London: William Heinemann, 1919), ch. 3; Tertullian, *The Church Fathers: Tertullian Apologetical Works and Minucius Felix Octavius*, trans. Rudolph Arbesmann, Emily Joseph Daly and Edwin A. Quain (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1950).

⁹ Tertullian, De pudicitia 19.19-20 as cited in Henry A. Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology and Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 107.

¹⁰ *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus: Translated Into English with Introduction and Notes by Burton Scott Easton* (London, 1934).

It also appeared that the early Christians believed that Christians could be demon possessed. For example, the Apostolic Canon¹¹ reads, 'If anyone hath a demon, let him not be made one of the clergy. No, let him not pray with the faithful; but when he is cleansed, let him be received; and if he be worthy, let him be ordained'.¹² There is a clear indication here that it was believed that Christians could be possessed with demons, since the criteria for consideration into the clergy included a demonised person who had been delivered. Hermas, writing at the beginning of the second century, contends that no matter how hard Christians try, 'the Devil is harsh and lords it over them'.¹³ For those whom Hermas describes as 'half-empty',¹⁴ according to him, the devil finds a place in them, that is, they become demonised.

The ministration of exorcism in the Hellenistic church progressively grew to become a specialty. The writing of both Justin and Tertullian show that initially every Christian was thought to be capable of performing exorcism.¹⁵ The exorcism of new converts was, however, performed by the bishops just before baptism 'so that he may personally be assured of their purity'.¹⁶ Yet, in the course of time, it seems apparent that the ministration of exorcism became a ministry for the especially gifted people. For example, Eusebius refers to a Roman bishop called Cornelius in AD 250 who says that there were fifty-two exorcists serving the church at the time.¹⁷

The writings of the Hellenistic leaders also show that sometimes the exorcisms were confrontational and violent, yet some people left without their freedom. Minucius Felix writes, perhaps in the third century, to describe how demons tear people's bodies through 'the torture of exorcism

¹¹ The Apostolic Canon forms the concluding chapter of the Apostolic Constitution. The Apostolic Constitution is a collection of Church practices and regulation from Syria around AD 300.

¹² The Apostolical Constitutions, *Translations of the Writings of the Father Down to A.D. 325*, vol. 17, *The Clementine Homilies and the Apostolical Constitutions*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1870), 8:47:79. See also *Saint Cyprian Letters (1-81)*, trans. Rose Bernard Donna (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 68:15, 75:11-12.

¹³ Shepherd of Hermas, *The Fathers of the Church: Shepherd of Hermas*, trans. Joseph M.F. Marique, ed. Roy Joseph (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1969), 11:5:2.

¹⁴ *Shepherd of Hermas*, 5:3.

¹⁵ Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*, ch. 6 reads, 'for many demoniacs throughout the entire world, and even in your city, were exorcised by many of our Christians in the name of Jesus Christ'. Cf. Tertullian, *Apology*, 23:4 cited above.

¹⁶ The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, 20:3.

¹⁷ Eusebius of Caesarea, ca. 260-340, *Eusebius Pamphilli Ecclesiastical History Books 6-10*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1956), 6:43.

and the fervour of prayer'.¹⁸ Yet his description shows that sometimes they left their victims reluctantly in misery, 'for they quake with pitiable fear in those bodies' and 'used to run away from Christians to a safe distance'.¹⁹ Fasting also featured prominently in the Hellenistic church. For instance, fasting was imposed on those seeking spiritual guidance,²⁰ new converts seeking exorcism²¹ and the sick.²²

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the belief in spiritual powers and their ability to take possession of people was strong in the Hellenistic church.

Western Church and Development of Spiritual Powers in the Church

It was in this setting – the belief in Satan and his powers – that Christianity spread to the West. It must, however, be pointed out that not much emphasis was placed in the power of the devil at this stage. For example, Augustine of Hippo, an influential theologian in the early Christian church, argued in the early 400s that God alone could suspend the normal laws of the universe. In his view, neither Satan nor witches had supernatural powers or were capable of effectively invoking magic of any sort. It was the 'error of the pagans' to believe in 'some other divine power than the one God'.²³ Of course, if witches are indeed powerless, the church needs not overly concern itself with their spells or so-called powers.

Nevertheless, the trend gradually changed. In 1208, Pope Innocent III opened an attack on Cathar heretics who believed in a world in which God and Satan, both having supernatural powers, were at war. As the

¹⁸ Minucius Felix, *The Church Fathers: Tertullian Apologetical Works and Minucius Felix Octavius*, trans. Rudolph Arbesmann (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1950), Octovius 27:5.

¹⁹ Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, Octovius 27:7.

²⁰ For example, Tertullian argued Christians needed to fast since 'even the demons require their dreaming subjects to fast in order to give themselves the [deceptive] appearance of true divinity'. Tertullian, *The Church Fathers: Tertullian Apologetical Works – On the Soul*, trans. Edwin A. Quain (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1950), 48:4.

²¹ For example, The Apostolic Tradition instructs that 'they who are to be baptized shall fast on Friday, and on Saturday the bishop shall assemble them and command them to kneel in prayer. And, laying his hand upon them, he shall exorcise all evil spirits to flee away and never to return'. Apostolic Tradition 1934:20:7-8.

²² Clement of Alexander gives instructions for visiting the sick, 'let them, therefore, with fasting and prayer, make their intercessions with well-arranged and fitly ordered of learning...'. Clement of Alexander, Epistle C. XII. Cited in John Woolmer, *Healing and Deliverance* (London: Monarch Books, 1999), 190.

²³ Douglas Linder, 'A Brief History of Witchcraft Persecutions before Salem' (<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/witchhistory.html>), Accessed on 23 July 2010.

propagandists for the Church continued to depict Cathars kissing the anus of Satan in a ceremonial show of loyalty to him, the public's understanding of Satan eventually moved from that of a mischievous spoiler to a deeply sinister force. Then, in the 1270s, Thomas Aquinas argued that the world was full of evil and dangerous demons, and that demons exist that try to lead people into temptation.²⁴

Eventually, in 1484 Pope Innocent VIII announced that Satanists in Germany were meeting with demons, casting spells that destroyed crops, and aborting infants. The pope asked two friars, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, to publish a full report on the suspected witchcraft. Two years later, they published *Malleus maleficarum* ('Hammer of Witches') which put to rest the old orthodoxy that witches were powerless in the face of God to a new orthodoxy that held that Christians had an obligation to hunt down and kill them. Much of the book offered hints to judges and prosecutors, such as the authors' suggestion to strip each suspect completely and inspect the body to see whether a mole was present that might be a revealing sign of consort with demons, and to have the defendants brought into court in attempts to minimise their opportunities to cast dangerous spells on officials. Suspected victims were forced to confess.²⁵ Outbreaks of witchcraft hysteria, with subsequent mass executions, began to appear in the early 1500s. It is said that over the 160 years from 1500 to 1660, Europe saw between 50,000 and 80,000 suspected witches executed. About 80% of those killed were said to be women.²⁶

The Enlightenment, beginning in the late 1680s, contributed to the end of witch-hunts throughout Europe. The Enlightenment brought empirical reason, scepticism, and humanitarianism, each of which helped defeat the superstitions of the earlier age. The Enlightenment suggested that there was no empirical evidence that alleged witches caused real harm, and taught that the use of torture to force confessions was inhumane.

Undeniably, the aftermath of the witchcraft persecution in the West, the Enlightenment produced the rationalistic worldview in the West, which has made western and other world views such as African and Asian become two opposing polarities, perhaps falling into C.S. Lewis' two errors: the former disbelief in the devil and the latter feel an 'excessive and unhealthy interest' in them.²⁷

The western thinking is clearly represented by the demythologisation of 'spirits' by the New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann in his popular article 'The New Testament and Mythology'.²⁸ Bultmann's main argument

²⁴ Linder, 'A Brief History'.

²⁵ Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum: The Classic Study of Witchcraft*, 1928, trans. Montague Summers (London: Bracken Books, 1996).

²⁶ Linder, 'A Brief History'.

²⁷ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 3.

²⁸ Rudolf Karl Bultmann, 'The New Testament and Mythology', in Hans-Werner (ed.), *Kerygma and Myth* (London: SPCK, 1972), 1-44.

was that the New Testament presupposes a pre-scientific and mythical cosmology. Such a worldview, he contends, is now obsolete, and incompatible with scientific knowledge. He squarely puts that 'we can no longer believe in spirits, whether good or evil...'.²⁹ Yet Bultmann is not saying that the demonic aspect of the New Testament is completely irrelevant, rather he wants it to be demythologised in line with contemporary western rationalistic worldview. This demythologisation approach, as the works of some western theologians have shown, removes all traces of the supernatural and explains them in terms of tangible realities in the material world. Paul's terminology, 'principalities and powers', have been contextualised as 'the forces of politics, economics, prejudices and superstition'.³⁰ Following Jung, Wink has proposed a 'collective possession' which, for him, means 'institutions which have their spirits', and 'inner personal demonic' as 'elements introjected into personality from the general pathology of society'.³¹ Thus, there is no ground for demons inhabiting people as it appears in the New Testament.

Nevertheless, as Sydney Page notes, 'the appalling evil that we see around us cannot satisfactorily be explained by human perversity'.³² The Episcopal priest and theologian Morton Kelsey argues that it was the psychiatrist Carl Jung, although not a Christian, who released the West from the materialistic worldview by his acceptance that 'both the spiritual domain and the saving power available there are real, and that we human beings could not live truly satisfactory lives and come to our full potential if we did not take these realities into consideration'.³³ That Kelsey's assertion is plausible is seen in the classic work of Richard Noll, a clinical psychologist, who demonstrates that Jung's analysis contains little to explain the workings of the human mind but a resurgence of neo-paganism.³⁴ Thus, for over two decades, despite the general tendency of a naturalistic worldview which reduces the spirit world into a materialistic explanation, belief in the supernatural world still has its counterpart in some western Christianity. The spirit world is represented in western societies in various forms such as consulting psychic counsellors, spiritists,

²⁹ Bultmann, 'The New Testament and Mythology', 4.

³⁰ N.T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 116. See also G.B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

³¹ Walter Wink, *Naming the Power: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 45, 25, 52, 64-66.

³² Sydney H.T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan & Demons* (Leicester: Baker Book House, 1995), 268

³³ Morton Kelsey, *Healing Christianity: A Classic Study*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1995), 254.

³⁴ Noll contends that Jung left the scientific world and the academia. Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 269.

palm readers, and reading of horoscopes for guidance. In Christianity, Nigel Wright argues that this must largely be due to the influence of the Charismatic movement, which he considers as a reaction to the materialism and spiritual barrenness of modernity.³⁵

Dealing with the demonic, however, came along with the early Pentecostal revival in the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁶ Stephen Hunt rightly points out, 'the growth and appeal of deliverance has come with the expansion of the 'classical' Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the twentieth century'.³⁷ Nevertheless the emphasis in this early period was on speaking in tongues as an initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and as a powerful weapon for evangelism; healing and deliverance were to accompany the baptism.³⁸ The belief was that there was power in the name of Jesus to crush the kingdom of Satan. For example, although the Norwegian historian of Pentecostalism Bloch-Hoell notices that Satan and his kingdom have a place in the Pentecostal message on supernatural healing, this was mainly 'in the appeal for the winning of souls and in holiness preaching'.³⁹

Consequently many Pentecostal churches did not believe a Christian could be possessed by demons. One significant example here is the official stance of the US Assemblies of God, which clearly assume that a born-again Christian could never be indwelt by an evil spirit.⁴⁰ Some Pentecostal churches therefore opposed those who attempted to make deliverance a speciality.⁴¹

Yet, as is usually the case, they could not cramp the activities of popular itinerant healing ministries that sprang up on the perimeter of the

³⁵ Nigel G. Wright, 'Charismatic Interpretations of the Demonic', in Anthony N.S. Lane (ed.), *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realms* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 149. See also Graham Dow, 'The Case for the Existence of Demons', *Churchman* 94:3 (1980), 199-209.

³⁶ Opoku Onyinah, *Spiritual Warfare: A Fresh Insight into the Nature of the Warfare, Identification of Strongholds, and Exposition on the Weapons* (Accra: Advocate Publishers, 2008), 18-22.

³⁷ Stephen Hunt, 'Managing the Demonic: Some Aspects of the Neo-Pentecostal Deliverance Ministry', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 13:2 (1998), 216.

³⁸ For example, see Allan Anderson, 'Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at Home and Abroad in the 20th Century', *Asian Journal of Missions* 2:2 (2000), 193-210; Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 18-24.

³⁹ Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Distinctive Character* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 111.

⁴⁰ Hunt, 'Managing the Demonic', 217; Steven S. Carter, 'Demon Possession and the Christian', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (2000), 19; William K. Kay, *Inside Story: A History of British Assemblies of God* (Mattersey: Mattersey Hall Publishing, 1999), 337.

⁴¹ Hunt, 'Managing the Demonic', 217; Carter, 'Demon Possession and the Christian', 19.

movement which made deliverance their field of interest. For such Pentecostals, as Keith Warrington observes, 'their view of the demonic owes as much to medieval art and popular fiction as it does to the New Testament'.⁴² Consequently, for many of those practitioners the manifestations and testimonies following 'deliverance services' have often been the catalyst for beliefs concerning demons, rather than the covert descriptions of the New Testament.

Nonetheless, there are some Pentecostals who believe that there is enough doctrine of demonology taught in Scripture. Thus Warrington observes that 'the lack of biblical parameters for much of that which is written makes the exercise subjective and at times, suspect, leaving a trail of speculation and confusion for the readers'.⁴³ From such unsettled beliefs in Pentecostal circles, Walter Hollenweger, the doyen of theology studies, concludes that the matter of demonology is 'an unsolved problem in Pentecostal belief and practice'.⁴⁴ It is against this background that the issue of spiritual warfare in the charismatic renewal becomes prominent.

The second part of the charismatic renewal during the 1980s and early 1990s was the creation of awareness of the powers of Satan and demons, and how to exorcise them. Some prominent evangelists and pastors who practiced deliverance and also wrote books about them were Derek Prince, Don Basham, Fred Dickason, Charles Kraft, Kurt Koch, Mark Bubeck, Bill Subritsky, John Wimber, and Francis MacNutt.⁴⁵ Some common factors emerging from these materials are that Satan and his allied spirits are real and powerful. It seems almost impossible to live without falling victim to Satan's wicked devices, since the environment is full of demonic activities. Therefore, one could be a Christian, baptised in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, yet might still have demons, generational or ancestral and other curses in their lives, until the Holy Spirit reveals them to be dealt with. Casting out a demon or renouncing a curse could be a lengthy process, and it was only forceful men who could lay hold of it; deliverance is to enter into a real battle with Satan's kingdom. The spiritual warfare concept in mission is an inevitable response to this development.

Territorial Warfare

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the trend changed from demon possession to levels of spiritual warfare. Two scholars who have propounded the territorial warfare concept are Charles Kraft and Peter Wagner; they are often labelled as Third Wave or Neo-Charismatic theologians. It is

⁴² Keith Warrington, 'Healing and Exorcism: The Path to Wholeness', in Keith Warrington (ed.), *Pentecostal Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 171-72.

⁴³ Warrington, 'Healing and Exorcism', 172.

⁴⁴ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), 379.

⁴⁵ For further reading on these people, see Onyinah, *Spiritual Warfare*.

propounded that there are two levels of warfare: ground-level warfare and cosmic-level warfare. Kraft is more concerned about ground-level,⁴⁶ while Wagner is concerned about cosmic level, which he calls strategic-level warfare.⁴⁷

Ground-level Warfare

Ground-level warfare is supposed to deal with evil spirits that inhabit people. These spirits are classified into three kinds. The first is family spirits or ancestral spirits, which gained their power through successive generations of children to the current generation. They are considered very powerful among the ground level demons. The second is the occult spirits. These are considered as the demons of the non-Christian religions and other new religions such as Freemasonry and New Age. These are thought to gain their power in the individual through invitation. The third class is the ordinary demons. These are considered to be those attached to such vices as anger, fear, lust, death, gambling, drunkenness, pornography, fornication, and homosexuality.

Those who are inhabited by one or more of these spirits are said to be demonised. Based upon the Greek term *daimonizomai* which simply means 'have a demon', the term demonised is preferred to demon possession. The focus here therefore is to find out the demon and cast it out in Jesus' name.

Strategic-level Warfare

Strategic-level warfare is considered to have, at least, five types. First are the territorial spirits who are said to be over cities, regions, and nations. This assumption is strongly based on Daniel 10:13, 21, where the Prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece are mentioned. Territorial spirits are defined as 'high ranking members of the hierarchy of evil spirits (delegated by Satan) to control nations, regions, cities, tribes, people groups, neighbourhoods, and other significant social networks'. Second are the institutional spirits, such as those assigned to non-Christian religions, governments, churches, and educational institutions. Third are the spirits assigned to supervise and promote special functions and vices such as prostitution, abortion, homosexuality, music, pornography, media, and war. Fourth are those assigned to objects such as buildings, tools as well as non-material entities, such as rituals and practices. It is assumed that these are assigned to specific

⁴⁶ Charles H. Kraft, *Defeating the Dark Angels* (Kent: Sovereign World, 1993), and also *Christianity with Power* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1989).

⁴⁷ For example, see C. Peter Wagner, *Warfare Prayer* (Ventura: Regal, 1991); C. Peter Wagner (ed.), *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Territorial Spirits* (Ventura: Regal, 1993); C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura: Regal, 1996).

objects during dedications. Fifth are ancestral spirits which are assigned to specific families, which portray themselves as the ancestors.

It is held that strategic-level spirits are in charge of ground-level spirits by assigning them to people and supervising them as they carry out their various assignments. Therefore, to break the powers of these spirits is to be involved in a real 'spiritual warfare'; this is what Wagner calls strategic-level warfare.⁴⁸ At the heart of this warfare is a threefold approach, proposed by Wagner: discerning the territorial spirits, dealing with the corporate sin of a city, and engaging in aggressive warfare against the territorial spirits.⁴⁹

This approach has been expounded by advocates of Wagner's ministry. The first is that of discerning the territorial spirits assigned to the city which was expounded by George Otis Jr.⁵⁰ The technique used here is called 'spiritual mapping'. This technique is used to discern and identify the spirits over the territory as a step towards developing strategies to combat and defeat them.

The second is dealing with the corporate sin of a city or an area. This was promoted by John Dawson, who coined the expression 'identification repentance', to illustrate the need for repentance and then confession of these sins as a means of effecting reconciliation, thus breaking Satan's grip.⁵¹ Wagner remarks that, 'no aspect of warfare prayer is more important than identification repentance'.⁵²

The third, engaging in aggressive warfare against the territorial spirits, was heightened by Cindy Jacobs.⁵³ This is the period where the business of warfare is done, by 'casting down strongholds', 'binding the strongman',

⁴⁸ Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*. Wagner presents the comprehensive detail of this strategy in this book. See also Gwen Shaw, *Redeeming the Land: A Bible Study on Dislodging Evil Spirits, Breaking the Curse and Restoring God's Blessing upon the Land* (Japer, Arkansas, 1987). The publication of this book preceded Wagner's, yet they shared similar ideas.

⁴⁹ C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura: Regal, 1996).

⁵⁰ George Otis Jr. is the president of Sentinel Group and co-ordinator with Wagner of AD 2000 & Beyond Movement's United Prayer Track. He heads the Spiritual Mapping Division. See George Otis Jr., *The Last of the Giants: Lifting the Veil on Islam and the End Times* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1993), 32; George Otis Jr., 'An Overview of Spiritual Mapping', in C. Peter Wagner (ed.), *Breaking Strongholds in Your City: How to Use Spiritual Mapping to Make Prayers More Strategic, Effective, and Targeted* (Ventura: Regal, 1991), 85.

⁵¹ See John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God: How to Break Spirit Strongholds* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 1989), 183-89.

⁵² Wagner, *Confronting the Powers*, 249-50.

⁵³ Cindy Jacobs is the president of Generals of Intercession, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intercession* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1994), 245-46; Cindy Jacobs, 'Dealing with Stronghold', in *Breaking Strongholds in Your City*.

‘evicting the ruler of the city’, ‘storming the gates of hell’, and ‘taking dominion in Jesus name’.

The Strengths of the Spiritual Warfare Approach

This concept has gained growing popularity among Christians worldwide. There are some positive aspects to this approach to spiritual warfare. For example, it has caused many Christians to strategise, plan and pray effectively before evangelism. The result is that the gospel has been preached in many difficult areas. Reports from other parts of the world also indicate that belief in the spirit world and the practice of deliverance contributes largely to the growth of churches in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia.⁵⁴ For example, Paul Freston writes that ‘Spiritual warfare is key for Charismatics and, increasingly, for other Brazilian evangelicals’.⁵⁵ Frank Dawson and Edgardo Silvos report the growth of the church in Argentina as a result of adopting the spiritual warfare approach.⁵⁶ The Jamaican anthropologist Diane Austin-Broos remarks that exorcism is the most dramatic act in which a pastor can be seen to heal and thereby allow a person to become a saint.⁵⁷

Harvey Cox points out that ‘ecstatic trances, demon possession, exorcism: all seem to find their place’ at ‘Yoido Full Gospel Church, or at any of several thousand Korean Pentecostal worship’.⁵⁸ Of course, the

⁵⁴ For example, see Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the America Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (London: Routledge, 1996); Ioan M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 1989); Ioan M. Lewis, *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Myrtle S. Langley, ‘Spirit-Possession and Exorcism and Social Context: An Anthropological Perspective with Theological Implications’, *Churchman* 94:3 (1980): 226-45; Karla Poewe (ed.), *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1994).

⁵⁵ Paul Freston, ‘Charismatic Evangelicals in Latin America: Mission and Politics on Frontiers of Protestant Growth’, in Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton, and Tony Walter (eds.), *Charismatic Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1997): 191. Cf. Gifford and Rose Brouwer, *Exporting the America Gospel*, 75-104: ch. 5, ‘Spiritual Warfare: The Case of the Philippines’.

⁵⁶ Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God*, 20; Tommy Lea, ‘Spiritual Warfare and the Missionary Task’, in John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, Justice Anderson (eds.), *Missiology* (Nasville: Broadman, Holam, 1998), 628-29.

⁵⁷ Diane J. Austin-Broos, ‘Pentecostal Community and Jamaican Hierarchy’, in John W. Pulis (ed.), *Religion, Diaspora, and Cultural Identity: A Reader in Anglophone Caribbean* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1999), 225.

⁵⁸ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 225. Cf. Brouwer, *Exporting the America Gospel*, 105-30: ch. 6 ‘South Korea: Modernization with a Vengeance, Evangelization with the Modern Edge’. Here the writer hints on Ki Dong Kim who began his church with seven members and, within eighteen years, had grown to 40,000 members. Kim’s preoccupation, according him, is exorcism (119).

intensive prayer warfare concept is similar to the prayer mountain phenomenon in Korea.⁵⁹ From another perspective Allan Anderson shows how the preaching of 'blessings' and healings in Korean Pentecostalism is contextualised by taking the good practices of ancient religions such as shamanism and transforming them with new Christian meanings.⁶⁰

Besides, there has been the renewed focus on missions in the area that is described as the 10/40 window. The term 10/40 window was coined by Luis Bush to describe the spiritually barren nations between the latitudes of 10 and 40 degrees north.⁶¹ This area encompasses a high percentage of the least evangelised people in the world. Otis has pushed this further by attempting to draw spiritual implication of the area as the last shrinking stronghold of demonic possession. He points out that the Garden of Eden (Iran and Iraq) are at the geographical bull's eye of the window. God intends to wind down the historical process and bring closure to world evangelisation. The only thing necessary to make this a reality is for the evangelistic forces currently surrounding the window to continue their advance at a more or less uniform pace.⁶² Against this backdrop, there has been a renewed mission focus on the area.

Again, this 'spiritual warfare concept' has caused a revival in the church in Africa. Since the 'spiritual warfare concept' intersects with African Spirit worldview, many of the denominations have set up prayer warriors and prayer centres for intercession.⁶³ Adubofour sees the Prayer Warrior movements as a Pentecostal holiness movement, which seeks to recover and apply the power of the gospel of Christ in terms meaningful to the African.⁶⁴ Many new converts become Christians through the ministry of the prayer camps and deliverance. This includes all sorts of people, from top government officials to the very low in society. Thus the camps become institutions for people who would not have normally found it easy to attend conventional church services.

⁵⁹ Eim Yeo-Soo, 'The Roots of Korean Pentecostalism', in *The 18th Pentecostal World Conference Seoul/Theological Symposium* (1998), 38-52.

⁶⁰ Allan Anderson, 'A Time to Show Love: Global Pentecostalism and the Social Ministry of David Yonggi Cho', in *17th Young San International Theological Symposium* (2009), 30.

⁶¹ Mike Wakely, "'Territorial Spirits': Some Concerns Expressed by Mike Wakely", *Operation Mobilization*, 18 July, 1993.

⁶² Wakely, 'Territorial Spirits'.

⁶³ The terms 'prayer camp' and 'prayer centre' are used interchangeably in the thesis to refer to this type of practice. A prayer camp is a place where a person goes with a problem to fast and pray with the aim of meeting God in a special way to answer his/her request. For further reading see, Opoku Onyinah, 'The Challenge of African Healing Communities', in Christopher Thomas (ed.), *Pentecostal Ecclesiology* (Cleveland, TN: CPL, 2010), 202-22.

⁶⁴ Samuel Adubofour, 'Evangelical Para-Church Movement in Ghanaian Christianity: 1950 to Early 1990s' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1994), 244-61.

Intercession in Christian ministries in Africa as a continent has been intensified. For example, it has been assumed that the real sources of African problems are the controlling powers of various territorial spirits, such as poverty and idolatry. In addition, it is held that Africans' involvement in the slave trade and bloodshed has opened this demonic door in the continent. Some African scholars such as Professor Oshun and Emeka Nwankpa have stressed the need to wage 'spiritual warfare' against these spiritual enemies to break free the African continent.⁶⁵ Thus, Maxwell rightly observes that, for the African, the answer to the continental problem of poverty is to be 'delivered from the spirit of poverty'.⁶⁶ Beside the centres, many churches and intercessory prayer ministries respond by putting up powerful national and international prayer ministries to intercede for Africans. African-wide intercessory bodies include Intercessors for Africa, AD 2000 Prayer Track, and 10/40 Window.⁶⁷

Another positive aspect of this ministry of 'spiritual warfare' is the fact that the evil side of sin has been laid bare before many people. Notwithstanding the charismatic renewal, some Christians among the renewal took some vices lightly. The warfare concept has exposed such vices as smoking, pornography, masturbation, and gambling as not only sin but also having demonic attachments. Thus Christians must not get involved in such things.

This approach to 'spiritual warfare' has also challenged Christians to reinvestigate their faith and to put it into practice. There have been reports of miracles occurring among the ministries of the proponents of spiritual warfare as against few miracles in the conventional church services. Thus God answers the prayers of the intercessors. Once people pray from sincere hearts, God will respond even if their theologies are not altogether right.

The Problems with the Spiritual Warfare Approach

There are some problems with the spiritual warfare concept. The first that comes to mind is that there is too much attention given to Satan and demonic issues. Some scholars in North America, especially the scholar of religion Harvey Cox, and the New Testament scholar Robert Guelich have rightly pointed out that the popular understanding of the character of contemporary spiritual warfare, with its excessive interest in demonic hierarchy, has been

⁶⁵ See Emeka Nwankpa, *Redeeming the Land: Interceding for the Nations* (Achimota: African Christian Press, 1994), 9; Chris O. Oshun, 'Spirits and Healing in a Depressed Economy: The Case of Nigeria', *Mission Studies* 25:1 (1998), 33.

⁶⁶ David Maxwell, 'Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty? Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28:3 (1998), 350-73.

⁶⁷ See Ogbu U. Kalo, 'The Third Response: Pentecostalism and the Reconstruction of Christian Experience in Africa, 1970-1995', *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1:2 (December 1998), 13.

captured by Peretti's novel, *This Present Darkness*.⁶⁸ The problem with such an approach is that many people tend to speculate instead of depending on the word of God.

The Bible clearly indicates that Satan rules over a hierarchy of evil spirits in the heavenly realms and attempts to control territories on earth. This is the picture given in Daniel 10:13, 20-21. The unnamed angel of God was resisted by the Prince of Persia until Michael came to assist him (Dan. 10:13). This angel informed Daniel, 'Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come' (Dan. 10:20, NIV).

This is an indication that there are princes from Satan attached to such kingdoms or territories. But the Bible does not show that believers or people of God have the power to dispel these evil spirits from the kingdoms. Christians have the authority to cast out evil spirits from people; there are examples of these in the gospels and Acts (Lk. 10:17-19; Mk. 16:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18). Christians can also resist the devil from taking control over their lives (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). However, there is no example of God's people pulling down the princes or evil spirits over cities.

In the Bible, evil powers or demonic powers are reduced to secondary causes in the accomplishment of God's supreme purpose. There is no graphic description of the activities of Satan and his evil powers, neither is there detailed confession of demoniacs as in some deliverance services.

Again, there is no detailed ritual and technique applied in the course of identifying problems or exorcisms. Some expressions and techniques used, such as spiritual mapping, ground-level warfare, cosmic-level warfare and evicting the ruler of this city, and some practices in the act of exorcism, such as emphasis on prayer language, the role of repetitive and intensive prayer, the need for fasting, and the demand for confession, make spiritual warfare appear like techniques more comparable to magical formulae than as presented in the Bible.

Another area where the proponents of the spiritual warfare concept fall short of biblical principle is that the approach fails to take into consideration the sovereignty of God. In the Bible, the Lord is the one true God, with overall supremacy over all spiritual powers (e.g., Deut. 6:4; Ps. 89: 5-8; Eph. 4:4-6). Satan is simply one of these spirits (Job 1:6-7). These spirits, whether good or evil, remain under God's sovereignty.

Satan and his spirits can tempt or afflict by divine permission (Job 1:12; Mt. 4:1; Lk. 22:31; 2 Cor. 12:7). They can be used by God to accomplish

⁶⁸ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), 281-84; Robert A. Guelich, 'Spiritual Warfare: Jesus, Paul and Peretti', *Pneuma* 13:1 (1991), 33-64; Frank Peretti, *This Present Darkness* (Westchester: Crossway Book, 1986), 34.

his divine plan (Mt. 16:21-23; Lk. 24:25-26; cf. Acts 2:23-24). For example, spirits designated as evil spirits (Judg. 9:23; 1 Sam. 16:14-16) and lying spirits (1 Kgs. 22:19-23; 2 Chr. 18:18-22) became envoys of God.

Again, the spiritual warfare concept fails to understand the place of misfortunes in life as set forth in the Bible. In the Bible, God is occasionally presented as the source of misfortunes. This is the case of Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-12).

In some places, misfortune is sometimes presented as punishment for sin. Some examples are the death of Uzzah (1 Sam. 6:7); the sickness and death of David's child (2 Sam. 12:13-18); and the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

In other places, misfortunes can best be designated as Christopher Thomas observed as 'neutral or natural causes'.⁶⁹ Some examples are Isaac's blindness (Gen. 27:1), Elisha's sickness and his subsequent death (2 Kgs. 13:14), and the illnesses of Paul's co-workers including Epaphroditus, Timothy and Trophimus (Phil. 2:27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).

Yet, in other places, misfortunes can originate from Satan, as in the cases of Job's temptation (Job 1) and that of Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:1-10). This leads us to another point which is very important – Satan works by or with God's permission.

This warfare approach fails to understand the biblical presentation of the operations of Satan. The biblical emphasis on the evils done by Satan and demons lies in their attempts to oppose God. In the Old Testament, Satan and his kingdom execute their plans on the people of God by putting a hindrance to, and inciting or accusing of moral evil as they carry out the work of God (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1-2; Zec. 3:1-2). Similarly the main work of Satan and demons in the New Testament is to oppose Christ and his Church (Mt. 4:1-12; 1 Thes. 2:18; cf. Acts 4:23-30). Even when the Bible shows that the devil has attacked righteous people, it often shows that Satan only carries out his plans after asking permission from God, and he works within that limitation (Job 1:12; Lk. 22:31; 2 Cor. 12:7-12).

The warfare concept fails to take into consideration the place of suffering in life. The biblical concept of the fall indicates that suffering and also death are part of life in this world (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12-14; Rom. 8:18-25). The whole human race fell as a result of the fall of Adam. Therefore, the whole of creation has 'been subjected to frustration', that is, suffering and death exist as an inevitable part of life in the world. Yet creation has a hope of being 'liberated from its bondage to decay' (Rom. 8:18-24). The death and resurrection of Christ mark the beginning of the end (the hope), which means 'God's final eschatological saving of his people has already been effected by Christ' (e.g., Eph. 1:7; 2:8). Believers, therefore, 'live between the times' of 'the already' but 'not yet' (e.g., Eph.

⁶⁹ John Christopher Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in the New Testament Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 304.

4:30; cf. Rom. 5:9; Gal. 5:5).⁷⁰ The outcome of this eschatological tension is that Christians are still exposed to physical afflictions, including any type of suffering or misfortune. Misfortune does not necessarily mean that the devil has attacked; neither does it mean that the person has sinned. It can just be the result of the fallen aspect of humanity.

Furthermore, this spiritual warfare approach sometimes reinforces the 'primitive animistic belief system' that keeps communities and people in servile fearfulness and hampers progress. Sometimes instead of trusting the power of God to deal with a situation while carrying on with preaching the gospel, too much time would be spent on casting down strongholds, or binding the strongman. The preaching of the gospel itself carries with it the power to demolish the strongholds of the devil. For example, instead of Africans finding a pragmatic solution to the poverty in the continent, some people assign it to the spirit of poverty hovering over the continent. In such situations, people may not consider other factors such as laziness, indiscipline, and economic mismanagement, which continue to hamper development in Africa.

One area which also makes this type of warfare approach alarming is the tendency it offers to people to relinquish them from accepting their responsibilities. The approach where demons are associated with every vice relinquishes people from acknowledging the responsibility for their wrongdoing, their sins and their inadequacies. Instead they place this responsibility on either the devil or generational curses. The impression given by the advocates of spiritual warfare is that there are demons attached to all sinful intentions and behaviours. However, the Bible rarely speaks of demons as the source of sinful behaviours. In the New Testament, there is no routine of deliverance performed on Christians, especially with regard to sinful behaviour.

For Jesus, the heart is the source of sinful thoughts (e.g. Mk. 7:21-23; Mt. 15:18-20). Similarly, Paul sees 'sin' as power in itself and the 'flesh' as that dimension of the Christian's personality where evil thoughts are manifested. Paul sets the flesh against the Spirit (Rom. 7:7-25; Gal. 5:19-22). Thus, it is 'the flesh' and not 'the demonic' which opposes the Spirit.

Finally, there is not enough biblical evidence of the approach. It must be said that some proponents admit that there is little biblical evidence of this concept.⁷¹ This should not have been a major problem, since the Bible has not prescribed the solution to every detailed challenge that people will encounter. Nevertheless, since this has almost become a doctrine and there is no strong biblical support, it has encouraged charlatans to deceive others with their exaggerated testimonies. People who attempt to challenge some

⁷⁰ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Paternoster, 1994), 804.

⁷¹ Wagner, *Warfare Prayer*, 19, 63.

of the testimonies are branded as sceptics. There is therefore the need to bring people back to the Scripture.

The Approach to Be Adopted

Only a summary of a proposal to be adopted can be put here.

The Sovereignty of God must be a focus

The sovereign reign of God over all his creation, including Satan, the gods and the demonic, must be emphasised by Christians. God's sovereign reign over the universe makes little room for the demonic activity to take place.

Jesus' announcement of the kingdom of God at hand takes its special significance from the prophetic expectation in the OT for the coming of God's sovereign rule, where God's people would be completely liberated (Lk. 4:18-19; Mk. 1:15; cf. Is. 61:1-3; Is. 9:6-11). Jesus clearly links his exorcism with the kingdom of God that is breaking through the satanic kingdom (e.g., Mt. 12:28).

Paul's gospel also includes the conquering of all the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm (Col. 2:15; cf. Eph. 1:21). For him, believers have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness, which is dominated by evil forces, and transferred into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). Paul's emphasis is that 'in Christ alone, by virtue of his work on the cross, the evil rulers no longer have control over believers' (Col. 2:16).

Yet the New Testament also shows that the devil and the powers are very active in the world and will continue to be until the final consummation when his power will be completely subdued. For example, Jesus shows in the parable of the sower that the devil is the evil one who snatches away the word of God from people's hearts (Mt. 13:19). In the parable of the weeds, Satan is portrayed as the enemy who seeks to destroy God's work by planting evil among them (Mt. 13: 25, 38-39). In John's gospel, the Pharisees' desire to kill Jesus is seen as fulfilling the desire of their master, the devil (Jn. 8:42-45). Satan enters into Judas before he sets forth to betray Jesus (Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:27).

Paul and other NT writers also show that the evil powers are still in rebellion against Christ in attacking the Church and effectively working in unredeemed humanity (e.g., Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:7-12).

Christians are, therefore, called upon to resist the devil (Pet. 5:9; Jam.4:7). Christians should put on the whole armour of God so that they stand up against 'the devil's scheme' (Eph. 6:10-13). This imagery has been understood by some Christians as a call to engage in spiritual warfare. However, this is 'fundamentally the transcendental conflict between God and satanic powers, in which man [human being] is both passively and

actively involved'.⁷² The implication here is that Paul speaks of 'power struggles and not warfare'. This becomes clearer if it is taken into consideration that Paul had already told the Ephesians, and often stressed in his writing, that the powers had already been defeated through the death and resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:21; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:16; Phil. 2:6-11). The implication of Christ having been raised above all the powers is that the powers have been defeated. Paul had also assured the Ephesians that God had placed them in Christ who is above all powers and authorities (Eph. 1:3-14). Therefore, Paul's call to Christians to put on the whole armour of God to stand against the devil's schemes would correlate with what Guelich contends here, 'the summons to prayer and supplication for oneself, the saint and for Paul, would be specifically a prayer that God would protect them from the adversary'.⁷³

Comparing Guelich's interpretation quoted here with Jesus' admonition to the disciples in the Lord's prayer, 'and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' (Mt. 6:13) brings the sovereignty of God over a believer's life into a sharper focus. The implication is that the 'evil one' can tempt or attack the believer only within the sovereign will of God. Thus Christians are not to fight with the devil; their armoury for protection against the enemy is based on what God has done in history in the coming of Christ. Christians are, therefore, to stand by putting the word of God into practice.

Secondly, the specific work of Satan and the demonic among Christians needs to be highlighted. Basically, the work of Satan and the powers is to oppose God. To achieve their opposing intentions, they seek to influence the people of God to live in ways which are contrary to their expressed intentions and the word of God. Some examples are the stories of Job, Eve, David and Peter cited already.

In the Pauline corpus, Satan is portrayed as living up to his name the 'adversary'. For example, he tempts, misleads, torments, traps, hinders and deceives Christians (e.g., 1 Thes. 3:5; 1 Cor. 7:5). The writings of Paul and other NT authors also show that evil stems from the devil who seeks to devour Christians and thwart the will of God at every turn (e.g., 1 Thes. 3:5; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jam. 4:7-10).

Consequently, the NT shows that the ground upon which the devil works is sin. It is precisely by addressing the problem of sin that Christ's atoning work also, in consequence, brings about the defeat of Satan and the powers (Col. 2:13-15). Therefore, in Colossians 2:15, the disarmament and public spectacle of the 'powers and authorities' follow the cancellation of the written code against sinners. Other NT passages also suggest that forgiveness of sins, as an aspect of salvation, is linked with deliverance

⁷² Quoted in Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Power*, 118.

⁷³ Guelich, 'Spiritual Warfare', 60.

from the powers of the evil one (e.g., Acts 26:15-18; Heb. 2: 14-18; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 12:7-12; Gal. 1:4; Col. 4:13-14).

The NT therefore urges Christians not to allow sin to have dominion over them by giving in to the craving of the flesh (e.g., Rom. 6:12; Jam. 4:1-10). Paul especially recognises that although, sin has been dealt with by the work of Christ, the inner compulsion of the flesh continually seeks to reassert its claim on Christians. He provides several lists of categories of sins, but in all of these he does not contrast 'the flesh' with 'the demonic', but rather with the 'new man' or 'the Spirit' (e.g., 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10; Eph. 4:17-24; Gal. 5:19-23). Christians are warned against 'the works of the flesh', not because they are demonic, but because they are concrete expressions of 'works' carried out by people who live in keeping with the desire of the human nature and that of the world around them. Such vices, according to Paul, may become the foothold for Satan and also bring the wrath of God (Eph. 4:20; Col.3:6; Rom. 1:18). Thus, Paul's consistent warning to believers not to yield to the flesh means that every Christian faces the recurring choice of either giving in to the compelling influence of the flesh, or continuing living in obedience to the Spirit.

The purpose of the devil does not exclude the possibility of attack about which some Christians are so much concerned. Clearly the Bible indicates that the devil instigates persecution against Christians which results in suffering and in some cases death of believers (e.g., Rev. 2:9, 13; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). Again, the Bible hints that the devil induces spiritual attack which may manifest in physical infirmity as in the case of Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor. 12:7). But that Paul prayed to God three times and was not 'delivered' means the issue was not between Paul and the devil, but rather between Paul and his God. This indicates that the eschatological tension displayed in the NT means Christians are still exposed to the attack of demonic powers which, although defeated, may attack under the permission of God.

This discussion leads to the third factor, that is, the place of suffering in the lives of Christians, which needs to be set within the Christian doctrine of the fall. The biblical concept of the fall implies that the whole human race fell as a result of the fall of Adam. Therefore, all creation has 'been subjected to frustration' (Rom. 8:20), that is, suffering and death exist as an inevitable part of the world. Yet creation has a hope of being 'liberated from its bondage to decay' (Rom. 8:20-21). The death and resurrection of Christ marks the beginning of the end (the hope), which means 'God's final (eschatological) saving of his people has already been effected by Christ'⁷⁴ (e.g., Eph. 1:7; 2:8). As Moltmann explains, 'the resurrection does not evacuate the cross [suffering]', but it provides hope for God's final triumph

⁷⁴ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 804. In other words, through the death of Christ, the future condemnation which human deserves has been transferred from future to the past.

over evil. Thus, since the believers' final redemption has not yet been fully realised, redemption is in the future. Suffering, therefore, does neither necessarily mean that the devil has attacked, nor that the person has sinned. It can just be the result of the fallen aspect of humanity.

Therefore, the three sources of possible suffering – God, the devil and natural or neutral – must be brought to the attention of Christians. There is the need to accept the fact that God allows Christians to relate to all suffering in a way that brings good, so that experiencing suffering becomes for them a valuable way of life and maturing in character.

The Role of Deliverance

Deliverance should be seen as part of the means of dealing with a variety of manifestations of evil in human life.

There may be times when exorcism may not be necessary. In the gospels, while Jesus sometimes cast out demons, there are some cases which appear demonic in which he does otherwise. For example, he does not cast out the demon of lust from the woman caught red-handed in the act of adultery (Jn. 8:1-11) or the woman who it is said 'had lived a sinful life' (Lk. 7:36-47). He does not expel the demon of lie from Peter for betraying him three times (Lk. 22:31, 22:54-60; cf. Jn. 19:15-19).

Paul does not cast out the 'demon of lust' from the man who was having sexual relations with his father's wife, the 'demon of division' from the saints in Corinth or the 'demon of slavery' from the Galatians who had been bewitched (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 3:1-9; Gal. 3:1-6). Similarly the saints who fell into sin in the OT were not considered demonised. These include Abraham, who slept with his maid (Gen. 16:1-15); Judah who slept with his daughter-in-law (Gen. 38:13-30); David, who slept with Uriah's wife (2 Sam. 11:1-27); Solomon for his polygamous and idolatrous life (1 Kgs. 11:1-8); and Absalom who rebelled against his father (2 Sam. 15:1-12).

This does not mean that exorcism should be pushed to the periphery. On the one hand, if Jesus' ministry and that of Paul's are taken into consideration, then, exorcism should not be narrowed to a special group of people who are thought to be gifted in the field, but should be opened to all believers (Mk. 16:15-18). In the case of Jesus, he dealt with the situations as they arose in his ministry. Similarly Paul dealt with familiar spirits during the course of his ministry. The implication of these is that there is no need to set aside a special time or place for the performance of exorcism. The prophetic community should not be limited by formal ways of services. They should be ready to allow the Holy Spirit to direct exorcism or healing even during a Sunday service, which is recognised as very important.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Christians

The role of the Holy Spirit in effecting the work of Christ in the life of the believer must be emphasised. Therefore, the significance of water baptism as being a sign of the believer's identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection need to be highlighted (e.g., Acts 9:17-18; 10:48; Rom. 6:1-14).

The guarantee of the believers' eternal security in Christ, with all its privileges such as their election, justification and glorification must be emphasised (e.g., 1 Eph. 1:3-21; Rom. 5:8; 8:28-31; Jn. 3:1-2). The person of the Holy Spirit and his role in the believer's life must be stressed, especially the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is so crucial to Pentecostal ministry.

Generally there is the need for teaching basic Christian doctrines. In connection with this, Christians must be encouraged to walk in the Spirit. The prosperity gospel and the deliverance ministry may be indications that some Christians are now walking in the flesh. Paul's (and inferred from other NT writers) answer to believers' moral discipline or fleshly action is the Spirit or walking in the Spirit (e.g., Gal. 5:16; cf. 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:9). Paul sees the flesh as the greatest threat to the believer's life. Walking in the Spirit can be seen from two perspectives. On the one hand, it means abstaining from sins. Christians are to accept their identity 'in Christ' as involving crucifixion of the flesh with its desires and passions (e.g., Gal. 2:20; Gal. 5:24), and to reject the world with its pleasures (Rom. 12:2, cf. 1 Jn. 2:15. Jam. 4:4). On the other hand, walking in the Spirit means putting oneself to the service of godliness or righteousness (Rom. 6:13; Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:10; 2 Pet. 1:3-10). This means that the Spirit enables Christians to demonstrate the sort of behaviour which God requires of his people.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the issue of principalities and powers has been an age-old problem that runs through the Bible and church history. Consequently, the discussion revealed that a number of key practices of similarity might be identified among the early Hellenistic church, western Christianity in the sixteenth century and contemporary spiritual warfare. Some of the approaches adopted, however, such as the killing of so-called witches and the excessive interest in the demonic were unethical and unhealthy. In some cases this attitude led to the disbelief of evil powers especially in the western worldview. In the same vein, if the right approach is not adopted contemporary beliefs and practices on spiritual warfare may lead people astray.

Accordingly, it was demonstrated that while the Bible shows that there is a being called Satan it does not pay attention to his work. The sovereignty of God reigns supreme in the Bible, reducing satanic power to secondary importance in accomplishing the purpose of God, as against the

preoccupation of this among advocates of spiritual warfare. Therefore, a translational approach which expressed the biblical message in terms and contexts that are relevant and meaningful in a believer's life was adopted. From this perspective, believers were shown as people who have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness, which is dominated by evil forces, and transferred into the kingdom of Christ. It is in Christ alone, by virtue of his work on the cross, that principalities and powers no longer have control over a believer. The greatest weapon of a believer is to declare the gospel of Christ which would deliver unbelievers from the evil powers.

Exorcism was recommended to be seen as part of the process of dealing with the area of sin in human life and not as an end in itself. It was also suggested that teaching basic Christian doctrines should be an important aspect in Christian ministry. The final point handled showed that an alternative to deliverance is walking in the Spirit, by putting to death all the actions of the flesh and yielding oneself to the power and service of God.



MINISTRY OF MERCY AND JUSTICE

Johan Mostert

The Pentecostal church's involvement in ministry to the poor is a study in the tensions between the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the socio-political context the church is always a part of. In this chapter I want to explore how the natural, Spirit-empowered impulse to care for the orphan, the widow and the oppressed was expressed, restrained, and even at times dismissed as less important in the history of the church in America, with special reference to the history of the Assemblies of God. Yet this impulse was never absent and now, one hundred years into our history it is enjoying such resurgence in popularity, particularly among the youth, that it could now pose a new threat to Pentecostal orthodoxy. The danger exists today that seeking social justice could become simply another theological fad driven by youthful exuberance. In order to avoid the excesses of over-reaction it is important to understand the historical contexts of these tensions. This will allow us to develop a robust Pentecostal theology of compassion and social justice that can rise above cultural influences that tend to lead us away from the Good News of the Kingdom.

I am also approaching this chapter from a White, Afropentecostal perspective; a perspective that was forged during my own experiences of transformation since the days when I actively collaborated with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Today I consider myself to be a community development activist that is committed to the 'trickle up' model of social change that a Holy Spirit transformation brings about. My experience has indicated that cultural programming plays a greater role in our perception of biblical truth than what we generally acknowledge. This becomes clearer when we trace the history of the tensions between evangelism and social justice within their socio-cultural contexts. I want to submit that social action was part of our Pentecostal DNA from the beginning but that the socio-cultural context in which Pentecostalism was reborn in the West one hundred years ago inappropriately skewed our theology and led us into a bifurcation of these concepts. On the other hand, Pentecostalism in the global south had to respond to a different socio-cultural context that was marked by poverty, economic exploitation and disease and its response to the Holy Spirit lacked the bifurcated response to the Good News that was evident in the West. I want to review what appears to be a healing of the American bifurcation and conclude with some thoughts on where we need to go from here.

Early Pentecostal Witness

From the very beginning of the modern Pentecostal outpouring a hundred years ago our movement has been associated with social outcasts, drunkards and persons of low cultural standing. This was not only so in the case of Azusa Street where the outpouring of the Holy Spirit under William Seymour's leadership as an African American preacher healed deep racial divides. It was also evident in my home nation as well. When John G. Lake arrived in South Africa in 1908, straight out of the revival fires of Azusa, we had just emerged from years of bloody conflict and human rights violations with the British colonizers (Boer War 1899-1902). Not only was the power of the Holy Spirit in evidence as supernatural healings took place but racial reconciliation took place between black and white, and possibly even more miraculously, between Boer and Brit! Social justice and Spirit-empowered witness took place simultaneously and seamlessly in the beginning years of Pentecost.

Throughout the history of the church in America, many Assemblies of God ministers found it natural to express their evangelistic zeal in social action.¹ Lillian Trasher established an orphanage in Egypt in 1911. Florence Steidel established a leprosy mission in Liberia in 1947. Mark and Huldah Buntain began the Calcutta mission of mercy in 1954² but the centre still today serves 25,000 hot meals every day and continues to train young women at their School of Nursing. In 1958 David Wilkerson began Teen Challenge. Today it has become a global phenomenon in substance abuse recovery with 550 centres worldwide.³ In 1963 John Bueno and his wife began Latin America Child Care that today provides a quality education for poor and marginalized children in 300 schools in twenty-one countries.⁴ More recently Hal Donaldson established Convoy of Hope. Since its founding in 1994, Convoy teams have served more than 52 million people through disaster response in hurricanes and earthquakes as well as daily feeding schemes throughout the world.⁵

But all these very successful humanitarian efforts of Assemblies of God pastors and missionaries increasingly revealed an underlying tension in the church. This tension reflected the socio-cultural context in which American Pentecostalism was struggling, and continues to struggle to establish itself. The locus of Christianity in the nineteenth century moved from Western Europe to the Americas in the twentieth century and introduced a liberal theological orientation to the colonies. During this process Pentecostalism

¹ William Menzies, *Anointed to serve: The story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1984).

² <http://www.buntain.org/who-we-are/our-mission>

³ http://www.teenchallenge.org/site/c.inKLR0uHqE/b.5953141/k.AEEB/Our_History.htm

⁴ <http://lacc4hope.org/about-us>

⁵ <http://www.convoyofhope.org/go/who>

in the West had to contextualize its message against the background of these theological debates. As we shall see, the successful contextualization of the movement was a key to its phenomenal growth in these past hundred years as it responded to theological liberalism by emphasizing the imminent return of Christ, personal salvation and an intimate relationship with Christ.

At the same time Pentecostalism also exploded globally and the church of the global south began to grow bigger and faster than its northern hemisphere parent churches. Historian Phillip Jenkins ably traces this gradual change in the locus of global Christianity from the north to the global south in his acclaimed volumes.⁶ But the socio-cultural contexts of the church in the global south reflect completely different theological debates and required Pentecostalism to re-contextualize itself without the theological baggage that western missionaries often inadvertently carried with them. In the global south Pentecostalism faced the onslaught of poverty, disease, and human rights violations. Global economic exploitation and colonialism replaced the dangers once posed to the western church by theological liberalism. In the first half of the twentieth century western Pentecostalism needed to find its proverbial North Star for the American church to remain true to biblical orthodoxy. Today, global Pentecostalism is challenged to realign itself to the Southern Cross in order to still remain true to biblical orthodoxy.

The Context of the Western Evangelism-Social Justice Bifurcation

It did not take long for culturally ingrained racial divisions to insert themselves into the Pentecostal heritage after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Mission. By the time the Assemblies of God held its first organizational meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1914 the absence of black delegates was already evident. During this meeting J. Roswell Flower was elected as the first general secretary and later he combined the influence of this position with his appointment as the first missionary secretary-treasurer. It became increasingly clear that the new movement not only bifurcated on issues of racial unity but also on issues of social justice. In 1920 Flower writes in the *Pentecostal Evangel*, 'The Pentecostal commission is to witness, witness, witness. It is so easy to be turned aside to do work which is very good in itself but which is short of the Pentecostal standard. Our missionaries are in danger of this'.⁷ This bifurcation was magnified by serious theological divisions that were taking place in the wider Evangelical movement at the time.

⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁷ J. Roswell Flower, 'The Pentecostal Commission', *Pentecostal Evangel*, 12 June, 1920, 12.

David Moberg contributed significant insight into the history of the bifurcation that was developing in Evangelicalism with the publication in 1972 of his book, *The Great Reversal: Reconciling Evangelism and Social Concern*.⁸ The title reflects the consternation of Christian historians who had never before evidenced the bifurcation that asserted itself as a result of the ‘Great Reversal’ in the American church during this time. Most had accepted as a matter of public record the social impact that the gospel had exerted on western civilization. Schmidt catalogues some of these impacts and *How Christianity Changed the World*⁹ since the fall of the Roman Empire: the promotion of human dignity, the value of human life, the value of children, the promotion of women’s rights, the abolition of slavery, the establishment of hospitals, the creation of nursing and social work as professions, and the promotion of formal education. In nineteenth centuries of church history there had never been a significant split between faith and works. But in the beginning of the twentieth century a significant shift in priorities happens within Evangelical circles.

Ever since the Wesleyan Awakening in England and the Great Awakening in America in the 1700s, there had always been a ‘heady dual emphasis of earthly and heavenly, social and personal’.¹⁰ This is the period which Winter has come to refer to as First Inheritance Evangelicalism (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) where no distinctions were made between the church’s role in social transformation and its role in personal transformation. This period included the First Great Awakening (1730s to about 1750s) that was associated with Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Whitefield’s ministry was credited with contributing to the development of democratic thought and the rights of free speech, critical precursors to the American Revolution. The Second Great Awakening (around 1790 to its peak in the 1840s) saw the massive growth of the church through camp meetings and revivals where every person was confronted with their need to make a decision for Christ in the light of his imminent return. But while church membership soared, and new denominations were formed during this Awakening there was also a commitment to many reform movements that dealt with the many social ills of society. This period spurred the establishment of the temperance movement, women’s rights and abolition groups, church-related higher education institutions, and the insertion of personal faith into the public square as attempts were made to change legislation and affect government policy.

⁸ David Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Reconciling Evangelism and Social Concern* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1972, 2006).

⁹ A.J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

¹⁰ R.D. Winter, ‘The Future of Evangelicals in Mission: Will We Regain the Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?’, *Mission Frontiers* (September-October, 2007), 6.

Winter notes that the establishment of Oberlin College with the encouragement of revivalist Charles Finney is a good case study for this period. Oberlin was the first interracial school, the first co-educational school, the first vocational school, the first school to teach music, the first anti-slavery school, and the first temperance school. The gospel had personal as well as social impacts on society and differentiating between the two was unthinkable.

Around the beginning of the twentieth century the theological pressures of the previous locus of Christianity in Europe began to impact the colonies. One of the founders of the new Social Gospel movement in the United States was a German Baptist minister, Walter Rauschenbusch whose first pastorate was on the edge of New York City's Hell's Kitchen in the 1880s. He became frustrated with traditional evangelism that aimed to save people's souls but did nothing about the social systems that enslaved people in poverty. Keller suggests that as Rauschenbusch began to shift his energies to minister to the social crisis that he saw people trapped in, he also underwent a shift in theology that reflected the modernist interpretations that were popular in Europe.¹¹ For Rauschenbusch, Jesus' death became simply an example of supreme selflessness not the atonement for man's sin. Increasingly mainline theologians began to question the authority of scripture, the virgin birth and vicarious atonement of Christ and the authenticity of miracles. Their modernist interpretations of scripture lacked the passion and transformation potential of the gospel. Rauschenbusch and this Social Gospel movement that pursued social justice came to be seen as the antithesis of sound doctrine that emphasized spiritual transformation.

Under the ministry of popular evangelists like D.L. Moody and Billy Sunday a new emphasis emerged as the focus of preaching shifted to issues of personal sin and salvation, and on the need for a *personal experience* with Christ. This Third Great Awakening ushered in a new era of Evangelicalism that maintained the emphasis on personal transformation that earlier Evangelicals like Whitefield and Finney had proclaimed, but increasingly neglected the social transformation evident in the ministry of their forefathers.

This reaction to the Social Gospel launched the modernist/fundamentalist debate in the West and perpetuated a bifurcation into which western Pentecostalism was inserted. There were also other factors that played into this debate. American philosophical individualism which tended to exclude a focus on social systems was gaining ground in the academic world. In the ecclesial publishing world the hugely popular Scofield Reference Bible was published in 1909. It was the first publication to include commentary to the Bible alongside the text. Scofield popularized

¹¹ T. Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Make Us Just* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010).

eschatological dispensationalism in these commentaries. The post-millennial eschatological optimism that characterized the end of the 19th century was also rapidly failing. The outbreak of the war to end all wars, one of the deadliest conflicts in human history with 37 million military and civilian casualties, crushed any remaining optimism about the dawning of a better world. Scofield's dispensationalist eschatology blossomed because it promoted a future millennial reign of Christ that tended to de-invest in the world and looked for peace and prosperity in that future.

Klaus highlights the humiliating impact that the Scopes 'Monkey' Trial in 1925 also had on Evangelicals during this period.¹² The trial became the breaking point of the huge breach in American Christianity and further solidified Evangelicals' aversion to the value of social reforms. The State of Tennessee had made it unlawful to teach evolution in schools and prosecuted high school science teacher John Scopes, because he had violated the Act. Three-time populist presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan led the prosecution and his courtroom presentations sounded like a Billy Sunday evangelistic meeting. The famed defence attorney Clarence Darrow defended Scopes with persuasive rhetoric. The trial became a national theological contest in the creation vs. evolution controversy and pitted fundamental Evangelicals against their modernist foes. The media portrayed Bryan as a buffoon and the subsequent Hollywood production of *Inherit the Wind* did irreparable harm to the Evangelical platform.

Moberg aptly summarized the polarization in the church of this period

As the Social Gospel increased its interest in 'secular' perspectives and issues and decreased its attention to directly biblical concerns and the spiritual needs of individual persons, it became linked with theological liberalism. It gave growing attention to social evils, while fundamentalists concentrated upon personal sin and individualistic approaches to social problems. It overemphasized man's horizontal relationships (man to man), while conservatives accentuated the vertical (man to God) and forgot the horizontal. Each group read different parts of the Bible: when it stumbled upon the other's domain, it provided a different interpretive schema. The sharp polarization that developed during the conflict made it politically impossible to remain both an evangelical and a social gospeler, and emotional involvements prevented Christians from recognizing the fallacies of being impaled upon the horns of a false dilemma.¹³

By the end of the Second World War, the remaining social optimism for a better world order had been crushed and the focus on personal salvation remained as the only viable focus of Evangelicalism in America. The Assemblies of God joins with other Evangelical churches in 1943 to form the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and by the time AG

¹² B.D. Klaus, 'Compassion Rooted in the Gospel that Transforms', *Enrichment Journal*, Spring 2004.

¹³ Moberg, *The Great Reversal*, 34.

General Superintendent, Thomas Zimmerman becomes the President of the NAE in 1960 Pentecostals had become a formal partner in the perpetuation of this bifurcation.

Bifurcation from the Perspective of the Global South

An astute observation by Klaus places the bifurcation between evangelism and social justice into an appropriate global perspective.¹⁴ He summarized the dilemma posed by the Great Reversal as 'a unique American experience'. Seen from this perspective it would appear that the raging debate of the western church may in fact detract us from an objective, biblical understanding of these issues. When historian Phillip Jenkins investigated how Evangelicals perceived the Bible in the global South he affirmed that he perceived a clear fundamentalism among them, but not the way that northern Evangelicals would define fundamentalism. The South was also liberal, but not in a northern understanding of liberalism. The global South displays a conservative interpretation of the Bible, but there is a significantly liberal understanding when it comes to issues of social justice. He cites numerous examples where Christians in the global South are often in the forefront of a wide range of liberation movements.

If the Great Reversal was a contextualized western response to the dangers of theological liberalism it correctly needs to be evaluated within that specifically western context. Clearly the response of the western church was very effective in terms of the global numerical growth that it engendered. The restoration of the spiritual gifts that we see as part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit has been a powerful and effective tool to equip the church to evangelize the world. Our global missionary enterprises have been so successful that as Jenkins has pointed out, the centre of global Christianity is now shifting to the former objects of global missions: Africa, Asia and Latin America.

But it needs to be emphasized that the Pentecostal pastor who seeks to contextualize the proclamation of the gospel in the middle of the Amazon region, or in the shadows of Kilimanjaro will never have heard of the western Great Awakenings, Walter Rauschenbusch or the Scofield Reference Bible. His knowledge of history will only have fleeting references to a 'World War' that took place on another continent and even less of a 'Monkey' Trial that took place on yet a different continent. The threats to his orthodoxy will likely not come from European theological liberalism or the social gospel but from Liberation Theology and endemic poverty. So when sociologists Miller and Yamamori go to discover the face of global Pentecostalism in their four-year research study they find 'Christians who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus and seek to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of

¹⁴ Klaus, 'Compassion Rooted in the Gospel'.

people in their community'.¹⁵ With their western ecclesiastical perspective these sociologists try to pigeonhole 'Progressive Pentecostals' by contrasting them with more familiar labels such as Social Gospel, Liberation Theology and Marxists. They correctly conclude,

Progressive Pentecostals are not trying to reform social structures or challenge government policies so much as they are attempting to build from the ground up an alternative social reality.... In our opinion, however, Pentecostals are actually doing something fairly subversive. They are teaching their members that they are made in the image of God; that all people have dignity and are equal in God's sight; and that therefore they have rights-whether they are poor, women, or children. These values are fundamental to the creation of a democratic government, and therefore, at the very least Pentecostalism is preparing good citizens...they are typically trying to build the Kingdom of God one person at a time.¹⁶

Pentecostals in the global south have to compete with socio-political contexts like Liberation Theology but Miller and Yamamori draw a clear distinction between the activities of 'progressive Pentecostals' and the promoters of Liberation Theology. While both attempt to address poverty, Pentecostals were addressing it one person at a time through a message of personal transformation. Liberation Theologians draw heavily on the story of the Exodus out of Egypt as an analogy for structural liberation, whereas Pentecostals draw heavily on the life and teachings of Jesus that promote peace, harmony and personal salvation. According to these researchers, Pentecostalism is burgeoning and Liberation Theology is waning. In the words of one of their research subjects, 'while Liberation Theology opted for the poor, the poor opted for Pentecostalism'.¹⁷

Amos Yong is correct when he places African Pentecostalism in a different context, a socio-political context of 'Justice deprived, Justice demanded'. 'Pentecostal theological reflection cannot remain focused only on the otherworldly or spiritual dimensions, but has to ask the difficult questions of what the good news means for the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed'.¹⁸ Jenkins predicts that the future of the global church will eventually overwhelmingly be the faith of poor non-whites living in the global South who will not reflect the values of the wealthy global North.¹⁹ It will be a Charismatically-oriented church that will thrive among the poor

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¹⁵ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁶ Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 5.

¹⁷ Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 12.

¹⁸ Amos Yong, 'Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded: Afropentecostals and the Task of World Pentecostal Theology Today', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15:1 (2006), 134.

¹⁹ Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

and oppressed who have recovered the message of Jesus as good news to the poor (Lk. 4:18-19).

Yong asserts that as we try to develop a global Pentecostal theology we cannot ignore the important contributions of the global South. His article highlights (inter alia) Afropentecostal theological traditions such as the work of Frank Chikane from South Africa.²⁰ Elsewhere I relate how my White Afropentecostal theology had been drastically impacted by my post-apartheid exposure to colleagues like Chikane.²¹ His Pentecostal context was apartheid South Africa. He was arrested for helping those who were being persecuted by the security police for ‘undemocratic activities’. He was a local Pentecostal pastor in Soweto, ordained by the same church that ordained me and at one stage even worked for a year with evangelist Reinhardt Bonnke. His non-violent opposition to apartheid resulted in him being detained without trial four times, as much as nine months in 1981 and then being tortured, beaten, humiliated and isolated in solitary confinement. In 1989 he survived several assassination attempts by a special ‘black ops’ unit of the police. The epitome in the irony of his story was the fact that his jail torturer was also a member of our church!²²

To suggest that a Pentecostals like Chikane should refrain from criticizing the government (as western Evangelical Pentecostals did) and to threaten him with the withdrawal of his ordination (which the church also eventually did) because he was aligning himself with the revolutionary forces that were being supported by Marxists and Communists, was clearly a politically motivated injustice. To suggest that his care for the poor, his visitation of political prisoners, or his opposition to the injustices of the apartheid system was any less valuable in God’s kingdom than his evangelistic and pastoral zeal, would be a miscarriage of justice.

Africa has been the recipient of a western style evangelism that has produced many millions of ‘decisions for Christ’. Many of Africa’s sub-Saharan nations have a majority Christian population, and yet African nations score consistently high in the Human Suffering Index, the Corruption Perception Index, the annual AIDS infection rates, Infant Mortality rates and Highly Indebted Poor Countries lists (HIPC). It is incomprehensible that a nation like Rwanda where in excess of 90% of the population claimed to be Christian could break out in such a demon-possessed genocidal purging. In 1994 mostly Tutsis were slaughtered by their Hutu neighbours and in a brief period of 100 days an estimated 800,000 died.

The socio-economic context of Pentecostalism in the global south is vastly different from that of the church in the North. It would be

²⁰ Yong, ‘Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded’.

²¹ J. Mostert, ‘White Cultural Identity Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa’, *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* 3:1 (2014).

²² F. Chikane, *No Life of My Own: An Autobiography* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

inappropriate to project onto it the ivory tower speculations on whether it is more theologically appropriate to preach the gospel or to heal the children dying of AIDS. African cosmology (as is that in Latin American and Asia) is naturally holistic and the bifurcations that come so naturally to the western mind are foreign to it. Yong is correct to question whether it is possible to develop our world Pentecostal theology without the perspectives that Afropentecostals like Chikane would bring to the table.

Hence the question is whether or not and how the many tongues today...can be miraculously orchestrated so as comprehensibly and intelligibly to declare the wondrous works of God as happened on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:11). Pentecostals today cannot avoid this question if we are convinced that the multiplicity of tongues on that day was a foretaste not only of world Pentecostalism today, but also of the multitudes from every tribe and nation that will be gathered on the coming day of the Lord.²³

The Healing of the American Bifurcation

Evangelical World

In 1947 Carl Henry, the father of modern fundamentalism published the first edition of his book that began to turn the tide of bifurcation in the West.²⁴ In *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, he questioned why humanitarian concern had evaporated, why the evils of racial hatred were left unchecked, why the social implications of the gospel were not pursued and why there was so much apprehension over the preaching of God's kingdom. In this ground-breaking book he calls for a new reformation among Evangelicals that would result in a passion for souls as well as a passion to meaningfully address the social needs of the world.

Almost twenty years after Henry's book was published the bifurcation was still evident as Evangelicals took opposing views at two significant conferences in 1966. On the one hand Billy Graham pleaded with the delegates of the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin to 'get back to the basics of preaching the gospel and all else will fall into place'. Thomas Zimmerman who was still General Superintendent of the (U.S.) Assemblies of God at that stage was on the steering committee of this conference. On the other hand, the Congress on the World Mission of the Church that was held in Wheaton, Illinois clearly took a different tack that reflected not only Henry's 'uneasy conscience' but began to reflect the voices of non-western theologians from 71 countries who were present. The conference produced the Wheaton Declaration wherein the delegates plead with Evangelicals not

²³ Yong, 'Justice Deprived, Justice Demanded', 146.

²⁴ C. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

to only preach a gospel of individual salvation but to also stand against social injustice.

Whereas evangelicals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led in social concern, in the twentieth century many have lost the biblical perspective and limited themselves only to preaching a gospel of individual salvation without sufficient involvement in their social and community responsibilities.... We therefore declare...that we reaffirm unreservedly the primacy of preaching the gospel to every creature, and we will demonstrate anew God's concern for social justice and human welfare...that our supreme loyalty (*sic*) is to Jesus Christ and all of our racial, cultural, social, and national loyalties are to be in subjection to him.

We have sinned grievously. We are guilty of an unscriptural isolation from the world that too often keeps us from honestly facing and coping with its concerns....we find that we have often failed...to apply Scriptural principles to such problems as racism, war, population explosion, poverty, family disintegration, social revolution, and communism.²⁵

It was only at the International Congress on World Evangelization that took place in Lausanne in 1974 that the convergence of the two streams began to emerge. The Conference was probably the most important worldwide Evangelical gathering of the twentieth century, and it took place with the support of the Billy Graham Organization. The Lausanne Covenant that was adopted at the conclusion of the Congress explicitly calls for the church to share God's concern for justice and reconciliation. In surprisingly activist terminology it calls for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression and confesses that the Evangelical church not only neglected this part of the message of the gospel, but that it had so often regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive.

Over the years the Lausanne Movement, as it came to be called, maintained various working groups and produced White Papers that they called 'Lausanne Occasional Papers' (LOP) to address specific topics.²⁶ It is gratifying to look through the contents of these LOPs to see how bifurcation, at least theoretically and academically, was being challenged. LOPs addressed such critical social issues such as witnessing to refugees (LOP 5), calling for an Evangelical commitment to a simple life-style (LOP 20), wrestling with evangelism and social responsibility (LOP 21), promoting ministry to at risk people (LOP 34), ministry to people with disabilities (LOP35B), addressing market place ministry (LOP 40), racial reconciliation (LOP 51), business as mission (LOP 59), and following Jesus in a broken world (LOP 62).

²⁵ 'The Wheaton Declaration' can be found in the archives of the Billy Graham Center (<http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/wd66/b01.html>).

²⁶ <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops.html>

Assemblies of God in America

In the Assemblies of God the tensions in official policy on the primacy of evangelism over social action continued unabated.²⁷ But several significant influences began to impact official policy in the last decade of the century. An emerging group of Assemblies of God missiologists like Gordon Fee, Paul Pomerville, Murray Dempster, Peter Kuzmic and Douglas Petersen began to advocate for ‘a new understanding of the kingdom of God motif in order to develop a holistic mission theology which encompasses an active social concern and action theology’.²⁸ In retrospect, the publishing of *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* by Dempster, Klaus and Petersen in 1991²⁹ could be considered a tipping point. At the time all three were heavily impacted by their experiences in Latin America where Liberation Theology was gaining ground and Pentecostals needed to respond. The first three chapters by Gordon Fee, Murray Dempster and Douglas Petersen unashamedly explained what a theology of the Kingdom looks like and Croatian Peter Kuzmic outlined a Pentecostal response to Marxism. The timeliness of this publication, two years after the fall of Communism should be considered pivotal.

On the other side of the world Pentecostals in South Africa, Latin America and Asia are not immune from the bifurcation that western missionaries bring with them and their social concern is similarly muted. This draws a sharp criticism from Marxist and Catholic writers who ascribe it to the fact that resources and leadership of the movement come from outside the majority world.³⁰ Ma traced the changes that took place in Asian Pentecostal theology. As the eschatological urgency that was identified with the first generation missionaries began to wane it was gradually replaced by a here-and-now prosperity gospel that was imported from the Charismatic movement and a this-worldly organizational orientation that was imported by Pentecostals that emphasized church growth.³¹ But increasingly there was a growing awareness of Pentecostal socio-political influence in the Philippines and in Indonesia. There was an increasing environmental awareness in Korea. Malaysian churches pioneered social

²⁷ G.B. McGee, *This Gospel... Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986).

²⁸ W.B. Newberry, ‘Major Missiological Motifs in North American Classical Pentecostal Missions’ (D.Th. dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 1999), 176.

²⁹ Published by Hendrickson of Peabody, MA.

³⁰ G.F. Wessels, ‘Charismatic Christian Congregations and Social Justice: A South African Perspective’, *Missionalia* 25:3 (1997), 360-74; V.-M. Kärkkäinen, ‘Are Pentecostals Oblivious to Social Justice? Theological and Ecumenical Perspectives’, *Missiology: An International Review* 29:4 (2001), 417-31

³¹ W. Ma, ‘Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean’, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12:1 (2009).

service programs for the neglected. Everywhere Pentecostals were providing general social services and establishing NGOs to serve the people.

The change in focus could also be seen in Africa when the Assemblies of God Association (AAGA) leadership met in Nairobi in 1993. AAGA represents all the indigenous Assemblies of God churches in Africa. At their first, inaugural meeting there were immediately calls for the establishment of a division for social concern in Africa to deal with issues of HIV/AIDS, poverty and other social concerns. With such a declaration they acknowledged that ministry in Africa cannot be bifurcated and ignore the social context of the people they minister to.

In the 1990s a growing chorus of Assemblies of God academics with roots in minority cultures in America began to publish works aimed at the American church that reflected the need for biblical holism. They include Eldin Vilafane, Samuel Solivan, and Frank Macchia.³²

Another significant impetus, to the healing of the bifurcation can be found in the participation of a group of Assemblies of God theologians in the Roman-Catholic Pentecostal dialogue.³³ This dialogue was launched already in 1972 but it was during The Fourth Phase of the dialogue (from 1990 to 1997) that the focus turned to mission and social justice issues. Although the participants clearly represented 'the theologically more sophisticated sector of Pentecostalism'³⁴ this was the first ecumenical occasion for Pentecostals to begin to engage these issues and to formulate a coherent response.

A significant turning point for the Assemblies of God came in 1998 when the Division of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God decided to convene an international consultation in Brussels 'to develop a coherent theological stance integrating biblical concepts with both our evangelistic efforts as well as ministries of social concern'.³⁵ The Brussels Consultation brought together not only theologians and academics, but executive leadership and practitioners involved with ministries of compassion from all over the world. The resultant *Brussels Statement* was an exciting, balanced Pentecostal theology that provided a framework for holistic ministry. It addressed the traditional bifurcation by using 'kingdom language'; suggesting that the church needs to balance life in the kingdom of God as something that is already present, but which is 'not yet' fully

³² Eldin Vilafane, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 1998); and Frank Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation: The Message of the Blumhardts in the Light of Wuertemberg Pietism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993).

³³ Karkkainen, 'Are Pentecostals Oblivious to Social Justice?'

³⁴ Karkkainen, 'Are Pentecostals Oblivious to Social Justice?', 423.

³⁵ 'Introduction to the Consultation', *Transformation* 16:2 (1999), 41.

consummated. In this way they were able to by-pass the contentious issues of eschatology and focus on current ministry.

In 1999, the *Brussels Statement* as well as two seminal presentations from the Consultation by Dempster and by Petersen were published in the journal of the influential Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, *Transformation*.³⁶ However, the *Statement* is never officially adopted by the Missions Department and subsequent official publications on the subject reflect the same uneasiness with the 'kingdom' terminology that Carl Henry noticed half a century earlier.

Finally, in 2009 the General Council of the Assemblies of God appeared to put to rest this debate,³⁷ once and for all as it modified its official purpose statement by adding a 'fourth pillar' to the church's 'reason for being'. The resolution called for 'compassion' to become a fourth 'reason for being'. The existing three were evangelism, worship and for the church to be a channel to build a body of saints, perfected in the image of Christ. In the discussions the Council heard warnings from missionaries and pastors that the church would lose its evangelistic fervour and slide into a social gospel if the resolution were to be adopted. Others argued that making it a pillar was unnecessary because compassion was already an integral part of the denomination's existence reflecting the view that 'for Pentecostals social justice is not a cause but a consequence of successful evangelistic efforts'.³⁸ Although the resolution was initially rejected, less than twenty-four hours later General Superintendent George O. Wood moved to the floor of the Council from his position as presiding officer and asked the delegates to reconsider their rejection of the resolution. Even though a two-thirds vote was needed to pass the resolution, it was finally accepted.

Quo Vadis?

At the conclusion of the Third Lausanne Conference which was held in Cape Town, South African in 2010 the Cape Town Commitment continued the trend toward holistic gospel that began with John Stott's words being adopted by the first Lausanne Congress in 1974, 'Evangelism requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world'. One is tempted to repeat the puzzling query of Rick Warren when he was interviewed by Readers Digest, 'I've got three advanced degrees. I went to two different seminaries

³⁶ M.W. Dempster, 'Social Concern in the Context of Jesus Kingdom, Mission and Ministry', *Transformation* 16:2 (1999), 43-53; D.P. Petersen, 'Missions in the Twenty-First Century: Toward a Methodology of Pentecostal Compassion', *Transformation* 16:2 (1999), 54-59.

³⁷ http://ag.org/top/Events/General_Council_2009/News/20090808/20090808_BusinessDay3.cfm

³⁸ Karkkainen, 'Are Pentecostals Oblivious to Social Justice?', 422.

and a Bible school. How did I miss the 2000 verses in the Bible where it talks about the poor?³⁹

For eleven years I was the director for welfare of the largest Pentecostal church in South Africa. South African (white) theology was also tainted by the bifurcations of the West because we relied so heavily on western scholarship to point us to what ‘the Spirit was doing in the world’. My team of 450 personnel cared for hundreds of aged who were too poor to survive on their own. Our social workers rescued children from abusive and neglectful families and a team of child care specialists provided the best care in our children’s village. When the AIDS pandemic began to destroy our nation we were able to refocus our efforts to educate the pastors, support those who had been abandoned by families who were afraid of being infected and rescued babies who had been abandoned because their mothers were too ill to care for them. When democracy started to dawn after 50 years of apartheid we led the charge to integrate our institutions, appoint management bodies that reflected the racial composition of the communities and restructured our services to concentrate on the poorest of the poor.

But when the church leadership gathered for national conferences and spiritual strategic meetings to hear the voice of God for the future, those of us with a ministry of social justice were inadvertently demoted to second-class Pentecostals because we were not on the forefront of evangelism, church-planting and global missions. ‘Spiritual’ activities were generally considered theologically superior to ‘social’ activities. ‘Saving souls’ trumped rescuing children from hunger, diseases and sexual abuse. Erecting a million dollar edifice that was only used for a few hours once or twice a week was more important than building a community clinic where people could be tested and counselled for HIV infection (probably one of the most effective strategies in an AIDS-ridden continent to bring good news to people who are vulnerably anxious and desperate for love and acceptance).

The future of global Pentecostal ministry requires a radical revision of biblical concepts that have been tainted by ethnocentric, western interpretations. Our conception of the *missio Dei* needs to be recalibrated to reflect our biblical heritage, not western reactions to perceived theological threats to orthodoxy. We need to regain the vision of our forefathers in the faith where there was no differentiation between personal and social transformation.⁴⁰ The good news of the gospel has temporal as well as eternal consequences.

One of the less than adequate ways in which the bifurcation is being dealt with today is by acknowledging the value of both but calling for

³⁹ Rick Warren, ‘Interview with Rick Warren’, *Readers Digest*, March, 2009.

⁴⁰ R.D. Winter, ‘The Future of Evangelicals in Mission: Will We Regain the Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?’, *Mission Frontiers*, September-October, 2007, 6-15.

prioritization of one.⁴¹ Influential missiologist David Hesselgrave reflects this position when he calls on the church to prioritize evangelism over social action.⁴² This prioritization of evangelism was even evident in the 1966 Wheaton Declaration and has also been promoted by influential Christian social activists like Ron Sider, the founder of Evangelicals for Social Action and whose works have greatly influenced our thinking on poverty and development. His 1977 book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* was one of *Christianity Today's* one hundred most influential books in religion in the twentieth century. Prioritization, however, still implies bifurcation.

An appropriate understanding of modern development theory underscores the need for biblical holism: individual transformation is a prerequisite for effective social development. Evidence-based community development strategies increasingly point to the critical role that the transformation of the individual by the power of the gospel must play. This is illustrated by research that was published in the *American Political Science Review* wherein Woodberry evaluates the impact of 'conversionary Protestants (CPs)' on the spread of stable democracies around the world. He defines CPs (much the same as we would define ourselves as Pentecostals) as persons who are actively involved in evangelism ('actively attempt to persuade others of their beliefs'), promote Bible translations in the vernacular and 'believe that grace/faith/choice saves people, not group membership or sacraments'.⁴³ He comes to an astounding conclusion; that CPs, 'were a crucial catalyst initiating the development and spread of religious liberty, mass education, mass printing, newspapers, voluntary organizations, most major colonial reforms, and the codification of legal protections for non-whites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These innovations fostered conditions that made stable representative democracy more likely-regardless of whether many people converted to Protestantism'.⁴⁴

Successful community transformation strategies need grass-roots-based individuals who have been spiritually transformed and display a singular commitment to their communities. Miller and Yamamori ably document seven ways the Pentecostal ethic transforms the economic circumstances of people and results in an upward social lift for its members.⁴⁵

- Pentecostals provide the poor with a sense of self-worth that gives them confidence

⁴¹ A. Johnson, 'Mission as Word and Deed: Transcending the Language of Priority', *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 28:2 (Summer 2011), 67-73.

⁴² David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2006).

⁴³ R.D. Woodberry, 'The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy', *American Political Science Review* 106:2 (2012), 244.

⁴⁴ Woodberry, 'The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy', 244-45.

⁴⁵ Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*.

- Pentecostal worship provides a new group identity that is vibrant and expressive and facilitates their identification with the community with music, testimonies and stirring oratory from the pulpit
- The close knit family atmosphere in the community provides a safety net for individuals who go through social crisis in countries where such support is not available to the poor
- The well-developed social services and educational facilities of many Pentecostal churches give their members a competitive advantage in the community
- Deliverance from the demonic empower individuals to gain control over their lives instead of leaving them victim to irrational forces
- The skills that are learned in Pentecostal church life are similar to skills that are necessary to run an entrepreneurial business. The authors talk about the way the church markets itself, or sets up 'daughter churches' (like franchise operations), manages customer satisfaction, teaches organizational development and financial accounting, and
- The skills that are promoted as spiritual practices (such as fasting, all-night prayer, and repressing libidinal urges) are inevitably transferred to the work environment with obvious social and economic benefits.

Pentecostals are well equipped to be entrepreneurial, to 'trust the Holy Spirit' and to think of creative solutions to seemingly intractable social ills that enslave their communities. They have a passion that sustains them when it appears that their task is beyond human capacity. Pentecostal leaders become socio-missional entrepreneurs,⁴⁶ who, like the sons of Issachar (1 Chro. 12:32) understand the signs of the times so that they are able to advise their leaders what to do. The type of social transformation that we envisage could not possibly be undertaken without a life-changing, personal encounter with the Christ of the Gospels.

It should therefore not be any surprise that secular sources stand in awe of global Pentecostals who understand this language of faith and transcendence for social situations that appear impossible:⁴⁷

The great secular ideologies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – from Marxism to Freudianism – have faded while Seymour's spirit-filled version of Christianity has flourished. Pentecostal denominations have prospered, and Pentecostalism has infused traditional denominations through the wildly popular charismatic movement...LA's most successful export is not Hollywood but Pentecostalism.... One of the movement's central messages is self-respect – Pentecostals are 'dynamite in the hands of God' rather than deferential servants. Relying on ordinary people to spread the

⁴⁶ Johan Mostert, 'Community Psychology as Socio-Missional Entrepreneurship', *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 30:3 (2012), 239-42.

⁴⁷ 'Pentecostals: Christianity Reborn', *Economist*, December 19, 2006.

word, the churches are particularly good at conveying the rudiments of management. They teach people to speak in public, organise meetings and, as they become more successful, manage large organisations.

The bifurcated view of the gospel that sees evangelism and social justice as polar opposites, or that requires the one to precede the other is not only culturally defined from a western perspective, it is also clearly developmentally inappropriate. A more appropriate approach is to see the two as part of a singular process. Sugden has suggested that the decision to start with evangelism or social action should not be determined by a theoretical consideration, but by the context of the need or the situation.⁴⁸ To do so outside of a specific context could clearly lead to a reductionist approach to God's mission. Similarly, Wright suggests that instead of seeing the two as opposing one another on a continuum it may be more helpful to see them as divine interventions in a circle of all the needs that God intends to *ultimately* address in a person's life.⁴⁹ You can enter the circle at any starting point that may be appropriate (through proclamation or through social action) but when you focus on 'ultimacy' the relegation of one or the other leads to a defective and truncated understanding of God's mission. God's message of salvation addresses the full range of human brokenness and when we see them in terms of 'ultimacy' the need to cling to the one or the other as a theoretical priority disappears.

As Pentecostalism moves past the bifurcations of our western heritage, there remains the danger that the renewed excitement of the transformational role of Biblical social justice could eventually subside and move past its faddish popularity. On the one side it is important to move past the 'bait and switch' practices that see social action as sanctified only because 'souls are being saved'. But similarly we face the danger that we could repeat the history of replacing the power of the gospel with secular philanthropy and social entrepreneurialism. The contributions of Petersen, Villafane, and Macchia together with documents like the *Brussels Statement* provide Pentecostals with a solid theological grounding to mitigate such a danger.⁵⁰

Timothy Keller is another in a long line of recent Evangelical writers that attempt to solidly anchor social justice within our understanding of the character of God. God is a just God who does not show partiality, he defends the fatherless and the widows and he loves immigrants and gives them food and clothing (Deut. 10:17-18). When God decides to describe his own character, he says he is a father to the fatherless and a defender of widows (Ps. 68:4-5). This is so unlike pagan gods who identify with the

⁴⁸ C. Sugden, 'Response to the Brussels Consultation', *Transformation* 16:2 (1999), 59-65.

⁴⁹ C. Wright, *Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

⁵⁰ Petersen, 'Missions in the Twenty-First Century'; Vilafane, *The Liberating Spirit*; and Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation*.

people who have all the power; the kings and the priests and the social elites. He is at pains to make sure that Israel understands that he is a God of justice.⁵¹

But for Keller⁵² it is the reason of this revelation that is important to grasp; he presents himself as an object lesson that needs to be replicated by his people. When we understand the character of God we are obliged to be like him. 'Every theological statement describing God's character and conduct simultaneously is a moral imperative prescribing who God's people ought to be and what they ought to do: as God is in his character, so God's people ought to be in their character; and, as God acts in his world, so God's people ought to act in their conduct'.⁵³ God's motive for revealing his character was that he would become visible to the nations through them (Deut. 4:6-8). That is why God loves those who live justly (Ps. 146:7-9), because through our justice we reveal the character of our just God! 'What does the Lord require of you but to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Mic. 6:8).

This too, reflects the mystery that Paul speaks about in Col. 1:7, the mystery that was hidden from ages past. God wants to reveal himself to a dysfunctional and broken world by sending them his sons and daughters as ambassadors for the kingdom of God. And when the world can see God in the Church, they will respond in awe of his love, justice and compassion. 'By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to the other' (Jn. 13:35).

We don't do justice or show mercy because people get saved through these actions. We don't do it because it's a fad or the 'right thing' to do. We do it because we are replicating the character of a just God in a world that desperately needs to tangibly experience justice and compassion.

Conclusion

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit has always been about service. With Ma I get excited about the prospects of non-western Pentecostals bringing a fresh vitality and enthusiasm to the message of the gospel as the 'poor get fired up' to address seemingly intractable issues of global poverty and suffering.⁵⁴ I am encouraged that sociologists and economists stand in awe at the transformative power of the gospel as the Holy Spirit leads the church through the vision of charismatically inspired socio-missional entrepreneurs. I dream about the western church coming alongside their brothers and sisters

⁵¹ Keller, *Generous Justice*.

⁵² And others like M.W. Dempster, 'A Theology of the Kingdom: A Pentecostal Contribution', in V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds.), *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999).

⁵³ Dempster, 'A Theology of the Kingdom', 59.

⁵⁴ W. Ma, "'When the Poor Are Fired up": The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal-Charismatic Mission', *Transformation* 24:1 (2007), 28-34.

in the global south, bearing their gifts of technology, capital, and entrepreneurial insights that hold the potential to change the face of disease, poverty and global economic exploitation. I pray for a united church, filled with the Holy Spirit and power bringing down the kingdoms of darkness and making all these enemies bow their knees before God the Father. With the disciples I will pray, as Jesus taught us to do, 'Let Thy kingdom come; let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'!



CHRISTIAN UNITY AND PENTECOSTAL MISSION: A CONTRADICTION?

Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.

In his provocative book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel P. Huntington observed the apparent competition that best describes the relationship between Christianity and Islam over the past century. He pointed to the fact that Christianity and Islam are both 'proselytizing religions'.¹ These faith traditions are the two largest global religions, and drawing upon the 1982 work of David Barrett, he predicted that Islam would take precedence and become the dominant world religion as early as 2010.

Whether or not one accepts Huntington's theory of the inevitability of clashing cultures, in this case religious cultures, it is difficult to imagine a future in which large numbers of Muslims and Pentecostals will ever be close friends, that is, it is difficult to imagine a time when they would be either willing or able to set their theological differences aside in such a way as to allow the other to exist without interference. Their ideologies and their missionary agendas appear to be diametrically opposed to one another because both of them deal in what they believe to be ultimate claims of truth.²

One might wonder, too, whether something similar might not be said when comparing Pentecostal mission programs with the programs of those that advocate the cause of Christian unity. I mean by this that the ideological and pragmatic issues over which Pentecostal Christians and ecumenical Christians think they disagree, issues that lead to unhealthy competition for domination within the Christian community or more broadly within the world, seem to be equally intransigent. While it is

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¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 64-66. Huntington has drawn his statistics from David B. Barrett (ed.), *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World AD 1900-2000* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1982).

² Asonzeh F.-K. Ukah, 'Nigerian Pentecostals and Their Relations with Islam and Muslims', in David Westerlund (ed.), *Global Pentecostalism: Encounters with Other Religious Traditions* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 94 writes, 'Both religions share a commonality that may be worrying in its implications for the socio-political order: their self-representation as the only true faith – with an inevitable intolerance of any other faith'.

widely stated that the modern ecumenical movement as embodied in the World Council of Churches came into being at least partially as a result of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh,³ thereby linking the concepts of mission and unity in a tangible initiative, the move toward Christian unity has also held some important implications for the subject of World Mission that have not always been viewed positively either by Evangelicals or by Pentecostals.

Three decades ago, the veteran evangelical missionary, Harvey Hoekstra, lamented what he called the demise of evangelism. It began, he argued, when the International Missionary Conference was swallowed up by the World Council of Churches in 1961. In his study, Hoekstra examined a range of independent and semi-independent mission agencies that had flourished within denominations that belonged to the World Council of Churches prior to the incorporation of the International Missionary Council into the World Council of Churches. Once this merger had been accomplished, Hoekstra asserted, these independent and semi-independent mission agencies were subjected to a steady process of domestication and regularization by the various ‘denominational boards of foreign and world missions’ of the churches that held membership in the World Council of Churches. From Hoekstra’s perspective, the influence of the World Council of Churches on its member churches tamed the missionary enterprise in two ways. First, it substituted the concern for social justice in place of evangelization.⁴ Second, it tended to reduce funding for evangelistic work on the mission field, in favour of padding

³ See, for instance, Lesslie Newbigin, *Is Christ Divided? A Plea for Christian Unity in a Revolutionary Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 22. For an important discussion on the matter that acknowledges that this position is a common one for good reason, but which points to many ecumenical initiatives that had taken place as early as the 18th Century, see Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 7-12.

⁴ In 1965, the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God drafted its position on the Ecumenical Movement. This position, only slightly modified, was subsequently passed by the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1969. It stated, in part, that the Assemblies of God disapproved of ‘ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organizations...in such a manner as to promote the Ecumenical Movement’ because it believed ‘the emphases of the Ecumenical Movement to be at variance with what we hold to be biblical priorities, frequently displacing the urgency of individual salvation with social concerns’. See the, ‘Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Article IX.B, List of Doctrines and Practices Disapproved, Section 11 The Ecumenical Movement’, *Minutes of the 50th Session of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, with revised Constitution and Bylaws 50th General Council, Washington, D.C. July 31-August 3, 2003* (Springfield, MO: General Secretary’s Office, 2003), 131-32.

budgets for the personal ambitions of denominational mission bureaucrats interested in their own upward mobility.⁵

While the work of Huntington has come under fire in some quarters as being far too pessimistic, the charges he has raised regarding Christian-Muslim relationships would seem to hold grave implications for the entrepreneurial nature of Pentecostal missions throughout the Middle East and other regions of the world where Islam is the majority religion.⁶ Similarly, if the broader Pentecostal programs of mission and evangelization are placed alongside the much more tidy discussions related to mission and the unity of the church conducted by the World Council of Churches, Hoekstra's concerns might also call for a level of scrutiny.⁷ Even so, their concerns should be examined by Pentecostals to see whether, or in what ways, they might be considered valid

I do not see the need to break social concerns apart from verbal forms of proclamation when it comes to evangelization and mission. For a century, Pentecostalism has understood itself as a missionary and evangelistic movement standing within the revivalist tradition.⁸ While the movement has always been strongly committed to the proclamation of the gospel in a verbal form, its role in social concern has not yet been adequately studied or recognized.⁹ At the same time, while the World Council of Churches has

⁵ Harvey T. Hoekstra, *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1979), 198-99.

⁶ As just one example, the May 1992 issue of *Mountain Movers*, the foreign missions Magazine of the Assemblies of God at that time, gave its entire attention to the theme 'Reaching the World of Islam'.

⁷ See, for example, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper 198 (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 2005), sections 34-42. In all fairness, it is important to read alongside Hoekstra's book, the critical review written by Robbins Strong, 'The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism', *International Review of Mission* 70 (1981), 79-81.

⁸ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 5 writes that '...the present proliferation of Pentecostalism and indeed its inherent character result from the fact that this is fundamentally a missionary movement of the Spirit from the start'.

⁹ David Bundy, 'Social Ethics in the Church of the Poor: The Cases of T. B. Barratt and Lewi Pethrus', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 22 (2002), 30-44; Rudiger V. Busto, 'In the Outer Boundaries': Pentecostalism, Politics, and Reies López Tijerina's Civic Activism', in Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda (eds.), *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65-75; Anthea Butler, 'Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality and Justice', in Huibert van Beek (ed.), *Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas: San Jose, Costa Rica 4-8 June 1996* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, no date), 28-44; Bernardo L. Campos, 'In the Power of the Spirit: Pentecostalism, Theology and Social Ethics', in Benjamin F. Gutierrez and Dennis A. Smith (eds.), *In the Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America* (Mexico City: AIPRAL/Guatemala City: CELEP / Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church

often been depicted by people such as Harvey Hoekstra as replacing personal evangelism with social justice programs,¹⁰ many of the

[U.S.A.], Worldwide Ministries Division, 1996), 41-50; Bernardo Campos Morante, 'After Azusa Street: Identity and Function of Pentecostals in the Processes of Social Change', in Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (eds.), *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006), 317-34; Augustus Cerillo, Jr., 'Pentecostals and the City', in Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (eds.), *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 98-119; Murray W. Dempster, 'Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 9 (1987), 129-53; Murray W. Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God', in *Called and Empowered*, 22-43; Murray W. Dempster, 'Social Concern in the Context of Jesus' Kingdom Mission and Ministry', *Transformation: An International Dialogue on Mission and Ethics* 16 (April/June 1999), 43-53; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Are Pentecostals Oblivious of Social Justice? Theological and Ecumenical Perspectives', in Christoph Dahling-Sander, Kai M. Fundschmidt, and Vera Mielke (eds.), *Pfingstkirchen und Ökumene In Bewegung*, a special issue of *Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau* 71 (Frankfurt am Main: Otto-Lembeck Verlag, 2001), 50-65; Donald E. Miller, 'Pentecostalism and Social Transformation', in *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, 335-348; Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'The Social Concern of Early American Pentecostalism', in Jan A.B. Jongeneel (ed.), *Pentecost, Mission, and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Walter J. Hollenweger* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 97-106, translated and published as 'Das soziale Anliegen der frühen amerikanischen Pfingstbewegung', in Michael Bergunder (ed.), *Pfingstbewegung und Basisgemeinden In Lateinamerika. Die Rezeption befreiungstheologischer Konzept durch die pfingstliche Theologie*, *Weltmission heute* 39 (Hamburg, Germany: Evangelisches Missionswerk In Deutschland, 2000), 57-66, notes 145-149; Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'Rebuilding a Broken Society: An Interview with Frank Chikane', *Theology, News & Notes* 48:1 (Spring 2001), 20-27; translated and reprinted as 'Reconstruir una sociedad despedazada: Entrevista con Frank Chikane', in *Surgir* 7 (2002), 49-62; Luis Scott, 'Reies López Tijerina: Las visiones y la obediencia de un activista pentecostal', in Juan F. Martínez Guerra y Luis Scout (eds.), *Iglesias peregrinas en busca de identidad: Cuadros del protestantismo latino en los Estados Unidos* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Karios Ediciones, 2004), 193-205; Eldin Villafaña, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward a Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992); Eldin Villafaña, 'The Politics of the Spirit: Reflections on a Theology of Social Transformation for the Twenty-First Century', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 18:2 (1996), 161-70; G. François Wessels, 'Charismatic Christian Congregations and Social Justice: A South African Perspective', *Missionalia* 25:3 (November 1997), 360-74; Robert D. Woodbury, 'Pentecostalism and Economic Development', in Jonathan B. Imber (ed.), *Markets, Morals and Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 157-77.

¹⁰ See, for instance, R.C. Cunningham, 'A World Council of Churches', *The Pentecostal Evangel* 1802 (November 20, 1948), 15; Charles Paul Conn, 'Where

denominations related to the World Council of Churches continue to send missionaries with much more than a mere social message.¹¹ We may differ on the priorities that we give to various aspects of ministry, but I think that our caricatures of one another need to change. More important still, I think, is whether we are only to *do* evangelization by these means or whether there is a role for simply *being* something that we have so far refused to be, or at least refused to be well. And that is *being one*. With that thought in mind, I want to focus for a short time on the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

The Prayer of Jesus

²⁰ I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that (*hina*) they may all be one (*pántes hèn 'ōsin*). As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, (*hina*) may they also be in us, so that (*hina*) the world may believe (ho kósmos pisteúē) that you have sent me (*hóti su me 'apéstēilas*).²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that (*hina*) they may be one as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, and they may become completely one, so that (*hina*) the world may know (ho kósmos ginōskē) that you have sent me (*hóti su me 'apéstēilas*) and have loved them even as you have loved me (*égápēsas autōus kathōs 'emē 'egápēsas*) (Jn 17:20-24, NRSV).

The prayer of Jesus that is recorded in John 17 has often been cited as a prayer in which Jesus asks the Father to grant his followers unity. Most Pentecostals maintain that when Jesus prayed this prayer, he was *not* speaking of *visible unity*. They understand the prayer of Jesus as pointing to a *spiritual* form of unity. When the Holy Spirit came to indwell his followers, Jesus' prayer was answered through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every genuine believer.¹² A spiritual unity or *koinonia* was the result of this common indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is not our job to decide who is 'within' and who is 'outside' of this spiritual fellowship. Any call to work for some form of visible unity is then portrayed as the misguided effort of human beings to accomplish what God has already given. As a result, Pentecostals have generally given little credence to the

the World Council of Churches Went Wrong', *Church of God Evangel* 72:16 (October 25, 1982), 16-18.

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¹¹ See, for example, Scott W. Sunquist and Caroline N. Becker (eds.), *A History of Presbyterian Missions: 1944-2007* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2008) and the recent work of the Committee on World Mission and Evangelization of the WCC.

¹² 'A Declaration on Ecumenical Councils and Christian Unity by the National Association of Evangelicals', *Church of God Evangel* 52:39 (December 3, 1962), 12; Ray H. Hughes, 'Pentecost and Ecumenism', *Church of God Evangel* 56:45 (January 16, 1967), 12-13, 15; Thomas F. Zimmerman, 'The Holy Spirit: Unifying the Church', *Church of God Evangel* 57:35 (November 13, 1967), 12-14, 17; Opal L. Reddin, 'Church Unity', *Enrichment* 1.2 (Spring 1996), 68; Francesco Toppi, *E Mi Sarete Testimoni: Il Movimento Pentecostale e le Assemblee di Dio in Italia*, 199.

modern ecumenical movement. But the question remains. Does this *spiritual* reading of Jesus' prayer do justice to his concern? Given the purpose of the unity for which Jesus prayed – so that the world would believe – wouldn't a *literal* reading of John 17:21 be more appropriate?

This second, more literal reading stands as the backdrop against which the modern ecumenical movement has found the source for many of its actions. While it may be true to say that we already experience a spiritual unity through the common indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that spiritual unity is not in itself sufficient to convince the world that God loves them. It is not visible and not tangible. Something more is needed to convince a world that is so disposed.

The argument then is that Jesus has prayed for the unity of the church as part of God's plan, and we have been invited to participate actively in this work of God as we search for the right solution to demonstrate that unity in a visible or tangible form. Most contemporary ecumenical conversations conclude that in light of this passage, the quest for unity must be viewed not as an independent human quest, but as being the will of Christ for the whole church. Ecumenism must be understood as God's gift to the church in direct response to Jesus' prayer for unity among His disciples. It is, therefore, the case that our calling as members of that church is to pursue together or enter together into the fulfilment of that will or to participate together in that gift. This understanding suggests that primary responsibility for our unity rests with God, but that all Christians are called to participate together in that call in an active way.¹³

In John 17:21-23 we may also find a governing paradigm regarding the relationship between unity and mission. A literal reading of the text seems to suggest that unity between the followers of Jesus is essential to the overall effectiveness of their witness. The connective *hina* in verse 21 is typically translated 'so that' or 'in order that' when followed by the subjunctive, as it is in this passage. Since the subjunctive mode conveys a tentative or contingent nature of the act, it is here the case that the world's belief that the Father has sent the Son (*ho kósmos pisteúē*) is in some way dependent upon the action in the previous clause. The action in the previous clause is simply that of being one (*pántes hèn ὄsin*). Nothing is said in verse 21 regarding either the witness of word or the witness of deed. The compelling nature of the testimony to which John bears witness is that followers of Jesus *are* one. It is a witness of *being* rather than a witness of *doing*. This does not mean that engaging in acts of verbal evangelization or doing acts of social justice in the name of mission is either ineffective or wrong-headed, but the fact of our *being one*, just as the Father and the Son

¹³ This idea is clearly stated in Günther Gassmann (ed.), *Documentary History of Faith and Order: 1963-1993*, Faith and Order Paper 159 (Geneva Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1993), Documents I.1 and I.3, pages 3-5, and again in III.3, page 61. This seems to me to be at the very heart of the admonition found in Ephesians 4:3 to 'maintain' the unity that we already enjoy.

are one, may be in some way a more compelling witness to God's love for the world and demonstrated in Jesus Christ in its own right, than any other thing we could say or do.

The message conveyed through this act of *being* is twofold. First, according to verse 21, it is the message that the Father has sent the Son, literally 'that you have sent me' (*sú me apésteilos*). In verse 23, this same phrase is repeated. Jesus prays that the disciples will be completely one so that (*hína*) the world will know (*ho kósmos ginōskē*) that you have sent me (*sú me apésteilos*). This initial request, however, is joined by a second one in verse 23, namely that as a result of the complete oneness of his followers, the world will come to know that the Father has loved the world. Literally, Jesus prays that the consequence of the oneness of his followers will convey the message that 'you have loved them just as you have loved me' (*hoti 'ēgápēsas autous kathos hemē 'ēgápēsas*). If it can be said that the prayer of Jesus links the effectiveness of mission to the unity of his followers, that is, the effectiveness of the message intended for the world, then it should be possible to assess the effectiveness of this mission in light of the unity or division that is currently present among the followers of Jesus.

Currently many Christians, among them most Pentecostals, remain focused upon what they describe as the spiritual or invisible character of the church while excluding more visible forms of ecumenism as in some ways compromising. At the same time, many others, notably many of the more ecumenical Christians have focused upon the visible nature of the church, but often at the expense of any emphasis upon the need for a personal conversion or life transformation that can be viewed in a spiritual sense. As a result, it is currently impossible to answer the question of effectiveness in any compelling way.

If it is spiritual or invisible unity for which Jesus prayed, how is the world able to discern it in such a way as to see the love of the Father demonstrated through his sending of Jesus, His Son?¹⁴ In what way is it a complete witness to the truth that Jesus wants the world to see? If, on the other hand it is intended to be visible, what is the form that this visible unity to take? Is it a visibility rooted in a single institution? Is it intended to manifest itself in some type of conciliar fellowship? Is it a unity that is based upon theological uniformity? And what expectations regarding personal conversion should churches place on individuals as a requirement for becoming a Christian and joining the church. Among Christians, the questions of 'being', that is, of how visible unity should best be conceived and manifested also remains unanswered. As a result, regardless of the position adopted in the current state of relations between Christian

¹⁴ Thomas F. Zimmerman, 'The Holy Spirit: Unifying the Church', *Church of God Evangel* 57:35 (November 13, 1967), 12-14, 17; Opal L. Reddin, 'Church Unity', *Enrichment* 1:2 (Spring 1996), 68.

churches, the question of the effectiveness of the church's mission continues to remain unanswered.

The Unanswered Challenges of Lesslie Newbigin

The question of the effectiveness of the church's mission in light of the current state of disunity was something that troubled Bishop Lesslie Newbigin over half a century ago and others as far back as Edinburgh 1910. As early as 1953, Newbigin took the position that

The disunity of the Church is a denial of the promise and a contradiction of the purpose for which the Church is sent into the world. How can the church give to the world the message that Jesus is able to draw all men to Himself, while it continues to say, 'Nevertheless, Jesus is not able to draw us who bear His name together'? How will the world believe a message which we do not appear to believe ourselves? The divisions of the Church are a public denial of the sufficiency of the atonement.¹⁵

For much of his life, Lesslie Newbigin served as an English, missionary-bishop in the Church of South India. He did not enter India as a bishop, but was elected to that post in the Church of South India by the Indian people of that church. For over half a century, his was a strong Evangelical voice in that region of the world. He was both a leading churchman and a formidable ecumenical statesman. From beginning to end, Bishop Newbigin was an advocate for proclaiming the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, and from beginning to end he saw the success of that task being linked to the unity of the followers of Jesus Christ. His commitment to the Church of South India, one of the earliest 'united' churches in the world, is a testimony to his commitment to this idea of visible unity. In truth, he saw unity as a basic fact of life whose foundation lay in the very atonement that Christ had made possible through his death and resurrection. His experience on the mission field of India led him to the conclusion that the unity of the church is as much a soteriological issue as it is an ecclesiological issue.

Bishop Newbigin often spoke of the challenge that many non-Christians posed to him when he presented the Gospel to them. They stumbled over the deep divisions that separated Christians from Christians as the Catholic Portuguese were replaced by the Reformed Dutch and the Reformed Dutch were displaced by the Anglican English and then the Baptists and the Methodists, divisions that seemed to deny the efficacy of the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. When Bishop Newbigin told the Indian populace of Christ's power to reconcile humanity to God, and His ability to reconcile people one with another, their response was often tainted by scepticism.

Yes, that is what you say, but it is not what you believe. For if you believed it, you would yourselves have found it true. You would have found in Jesus a

¹⁵ Newbigin, *Is Christ Divided?*, 9.

center of unity deep enough and strong enough to overcome your natural divisions and to bring you together as one family. If you really believed that the Name of Jesus is the one name under which all [hu]mankind is to be enrolled, you would yourselves have found that Name sufficient. But in fact you add all sorts of other names. Evidently you yourselves do not find in Him the secret that you are offering to us.¹⁶

While this short response is most likely a composite one, made up of arguments that young Hindus with whom Bishop Newbigin came into regular contact may have brought, it is nonetheless effective in communicating the discrepancy between what we say and who we are. In short, the current state of division between Christians is sufficient to raise doubts among those for whom the message of reconciliation is intended to be *Good News*. From the perspective of missions, our divided state is a scandal of the highest magnitude that needs to be overcome.

The Qu'ran has put the indictment another way,

With those who said they were Christians, We [Allah] made a covenant also, but they too have forgotten much of what they were enjoined. Therefore, We stirred among them enmity and hatred, which shall endure till the Day of Resurrection when Allah will declare to them all that they have done.¹⁷

The Qu'ran forms and guides the worldview of millions of people around the world. Some interpretations of this passage suggest that the divisions between Christians have come as a result of Allah's judgment upon a backslidden church. Christians are portrayed as being divided because they have been unfaithful to God. Still, we claim to carry the message of reconciliation. In light of our divisions, the appropriate Muslim response, like that of the Hindu, is, 'If your God is so good at providing reconciliation through Jesus Christ, why are you who carry his Name unable to be reconciled to one another? Don't talk to us about God's reconciling power until you can bear tangible evidence that your message is true'.

The World Missionary Conference that was held in Edinburgh in 1910 can be described as a watershed both for mission and for unity or ecumenism. The purpose of the Conference was not first and foremost about Christian unity, it was about Christian mission. The conference came at a time when the situation around the world was changing. The institution known as Christendom that seemed to have served the church in previous centuries fairly well was beginning to crumble. The handwriting was on the wall as the colonial powers began to be eclipsed and indigenous people and their newly created nations began to rise up. Many nations began to find their own voices, emerging to take their place on the world stage. This

¹⁶ Newbigin, *Is Christ Divided?* 21-22.

¹⁷ Al-Ma'ida 5.14-15. The reference to enmity and hatred is typically interpreted as divisions and sectarianism within the Christian community. When I think of what has been enjoined upon us in the name of unity, my mind is drawn to Ephesians 4:1-6.

process would continue for the better part of the next century. The missionaries and mission executives that gathered in Edinburgh in 1910 were concerned with the need to evaluate the effectiveness of their current work, and if possible, to strategize together regarding the future in which a post-colonial, post-Christendom global form of Christianity might take the place of the *status quo*.

One of the things that quickly became apparent as they met with one another was the need for greater unity between the churches engaged in missionary work. The call for the churches to work toward greater visible unity that was issued by the World Missionary Conference of 1910 is difficult to ignore. It was the sole theme of the entire study issued by Commission VIII,¹⁸ and clearly it had a significant impact on the ultimate formation of the World Council of Churches.¹⁹ The Commission had gathered information from a range of denominations, missionary sending agencies, regional missionary conferences and associations, missionary founded churches, and missionaries on the status of conversations and projects that fostered visible unity. It included an assessment of the contributions being made through comity agreements, the role and promise of conferences and associations developing in various regions of the world, the necessity to foster unity and the potential fruit to be gained by engaging in joint actions whenever possible, and the obligation of missionaries and their respective sending bodies to cooperate more fully with one another on issues related to visible unity.

The Commission also included a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of two fundamental approaches to visible unity, 1) the role of federations of churches that might allow for maximum diversity between ecclesial partners, and 2) the possibility of moves toward greater organic unity that might contribute maximum depth to the resulting relationships.

What resulted from the 1910 Conference included the formation of the International Missionary Conference.²⁰ It should not be surprising, then, to learn that the Assemblies of God in the USA, which had formed explicitly in 1914 for purposes of greater visible unity and of greater missionary

¹⁸ *Report of Commission VIII: Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity with Supplement: Presentation and Discussion of the Report in the Conference on 21st June 1910* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier / New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1910).

¹⁹ Kenneth Scott Latourette, 'Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Conference', in Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: 1517-1948*, 2 vols. (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1953, 1967, 1986), I:353-362; C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott: 1865-1955: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 342-82, 684-96.

²⁰ W.H.T. Gairdner, *'Edinburgh 1910': An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1910), 187-88.

cooperation, should become part of such an organization.²¹ The Assemblies of God joined the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America in 1920. When the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America joined the International Missionary Conference the following year, the Assemblies of God *ipso facto* became a member of the International Missionary Conference.²²

When in 1949 the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America became the missionary arm of the National Council of Churches in the USA, the Assemblies of God dropped its membership in that missionary organization, but it continued to maintain a cordial relationship as a 'consultant agency' to both the National Council of Churches in the USA and the newly formed World Council of Churches, ultimately taking up residence in the same building at 475 Riverside Drive, in New York City, where the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches housed their North American headquarters.²³

In 1961, the International Missionary Conference became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. It was only in August 1961, after four decades of membership and cooperation with these national and international ecumenical agencies that the Assemblies of God broke off its relationship with them, a decision

²¹ In 1913 and 1914, Pentecostals were at odds with one another over the doctrine of sanctification (whether it was to be viewed as a crisis or as a process) as well as the proper formula to be invoked at the time of baptism (whether it was to be done in the name of Jesus Christ as it was in Acts 2:38, or using classical Trinitarian language of Matthew 28:19). While these differences were not mentioned by name, the concern for doctrinal unity within the youthful Pentecostal movement was genuine, and many thought that if they could work with a common name (Assemblies of God) with shared educational expectations and a shared standard for clergy, the issue of unity could be addressed visibly. At the same time, missionary activity was a second major concern. The movement wanted to conserve resources, to assess needs, and engage in practical stewardship, just as the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference had done. This may be seen in the following statements in the call to the first General Council of the Assemblies of God. 'We come together that we know how to conserve the work; that we may all build up and not tear down both in home and foreign lands'. 'We come together...that we may get a better understanding of the needs of each foreign field, and may know how to place our money in such a way that one mission or missionary shall not suffer, while another not any more worthy, lives in luxuries. Also that we may discourage wasting money on those who are running here and there accomplishing nothing, and may concentrate our support on those who mean business for our King'. 'General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ', *Word and Witness* 9:12 (December 20, 1913), 1.5-6.

²² Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation: 1920-1965', in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (eds.), *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies* Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 11 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 116

²³ Robeck, 'The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation', 121-22.

made under duress from the repeated attacks by the American Fundamentalist, Carl F. McIntyre, questions raised by the National Association of Evangelicals, and the personal convictions of the newly elected General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Thomas F. Zimmerman.²⁴

It is easy to see why Lesslie Newbigin would argue that

It was among missionaries that the denominational barriers were first overleaped, and it was the great world missionary conference of 1910 that created the modern movement for Christian unity. The unity of Christ's people, for which He prays, is a unity 'that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou lovest me'. It is a unity for the sake of the world, the world which God made and loves and for which He sent His Son.²⁵

Newbigin went beyond this initial summary, however, when he envisioned the participation of Pentecostals in the field of mission as well as in the field of unity as one of critical importance to the whole Church.

In 1953, Newbigin wrote his important book, *The Household of God*, in which he outlined what he called the three streams of Christianity. The first stream he called the Catholic stream. The second stream was the Protestant stream. And the third stream was the Pentecostal stream.²⁶ He declared that all three streams were essential to a full understanding of the church. Each had a contribution to make, but apart from the contributions of the other two streams, each was incomplete. According to Newbigin's argument, Catholics offered structure to the church through their emphasis upon apostolic succession. Protestants offered the reformed 'message' of the church, that is, what he viewed as its doctrinal orthodoxy. Together, Catholics and Protestants had historically sought to 'honour and safeguard the uniqueness, sufficiency and finality of God's saving acts in Christ'. Yet without the third stream, he contended, they reflected a 'Church which is a mere shell, having the form of a Church but not the life'.²⁷

What Pentecostalism brought to the church, he offered, was 'the conviction that the Christian life is a matter of the experienced power and presence of the Holy Spirit today'.²⁸ Unfortunately, he pointed out, for a variety of reasons Pentecostals were largely outside the ecumenical arena. As a result, Pentecostalism had not yet risen to the critically necessary challenge of the theological encounter that the ecumenical movement made possible, and as a result, the other two streams were bereft of vitality and power.

²⁴ Robeck, 'The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation', 122-45.

²⁵ Newbigin, *Is Christ Divided?* 22.

²⁶ One could wish that he had also included Orthodoxy as a fourth stream or that he had made clear its relationship to one of the other streams.

²⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (London, England: SCM Press, 1953), 87. There is clearly a less than subtle reference to 2 Tim. 3:5 here.

²⁸ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 87.

Newbigin maintained that the Church needs all three streams, cooperating in such a way as to *be* one, for in the end, ‘the Church is, in the most exact sense, a *koinonia*, a sharing in the Holy Spirit’.²⁹ The presence of Pentecostalism as an equal partner in the church removes all three aspects of the church – Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal – from the clutches of their individual sin, whereby each claims to be or acts as though it were the whole church, without giving due consideration to the other parts. Furthermore, he pointed out, ‘When the risen Lord bestowed the apostolic commission upon the Church and empowered it to continue his mission, the very heart of His act lay in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit.... It is as anointed with His Holy Spirit that they are bearers of His commission, and in no other way’.³⁰

Repeatedly throughout his ministry, Newbigin came back to this same theme. Five years later, in 1958 for instance, he wrote a small pamphlet, in which he called for something more than mere cooperation between the various strands of Christianity,

Our divisions are a public contradiction of that atonement. Co-operation in common programmes of study and action is not a substitute for this unity. Co-operation in mission must eventually face the question ‘Mission for what?’ Into what are we inviting the men of all nations – into a new complex of divisions in place of their own, or into the one family where at last they may know themselves one in the Father’s house?³¹

Following the lead of Lesslie Newbigin, the Disciples of Christ ecumenical theologian and recently retired General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the USA, Michael Kinnamon, has also made this point, one on which Pentecostals need to reflect further.³² It is one thing to join a local, national, or international Evangelical or Full Gospel alliance in order to cooperate on shared concerns; it is quite another thing to join in a quest for full visible unity.

If Newbigin was strongly committed to the idea that full and genuine Christian unity was critical to the success of Christian mission, he was just as strongly convinced that Christian unity was not to be viewed as an end in itself. It was unity *for the sake of* mission that was at stake. In one of the last addresses he gave before his death in January 1998, Bishop Newbigin, now retired, was invited to speak to the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches that was held in Salvador,

²⁹ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 90. This position is similar to that expressed by Emil Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1953), 10-11.

³⁰ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 95.

³¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *One Gospel, One Body, One World: The Christian Mission Today* (New York, NY: Friendship Press, 1958, 1966), 54.

³² Michael Kinnamon, *The Vision of the Ecumenical Movement and How It Has Been Impoverished by Its Friends* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 23-35, especially 30-31.

Bahia, Brazil, November 24-December 6, 1996. While he was physically weak, his words were powerful, and they led to major acclaim. He was pleased that various speakers had talked about building relationships with groups like the World Evangelical Fellowship [now Alliance] but he also had some critical remarks for the World Council of Churches. 'I do not think that the desire here expressed will be fulfilled unless the WCC gives much more evidence of being filled with a longing to bring the Gospel to all peoples', he began. He went on to note that

The WCC has given courageous leadership in the struggle for peace and justice in the fight against racism and in concern for the integrity of creation. It has been the prime mover in the search for closer Christian unity. But in so powerfully challenging the churches on these issues it does seem to have lost the missionary passion that was the vital force that created the ecumenical movement in the closing years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries. The demand for unity among the churches and the demand for justice and peace among the nations, if they are not rooted in what God has done for all the world in Jesus Christ, can themselves become new forms of domination. There cannot be any greater task, or any deeper joy than to tell the world what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and to enable others to know, love, and serve him as Lord and Savior.³³

Unity and Mission: The Message of Edinburgh 1910

The 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference was largely and intentionally a Protestant and Anglican event, though there were a couple of Catholic observers. When delegates representing the many historic Protestant and Anglican churches of the day met in Edinburgh in 1910, they concentrated almost entirely upon the challenges faced by their own missionaries in Africa, the Middle East, and especially in the giants of Asia – India and China. A significant portion of the Commission's agenda revolved not only around the interface between Christianity and other religions that were already present in those regions of the world, but also around the notion of unity among the Christians who were working in those areas.

Those who led Commission VIII were very much aware that tensions existed between some churches. Some of these tensions were obviously theological, but others were more practical. In any case, the Commission sought to avoid any possible conflicts between delegates. At the same time, it was very clear that no one should have to sacrifice his or her personal convictions. As a result, Commission VIII looked specifically at the more pressing and pragmatic, church-dividing issues that were present in these regions rather than the longer term and underlying issues. Given that neither the Orthodox, nor the Catholic, nor the newly emerging Pentecostal

³³ Lesslie Newbigin, 'The Dialogue of Gospel and Culture: Reflections on the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21:2 (April 1997), 52.

churches were present, it is easy to understand why the work of Commission VIII had in one sense only a limited value.

Among the pragmatic issues undertaken by Commission VIII were the use and misuse of comity agreements by which countries were divided up in such a way that entire regions, were given over to one specific denomination or another, but rarely to more than one. The limitations of such agreements became readily recognizable as soon as one or another group refused to recognize the validity of such an agreement, especially when it had not been a party to the establishment of the agreement in the first place. It also evaluated the role and promise of various conferences and associations then in the process of developing in various parts of the world. The Commission called attention to the need to foster these relatively recent developments and it pointed to the potential fruit that might be gained by engaging in joint actions whenever that was possible. Several of them held real promise for the future. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it noted the obligation that the missionaries and their respective sending agencies had, to cooperate more fully with one another on issues related to visible unity. In keeping with this point, the Commission ultimately passed a single resolution that put into place a Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference that would be multi-national and multi-denominational empowered to follow up on unresolved issues.³⁴ This Continuation Committee would become extremely important in the development of various networks that ultimately evolved into different streams within the World Council of Churches.

Christian Unity and Pentecostal Mission: A Contradiction?

The title of my paper includes a question. It asks whether Christian unity and Pentecostal mission stand in contradiction to one another. I believe that Pentecostals might respond rightly by saying 'No' to this question if it were asked in a neutral or abstract setting. Christian unity and Pentecostal mission need not run competition with one another. They are not mutually exclusive. They belong together. Pentecostals would point to John 17 and say that it is obvious that Jesus saw it this way. They might read the writings of Lesslie Newbigin and recognize the validity of his appeal for unity for the sake of mission. They might even point to the 1910 Missionary Conference (if they knew about it) and note that the delegates were convinced that these two things were related as well.

But in the real world, one where differences seem clear and sides are drawn, Pentecostals have long said, 'yes'. Efforts toward visible Christian unity and mission are a contradiction in terms. They have not typically said this in so many words, but their response is shouted through their actions.

³⁴ For a useful summary of the week and the debate surrounding this resolution, see Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910*, 178-214.

For far too long, they have chosen to build walls between themselves and those with whom they have disagreed, rather than to engage in conversation or to seek understanding. One might even speak of a 70-year Babylonian captivity of Pentecostalism. They have allowed themselves to become captive to an Evangelical agenda that has not really been their own. And while some of the blame for this captivity lies squarely at the feet of the Evangelical community, some of it rightly belongs at the feet of those Pentecostal leaders who, for the sake of acceptance within the Evangelical community, have chosen to move against the historic visions of Christian unity that Pentecostals had previously held.³⁵

Name and Glory / Ephraim and Judah

Those of you who know me know also that I began my ecumenical journey officially in 1983 when the Lord awakened me in the middle of the night and instructed me to write a specific paper on the topic of ecumenism. It was a radical request, one that I did not feel I was at all prepared to heed. But I wrote it, and today I look back on that divine visitation as the night when I was called to work for greater unity in the global church.

Shortly before I wrote that first paper on ‘The Ecumenical Challenge’, my presidential Address to the Society for Pentecostal Studies, I had read Professor Samuel Terrien’s book, *The Elusive Presence*. He intended it to be a contribution toward ‘an ecumenical theology of the Bible’.³⁶ What intrigued me about Professor Terrien’s work on the divine presence, were his conclusions about the people of God in ancient Israel. He saw, as many of us might, two sets of people. There were those who identified with Israel or Ephraim. And there were those who identified with Judah. What was most interesting to me was what he took great pains to explain. Both Israel and Judah experienced the divine presence at times quite visible through his work among them, and on other occasions as *Deus absconditus* – apparently absent, and yet in the experience of Israel, at the same time very much present.

What Terrien argued was that these two groups, Israel and Judah, seemed to experience God in very different ways. Those who identified with Israel experienced God through their spiritual ear. These were the people to whom God revealed his Name (Deut. 5:6), a revelation that prefaced the Decalogue, the commandments that spoke of how they were to live their lives. They were the people who heard the call of the *shema* – ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One’ and the command to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and strength (Deut. 6:4-5).

³⁵ Robeck, ‘The Assemblies of God and Ecumenical Cooperation’, 132-50.

³⁶ Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence; Toward a New Biblical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 7. This volume has recently been reprinted and is available from Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Hearing God as they did, they also went to their sacred places and listened as God spoke through the prophets, 'Thus, says the Lord'. They heard themselves called to live their lives within the ethical boundaries of their relationship with God. God would be as much in their actions, in the ways they would relate one to another, as God would be in the words that they heard, calling them to follow him. These people, argued Terrien, were best viewed as people of the Name. Their knowledge of God came through the auditory canal, the ear. They heard the commands and they lived according to an ethical revelation.

On the other hand, there were the people of Judah. Their advantage was that they lived close to Jerusalem, the city of God. There on the hill sat the temple of God. The people who identified with Judah, Terrien contended, saw the glory of the Lord. As they gathered at the temple, they experienced God through their spiritual eye. As David brought the ark back to Jerusalem, he danced before the Lord with all his might. Isaiah saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, filling the temple with His glory, while seraphim fluttered about proclaiming 'holy, holy, holy' (Is. 6:1-13) and he was overcome with awe. And when the worship of Judah was conducted in the majestic sacred space called the temple, it included a celebrative atmosphere full of burning incense, chanting priests, and antiphonal choirs. It included orchestras, trumpets, tambourines, and cymbals. They sang and clapped and shouted and danced! It is in the exuberant praise of the Psalms where we catch a vision of the Lord, a vision of his glory that filled not only their temple, but also filled their minds and hearts. Their encounter with God came through the optic nerve, the eye. They saw the glory of the Lord and were overwhelmed with its majesty. As a result, they had a message to proclaim!

What I want to point out is this. In spite of the differences in the ways each group came before God, there is no question that they both encountered or experienced God, one group hearing God, the other group seeing God. One group may have stood silently as God spoke, while the other burst into what some might describe as ecstatic worship in response to what they saw in God's presence among them. But these two groups of related people, these two groups who appeared to have quite different identities and histories and even traditions, these two groups both genuinely encountered God. And each responded to God's presence in very different ways. In fact, their ways may have seemed irreconcilable, even mutually exclusive of one another. But in the Lord's hand, they are becoming one (Ezek. 37:15-19; 22-24a).

Those who find an identity in Ephraim or Israel know that they have been in God's presence and they know that God has been working with them about this thing called unity. Their obedience in forming the World Council of Churches, in forming various regional, national, and local ecumenical bodies, in participating in a vast array of ecumenical opportunities in faith, order, work, life, mission, and evangelism know that

God has been in all of it. But I want to state categorically that God has also been working with those who identify with 'Judah', the ones I would describe as Pentecostals.

In a sense, there is nothing new in this chapter. And yet, the factors that have for so long led to a standoff between Pentecostals and many churches in the ecumenical movement may finally be relinquishing their grip. Pentecostals have been participating in the work of Faith and Order with the National Council of Churches in the USA since the early 1980s. They continue to do so. Several Pentecostal groups have also recently become part of a creative, ecumenical initiative called Christian Churches Together in the USA.³⁷ Bishop James Leggett, former General Superintendent of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church played a significant role, encouraging other Pentecostal leaders to open up to the ecumenical process through this initiative. His denomination was joined by other Pentecostal groups including the Church of God of Prophecy, the Elim Fellowship (Lima, NY), and the Open Bible Churches. Sadly, the two largest Pentecostal denominations in the USA, the Churches of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God have held the CCT at arms length.³⁸ In spite of their unwillingness to join this new initiative, it should be noted that a decade ago the Church of God in Christ established an Office of Ecumenical and Urban Affairs. And in 2005, the Assemblies of God transformed its statement disapproving of participation in ecumenical organizations from an exclusive statement to a much more inclusive one.³⁹

If we look at Pentecostals around the world, however, we find a very different and much more rapidly changing story. Since 1961, there have been several Pentecostal denominations that have taken membership in the World Council of Churches. Most of them are small Pentecostal denominations numbering at most a few hundred thousand members. All of them come from the global South – Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Angola. Before they joined the WCC, many of them were considered to be the poster children of the Pentecostal movement – early, indigenous, independent, and thriving. Since they joined the WCC, the Pentecostal denominations affiliated with the Pentecostal World Fellowship have tended to marginalize and ignore them. Yet they are fully Pentecostal in

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³⁷ See the list of CCT participant organizations at: www.christianchurchestogether.org/members/.

³⁸ I am aware that the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), the Church of God in Christ, Inc, and the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church have sent observers to some CCT meetings and that they continue to watch the situation. But to date, they stand on the outside, looking in.

³⁹ 'Bylaws of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Article IX.B, List of Doctrines and Practices Disapproved, Section 11 The Ecumenical Movement', *Minutes of the 51st Session of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, with revised Constitution and Bylaws 51st General Council, Denver, Colorado, August 2-5, 2005* (Springfield, MO: General Secretary's Office, 2005), 125.

their faith and practice, and today they have nearly a half century of experience, living as ecumenical Christians. They may not reflect the same political, social, or economic agenda of North America and Europe, but they are fully Pentecostal in every respect. The time has come for the rest of Pentecostalism to hear their testimony and to re-evaluate their witness.

Still, the story gets better. Within the past two decades, Pentecostal denominations have become full members of the National Councils of Churches in at least 37 countries and they have taken either associate or observer status in 6 more. That means that there are at least 43 countries in which Pentecostals are now part of the National Council of Churches.⁴⁰ What may be even more profound is the fact that roughly 70% of them come from the global South, among the so-called ‘developing countries’ of the ‘two-thirds world’ where the growth of Pentecostalism is most significant.⁴¹

And then, there are the international dialogues. The International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue came into existence, in part, because of the lack of unity between Pentecostals and Catholics in Latin America. The question of mission has been addressed several times in this dialogue between Pentecostals and the Catholic Church, as well as with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, with the Lutheran World Federation, and through the Joint Consultative Group with the World Council of Churches. Many Pentecostal leaders from around the world have participated in the Global Christian Forum, a relatively new and promising initiative on the ecumenical horizon.⁴²

Unity is critical to the work of mission. The Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue came about because of disunity between these two enormous traditions. For the sake of mission, they worked on the subject of proselytism. The Lutheran–Pentecostal dialogue came into existence because of the desire of the Lutheran World Federation to understand better the dynamics of a missionary church in Ethiopia that holds membership in the Federation, the lively and charismatic Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. The dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Pentecostals resulted from conversations broached by the late

⁴⁰ These figures may be found in the Appendix, and are largely derived from Huibert van Beek, Compiler, *A Handbook of Churches and Councils: Profiles of Ecumenical Relationships* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 2006).

⁴¹ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7-8; Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 121.

⁴² On the Forum see Richard Howell (ed.), *Global Christian Forum: Transforming Ecumenism* (New Delhi, India: Evangelical fellowship of India, 2007), and Hubert van Beek (ed.), *Revisoning Christian Unity: The Global Christian Forum* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 2009).

Milan Opocensky, who wanted to change the dynamics between Pentecostals and Presbyterians in Korea. The result has been that the Assemblies of God in Korea has now joined and is offering leadership in the Korean National Council of Churches.

Huibert van Beek, who for years led the Office of Church and Ecumenical Relations in the World Council of Churches worked tirelessly to gain approval for the formation of the Joint Consultative Group, an ongoing dialogue between WCC member churches and Pentecostals that is now in its second round of discussions. Thus far, both teams are still learning about the other, but high on their agenda are issues that have emerged on various mission fields, including the problem of proselytism. And then there are the Orthodox. In 2009, Dr. Harold Hunter of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church visited the Ecumenical Patriarch, suggesting the possibility of an Orthodox–Pentecostal dialogue. The Holy Synod has approved moving ahead on this important discussion and questions of mission and proselytism will ultimately appear in that dialogue.

What seems evident, I think, is the fact that unity and mission somehow go together. The ecumenical movement prides itself on the fact that it has been hard at work on the *unity* question. Pentecostals pride themselves on the fact that they have been hard at work on the *mission* question. It is time to bring the two together into some form of major dialogue in which unity and mission can bring the vitality of the Holy Spirit to the entire church, restoring the unity for which Christ prayed, a form of unity that will convince the world of God’s love for them manifested most completely in the sending of his Son.

Appendix

Regional and National Councils of Churches with Pentecostal Memberships
(as of 2000)

Africa

All Africa Council of Churches

Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (Liberia)

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Council of Churches in Angola

Apostolic Faith Church in Angola

Christian Apostolic Mission in Angola

Evangelical Pentecostal Mission in Angola

Full Gospel Church in Angola

Church of God in Angola*

Botswana Council of Churches

Church of God in Christ

Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon

Full Gospel Mission in Cameroon*

National Council of Churches of Kenya

Kenya Assemblies of God
 Maranatha Faith Assemblies
 Overcoming Faith Centre Church of Kenya
 Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa

Liberian Council of Churches

Don Stewart Christ Pentecostal Church
 Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
 New Apostolic Church*
 United Church of God in Christ*
 United Pentecostal Churches of Christ*

Christian Council of Mozambique

Full Gospel Evangelical Church

Council of Churches in Namibia

Apostolic Faith Mission**
 Pentecostal Protestant Church**

Council of Churches in Sierra Leone

Christ Apostolic Church
 Church of God of Prophecy
 National Pentecostal Church
 Calvary Pentecostal Church*

South African Council of Churches

Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

Sudan Council of Churches

Sudan Pentecostal Church

New Sudan Council of Churches

Sudan Pentecostal Church

Council of Swaziland Churches

African Apostolic Faith Mission
 Apostolic Faith Mission

Council of Churches in Zambia

Apostolic Faith Mission

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Zimbabwe Council of Churches

Zimbabwe Assemblies of God in Africa

Asia*Communion of Churches in Indonesia*

Church of God of Prophecy in Indonesia
 Full Gospel Bethel Church
 Pentecostal Movement Church

Surabaya Centre Pentecostal Church
Utusan Pentecostal Church in Indonesia

National Council of Churches in Korea
Korean Assemblies of God

Caribbean

Caribbean Conference of Churches
Christian Pentecostal Church – Cuba
Church of God (Ebenezer) – Haiti

Bahamas Christian Council
Pentecostal Church

Cuban Council of Churches
Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ
Christian Pentecostal Church
Congregational Pentecostal Church
Light of God Pentecostal Church
Pentecostal Holiness Church
Open Bible Church**
Pentecostal Church of Sovereign Grace in Cuba***

Protestant Federation of Haiti
Apostolic Faith Mission
Assemblies of God
Church of God in Christ
Church of God Mission

Jamaica Council of Churches
Jamaica Association of Full Gospel Churches**
Jamaica Pentecostal Union**

Europe

Conference of European Churches
Pentecostal Assemblies of Bulgaria
Church of God in Croatia
Evangelical (Pentecostal) Church in Croatia
Shiloh United Church of Christ Apostolic Worldwide (UK)

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Council of Christian Churches of an African Approach in Europe
Assembly of God, Berlin – Germany
Christian Pentecostal Church – Germany
Church of Pentecost – Germany
Pentecostal Church International, ‘Shalom Chapel’ – Germany
Pentecostal Revival Ministry – Germany
Full Gospel Christian Community – Switzerland
Full Gospel International Church – Switzerland
Calvary Church of God in Christ – UK
Full Gospel Revival Church Centre – UK

Full Gospel Revival Church of God – UK

Ecumenical Coordinating Committee of Churches in Croatia
Evangelical Pentecostal Church

Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic
Apostolic Church

National Council of Churches in Denmark
Apostolic Church

Estonian Council of Churches
Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church

Finnish Ecumenical Council
Swedish Pentecostal Mission in Finland**

French Protestant Federation
Apostolic Church
Church of God in France

SKIN – Together Church in the Netherlands [Immigrant]
ACTS Revival Church – The Hague
Assembly of God, Utrecht and Rotterdam
Pentecost Revival Church – Amsterdam

Christian Council of Norway
Pentecostal Churches of Norway

Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Slovak Republic
Apostolic Church in Slovakia**

Council of Christian Churches in Slovenia
Pentecostal Church in Slovenia

Christian Council of Sweden
Pentecostal Churches in Sweden

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Church of God of Prophecy Copyrighted Material
Free Churches Group [See Below]

Churches Together in England
Church of God of Prophecy

Free Churches Group
Assemblies of God
New Testament Church of God

Latin America

Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI)

Association 'The Church of God' – Argentina
Christian Biblical Church of Argentina
Evangelical Pentecostal Church – Argentina
Pentecostal Methodist Church of Bolivia
Free Pentecostal Missions Church – Chile
Missionary Pentecostal Church – Chile
Pentecost Church Eben-Ezer – Chile
Pentecostal Church of Chile
Pentecostal Mission Church – Chile
Pentecostal Church Faith and Holiness – Costa Rica
Christian Pentecostal Church – Cuba
Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela
Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Naciente – Uruguay
Universal Apostolic Mission Church*** – Chile

Christian Fellowship of Churches in Chile (CCI)

Free Pentecostal Missions Church
Pentecostal Church Eben Ezer
Pentecostal Mission Church
Universal Apostolic Mission Church

Ecumenical Fellowship of Chile

Pentecostal Mission Church
Universal Apostolic Mission Church

National Evangelical Council of Peru

Assemblies of God of Peru
Church of God in Peru
Church of God of Peru
Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Peru
International Movement Pentecostal Church of Peru
Missionary Evangelical Pentecostal Church
Missionary Fellowship of the Assemblies of God

Federation of Evangelical Churches of Uruguay (FIEU)

Pentecostal Church Naciente

Council of Christian Churches of Uruguay (CICU)

Pentecostal Church Naciente

North America

Christian Churches Together in the USA

Church of God of Prophecy
Elim Pentecostal Church
International Pentecostal Holiness Church
Open Bible Churches
Church of God (Cleveland, TN)**
Church of God in Christ, Inc.**

Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Church**

Middle East

There is no formal cooperation between the Middle East Council of Churches and any Pentecostal body in this region of the world.

Pacific

Cook Islands Religious Advisory Council

Apostolic Church

Assemblies of God

Kiribati National Council of Churches

Assemblies of God**

Niue National Council of Churches

Apostolic Church

Samoa Council of Churches

Pentecostal Church

Vanuatu Christian Council

Apostolic Church

Assemblies of God**

Associate Members *

Observers**

Fraternal Affiliates***



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GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY AND ECUMENISM IN ASIAN PENTECOSTALISM¹

Connie Au

The Paradoxes between Edinburgh 1910, Asians and Pentecostals

Edinburgh 1910 was convened with a zealous expectation of the advent of God's kingdom through the seemed-to-be promising expansion of missionary enterprise. At the opening session of the conference, Archbishop of Canterbury Randall Davidson confidently declared, 'It may well be that "there be some standing here tonight who shall not taste of death till they see", – here on earth, in a way we know not now, – "the Kingdom of God come with power"'.² This declaration was proved to be true in the rest of the twentieth century, but ironically, the Archbishop himself and his addressees at the conference were not the key players of its realisation, but those who were not invited – the Africans, Latin Americans and Asians. Out of 1215 delegates, eighteen Asians and one African attended, but no Latin Americans.³ Although the conference committee had encouraged missionary societies to invite local Christians to participate two years before the conference started, since the majority of the natives came from undeveloped countries like China and India and their expenses had to be met by fund raising or provided by missionary societies, only a few of them could attend eventually.⁴ Some missionaries perceived that the conference was a gathering of mission executives and leaders; hence the presence of local Christians did not match its purpose.⁵

Another Christian group that was missing at the conference was the Pentecostals, who were still at the infant stage of mission, but they have turned out to be the major contributors of the realisation of the conference's

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¹ 'Asian Ecumenism from Pentecostal Perspective', in Hope Antone, Dieter Werner, et al. (eds) *Asian Handbook for Theological Education and Ecumenism* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 84-93.

² Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 1.

³ Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 12.

⁴ Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 102.

⁵ Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 104.

motto, 'the evangelization of the world in this generation'.⁶ Compared to the meticulous strategic mission planning at Edinburgh, the spontaneity of Pentecostalism through following the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit and performance of gifts enabled its missionaries to effectively contextualise the gospel, especially among the pragmatic and sometimes illiterate Asian people. Compared to the gospel message of the salvation of the soul and eternal life, the full gospel emphasised by Pentecostals conveys a here-and-now holistic deliverance and the hope of eternity in the future. They are fully aware of the power of the cosmological world featured in animism, witchcraft and ancestor worship in Asia. They demonstrate the power of the almighty God in a spiritual warfare and through casting out demons and healing ministry. Pentecostal missionaries set out to the mission fields with a train or ship ticket, little money but tremendous faith, believing in God's supply. Indigenous Asian Pentecostals live under poverty but abundance in the power of the Spirit and faith in the Word, but they play a significant role in the conversion of their own people.⁷

Edinburgh 1910 has been known more for its ecumenical legacy than for its missionary contribution to the world. The ecumenical movement has been supported by mainline Protestant and Orthodox churches, which were involved in the Faith and Order, and the Life and Work movements and in the various structures of the World Council of Churches (WCC). In contrast, Asians and Pentecostals have fulfilled the missionary and evangelical goal of Edinburgh 1910, but they have consciously rejected or ignored its ecumenical vision without realising their unconscious contribution to the movement. This article will first analyse the characteristics of Pentecostalism in Asia, then its grassroots and official engagements in the ecumenical movement and its relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.

Pentecostalism in Asia

Pentecostalism in Asia is fairly complex; it includes indigenous and denominational Pentecostals and charismatics. Hence, it is methodologically more justifiable to define the movement in Asia from a phenomenological perspective rather than particular doctrines constructed by western Pentecostal denominations. 'Pentecostalism' in this article is referred to the phenomena of Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, prophecy, exorcism, healing, seeing visions and dreams—occurring within a Christian group.⁸

⁶ Allan Heaton Anderson, *To the Ends of the World: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 85.

⁷ Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 17.

⁸ See Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2004); Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapid, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

This inclusive definition enables us to analyse the ecumenical engagements of the denominational Pentecostals and charismatics.

Historically, Pentecostalism in Asia was spread both by native and western Pentecostals. The former group moulded Pentecostalism as indigenous Christianity in Asia. It was not only developed by being based on any denominational doctrines and institutions, but also by praxis derived from self-interpretation of the Bible according to its own Asian cultural and religious context and personal experience of the divine.⁹ Asian Pentecostals developed their theology from religious experience, in other words, *prima theologia*, rather than from rationality; a theology that was nourished from below rather than imposed from above. It was practised and developed more by ordinary Christians than by clergy and theologians. In some regions, revivals had existed before the first western Pentecostal missionaries arrived. For example, K. E. Abraham, one of the founders of the indigenous Indian Pentecostal Church, recorded that revivals had taken place in Kerala in 1873, 1895 and 1908 and they were speaking in tongues as filled by the Holy Spirit. They did not recognise that it was tongues as they were not familiar with the scriptures.¹⁰ There are also indigenous Pentecostal churches and denominations such as the True Jesus Church and Jesus Family in China. Some indigenous revivalists remained itinerant preachers in their whole lives without establishing any churches. Song Shangjie (John Sung) brought thousands of Chinese in China and British Malaya to Christ not just by his gifts of healing, prophecy and tongues, but also his discernment of hidden sins. Many people truly repented of their sin and were delivered from spiritual as well as physical illnesses. Nowadays, his stories are even told by Chinese evangelical preachers who are opposed to Pentecostals and charismatics.

Another stream of Pentecostalism has been running through the Asian lands because of western missionaries who were either independent revivalists or members of a Pentecostal denomination, such as the Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Foursquare Church and Oneness Pentecostals. Western missionaries were prompted by their revival experience and the urgency for mission before the second coming of Jesus. Their dedication of going to a particular country was proved by the 'missionary tongues', the spiritual gift of speaking in the language of that country based on Acts 2. However, it was a common case that they could not speak the language upon arrival. For instance, shortly after his arrival in the Portuguese colony, Macau, in 1908, T.J. McIntosh discovered that he could not utter a single Chinese

⁹ Hwa Yung, 'Pentecostalism and the Asian Church', in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds.), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, rev. ed. (Baguio City: Regnum, 2011), 43.

¹⁰ Paulson Pulikottil, 'As East and West Met in God's Own Country: Encounter of Western Pentecostalism with Native Pentecostalism in Kerala', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5:1 (2002), 19.

word as the gift of tongues and had to rely on an interpreter to preach. This incident gave a negative impression to S.C. Todd, the founder of Bible Missionary Society and a missionary in Macao, who provided accommodation to the McIntoshes.¹¹ Despite their unfulfilled expectation of the gift of the Spirit, their complete dependence on the power of the Spirit in mission distinguished them from the mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries. Besides building schools, hospitals, orphanages and other humanitarian institutions to convey the gospel message, Pentecostal missionaries strongly believed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Their use of healing, exorcism, prophecy and other gifts enlivened the gospel – not only to be heard, but also seen and felt. Their ‘full gospel’ not only proclaims the Jesus recorded in the Bible in the past, but the Lord who works in the present and future.¹²

No matter whether it is indigenous or western missionary Pentecostalism, as many Asian countries are stricken by poverty caused by colonialism, capitalism, communism and injustice in social, commercial and governmental systems, the full gospel has transformed individuals’ lives despite social and economic marginalities. Healing demonstrates God’s gracious care and justice to the poor who cannot afford medical care. Spirit baptism ushers in self-confidence, which motivates them to seek upward social mobility. The charismata are believed to be freely distributed to all Christians, both women and men, poor and rich, outcasts and elites, slaves and masters and even laity and clergy, empowering the marginalised to serve in the church and society.

In China, Korea and Japan, Confucianism is deeply rooted in the culture. The Confucians taught about five relationships as the golden rules to maintain social order: people should obey the emperor, children should obey their parents, a wife should obey her husband, young people should obey their senior and friends should be faithful to each other. Except the last one suggesting equality, the others connote non-negotiable obedience within the hierarchy. As Pentecostals faithfully believe that ‘your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions’ (Joel 3:28), daughters and sons, women and men, youth and elderly are perceived to be equally important in the kingdom of God. They are all entitled to be filled by the Spirit and endowed with gifts. Some Pentecostal churches translate this innovative understanding into practice.

¹¹ S.C. Todd, ‘An Open Letter: Being a Calm Review of the Speaking in Tongues in South China’ (published around 1909).

¹² For the Pentecostals who adopt the Holiness tradition, such as the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the ‘full gospel’ consists of five elements: Jesus is the Saviour; Jesus is the sanctifier; Jesus is the baptiser in the Holy Spirit; Jesus is a healer; and Jesus is the soon-coming king. For the ‘Finished Work’ Pentecostals, such as the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Church, it does not include ‘Jesus is a sanctifier’ as they believe that the work of sanctification is accomplished on the cross, so whoever admits Jesus as the Saviour, s/he is cleansed simultaneously.

The cell group model introduced by Yonggi Cho at the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul and other charismatic churches provide leadership opportunities for women, which is acceptable in a patriarchal society where traditionally shamans are usually women.¹³ Furthermore, Pentecostal churches have been serious about training youth worship leaders and preachers, not just because many of the members are teenagers or young adults, but also because they foresee that the future of the church lies in the younger generation.

Encounter with the cosmological world is not unusual in Asia. In Chinese-speaking regions, ancestor worship and folk religions mixed with Buddhist and Daoist practices and beliefs can be found in many household. Most families including my parents worship five particular gods. They consecrate a pile of three altars in the lounge. The bottom one is for the god of property and wealth, the middle one for my diseased grandfather and other ancestors and the top one for Guanyin, Wong Tai Sin and Guanddi.¹⁴ In the kitchen, a tiny altar hung on the wall is set for the god of chefs who is believed to protect those who cook. By the front door, a small one is set for the god of land to keep us safe whenever we go in and out of the flat. Before having breakfast, my parents put up one to three burnt incense sticks into a small pot to venerate these gods. In the Chinese pragmatic and utilitarian mentality and belief in the supernatural, different spirits function differently to 'serve' humans, except the ancestors whom should be honoured for who they were and what they contributed to the family. This mentality is also applied to Christianity; the concreteness of the supernatural demonstrated through healing, prophecy and exorcism in Pentecostalism powerfully convince the Chinese of a living God, but there is also a tendency to use God for personal benefits; hence strict teachings on holiness and repentance in the heart which some Classical Pentecostals like the Holiness Pentecostals emphasise could transform one's morality.

For those who are exposed to nature to earn their living such as fishermen and farmers, nature worship to the spirits of sea, mountains, rain and wind is a way to seek good harvest and protection from natural disasters and evil spirits. But the frequent encounters with spirits make these people more exposed to the spiritual world and attack by evil spirits. This is proved by the elderly women who are retired fishermen and life-long members of the Pentecostal Holiness Church Rousseau Memorial Assembly in Aberdeen in Hong Kong. Decades ago that area was an

¹³ Wonsuk and Julie Ma, 'Jesus Christ in Asia: Our Journey with Him as Pentecostal Believers', *International Review of Mission* 94:375 (October, 2005), 496; Young-gi Hong, 'The Backgrounds and Characteristics of the Charismatic Mega-Churches in Korea', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (2000), 108.

¹⁴ Guanyin is the goddess of mercy in Chinese Buddhism. Wong Tai Sin is a Daoist god who is believed to have healing power. Guandi is a warrior god. He is deified from a human bring, Guan Yunchang, who was a courageous warrior in Chinese history.

undeveloped fishing port and the coastline was filled with numerous tiny boats which were living habitats of many poor fishing families. Before sailing to the oceans near Hong Kong, it was a common practice for fishermen to pray to spirits and gods for protection from typhoon and heavy rain storms. One of them told me that when she was young, she was attacked by some evil spirits as she was walking in the street by the fishing port. She remained sick for weeks despite medical treatments, but was healed when the missionaries of the Pentecostal Holiness Church casted out demons, and she was converted to Christianity.¹⁵ In the area where animistic practice is popular and evil spirits wander in the atmosphere, mission is not about preaching *about* the Word, but fighting with the Word and the power of the Spirit to deliver those who are manipulated and humiliated by demons.

Although Asian Pentecostalism is distinctive at its spiritual practices and the full gospel, it has also been affected by denominationalism. Generally speaking, Asian Christians are not as much concerned about denominationalism as some western Pentecostals are. As one of the few Asian speakers at Edinburgh 1910, Cheng Jingyi, declared from a Chinese perspective, 'Denominationalism has never interested the Chinese mind'.¹⁶ Indigenous Pentecostals have similar mentality, but western Pentecostal missionaries came with a denominational identity despite their common faith in Christ and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Division and separatism among Pentecostal denominations have continued even after the authority was handed over by missionaries to the locals. Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals and the Holiness and 'Finished-work' Pentecostals have been isolated from each other for almost a century in regions like Hong Kong. The negative attitude towards other Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church has not changed under Asian leadership. Fundamentalist thoughts conveyed by Pentecostal missionaries such as anti-ecumenism and anti-Catholicism are still taught by some Asian Pentecostals; they have unconsciously inherited the prejudice of their mother churches. As a result, there is no surprise that ecumenism has not firmly taken root among Pentecostals in Asian soil. Nevertheless, they have unconsciously contributed to the ecumenical movement when they are holding large-scale revival and healing conventions which impact mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics. Some of them have some Pentecostal experiences but remain in their own church. They are defined as charismatics. Some of them develop their own independent charismatic churches which are not affiliated to any denominations and have been the fastest-growing churches like the Onnuri Church in South Korea and the Ling Liang Church (Spiritual Bread Church) in Taiwan.

¹⁵ Interview with a group of women in July 2009, Pentecostal Holiness Church Rousseau Memorial Church, Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

¹⁶ Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 108.

Grassroots Unity

The charismatic renewal creates reconciliation and unity among Christians of various traditions at the grassroots level, especially between Protestants and Roman Catholics. It happens through spontaneous worship where people can express themselves freely to God and people with physical and emotional expressions. Serving each other with gifts and intercession become God's channel to show his care to human beings. In contrast to ecumenical dialogue which is cerebral, cognitive and official, this grassroots unity is experiential, affective and local.¹⁷ As religious experiences are generally the gateway for Asians to encounter a religion instead of the logicity of doctrines and rationality of the ecclesiastical system, ecumenism in Asian Pentecostalism is not so much about reaching theological and institutional consensus through dialogue, but (re-)building up a trusting relationship through common experiences in the Spirit, mutual acceptance, and forgiveness through sanctification of sin and the outpouring of love flowing from God, then to fellow Christians at the grassroots level. Since the Holy Spirit endows power and concrete experiences among Christians, a pneumatological approach to ecumenism creating a living *koinonia* of Jesus Christ would make more sense to Asians. Furthermore, the growth in Asian Pentecostal and charismatic churches is not just numerical, but also ecumenical since their shared evangelical vision and revival through the power of the Holy Spirit create room for mutual recognition and collaborations.¹⁸

On the Roman Catholic side, the El Shaddai DWXI Prayer Partners Fellowship International developed in the Philippines has brought revival to Roman Catholics worldwide since 1984. The founder, Bro. Mariano ('Mike') Z. Velarde, is a rich and 'born-again' Roman Catholic. He envisions to 'bring about a revival of the true Christian spirit in the Catholic faith. It aims to raise up a community of faith-filled generous believers of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Acts 2:42-47, which by Divine Guidance and Providence has now miraculously established these communities in many areas worldwide'.¹⁹ This movement does not practise traditional Catholic liturgy, but follows a spontaneous worship style. Healing of serious diseases and broken relationships took place and the lame and paralytic stood up and walked. As these features are shared by Roman Catholics, Protestant charismatics and Pentecostals, they become springboards for them to build up relationship at the grassroots level. El Shaddai has spread in many regions in Asia such as Hong Kong, Singapore

¹⁷ Connie Ho Yan Au, *Grassroots Unity in the Charismatic Renewal* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 2.

¹⁸ Hwa Yung, 'Endued with Power: The Pentecostal-Charismatic Renewal and the Asian Church in the Twenty-First Century', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6:1(2003), 75.

¹⁹ <http://www.freewebs.com/elshaddai-dwxippfi/outreachesprograms.htm>

and Japan and western countries such as the United States, Canada, Italy and Greece. Its ecumenical influence has been immeasurable.²⁰

The charismatic renewal has also been healing divisions between mainline churches and Pentecostal and charismatic churches. For decades, Pentecostals and charismatics have been accused of radicalism, emotionalism and irrationalism in their praxis and lack of theological reasoning. However, as Pentecostal experiences also occur in mainline churches, reconciliation between the two groups has been brought into reality. In Taiwan, the Prayer Mountain Revival Movement has drawn Protestants together since 1982. It is neither a church nor a denominational organisation although the leader, Daniel Dai, is a Southern Baptist minister. Thousands of members of various churches, ranging from evangelical, charismatic to conciliar, prayed together on mountains during weekends for the common purpose of spiritual renewal. The movement does not only unite Christians of different denominations, but also indigenous and Chinese Taiwanese as well as Taiwanese and western Christians through the work of the co-founder, Allen Swanson.²¹ The Presbyterians and Baptists in Taiwan have dramatically changed their attitude towards Pentecostals and charismatics in recent years. They have accepted the work of the Spirit and collaborated with Pentecostals and charismatics for public revival and prayer conventions. One of the contributors was Peter Chu, the senior pastor of Truth Church, which was a charismatic church founded in Hong Kong and planted in Taiwan. At the Taiwan World Day of Prayer in 2006, he and another charismatic, Chu Tai Shen, the senior pastor of Taipei Glory Church and the founder of Taipei Association of Christian Churches, exhorted the congregation of over 30,000 in Taipei to kneel down and confess the sin of division between evangelicals and charismatics. Christians from both sides embraced and blessed each other and hoped for unity. At the same event held in the southern city in Taiwan, Gaoxiong, more than 3,000 Christians from various churches and ethnic groups prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the whole island.²² This charismatic and ecumenical stream is not only spread through occasional conventions, but through publications and multi-media devices. The Elim Bookstore, founded by Elder Andrew Chang in 1982, has made a

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²⁰ Wonsuk Ma, 'Philippines', in Stanley M. Burgess, Eduard M. van der Maas (eds.), *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 206.

²¹ M.A. Rubinstein, 'Taiwan', *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 260-61.

²² Choi Man Ching, 'Churches Took Unity Seriously at Taiwan World Day of Prayer', *Kingdom Revival Times (HK)* (<http://www.krt.com.hk/modules/news/article.php?storyid=3411>), accessed on 15 April 2012. The title is translated from Chinese into English by the author.

contribution to sustaining this joint movement among Chinese-speaking Christians throughout Asia.²³

In Singapore, the charismatic renewal spread to Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists in the 1970s. The Anglican Bishop, Chiu Ban It, was inspired by Dennis Bennett's *Nine O'clock in the Morning* in 1972 and desired the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ Since then, the Anglican Church held 'Prayers for Healing Services', 'Praise and Prayer' meetings and Spiritual Renewal Seminar which brought renewal to Christians from other denominations. The Wesley Methodist Church held a special charismatic service alongside the traditional liturgy in response to the need of the charismatic Methodists.²⁵ On a contrary, the charismatic renewal was strongly opposed by evangelicals for decades. This bitterness began to ease when Lawrence Khong, the pastor of Faith Community Baptist Church, organised a movement called 'Vision 2001' in 1995. It was aimed to mend the divisions caused by conservative evangelical enmity against Pentecostalism and by younger pastors leaving their churches to found their own independent churches, so that Christians could serve the society together and destroy 'Satan's perimeter' with the concept of spiritual warfare. It successfully mobilised Christians to participate in 'prayerwalk' in the city according to the planned routes designed with the idea of 'spiritual mapping'. By 2000, the movement evolved into a patriotic campaign called 'LoveSingapore', proclaiming God's love for Singapore and encouraging citizens not to migrate to foreign countries.²⁶ In 2008, the movement focused on global poverty and justice and gathered Christians from various traditions to pray and work for the poor.²⁷

The ecumenical impact of the charismatic renewal also happens between some of the Three-Self and house churches in China. Some of the house groups are stigmatised by the communist government as politically-provocative religious societies due to their practice of spiritual power and refusal to register. They were betrayed and severely abused by their fellow Christians belonging to Three-Self churches in the 1950s to 1970s. In Chinese context, doctrinal issues are not major causes of division, but the political makeup of patriotic churches and violation against freedom of

²³ (<http://www.hosanna-tod.com/front/bin/ptdetail.phtml?Part=hm-9912-07&Category=28958>), accessed on 14 April 2012.

²⁴ Dennis Bennett, *Nine O'clock in the Morning* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1970).

²⁵ D. Tan, 'Singapore', *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 225; Au, *Grassroots Unity*, 105.

²⁶ Daniel P.S. Goh, 'State and Social Christianity in Post-colonial Singapore', *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 25:1 (2010), 78-82. For details of the 'LoveSingapore' movement, please refer to Tan-Chow Mayling, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-faith Singapore* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

²⁷ Goh, 'State and Social Christianity in Post-colonial Singapore', 85.

religion. However, as the communist government launched a reform in its policy on religions in the 1980s, Christians from both sides have had more contact with and influence on each other. It has been increasingly common for members of the Three-Self churches to experience healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues and prophecy. Some of their church leaders invite Pentecostals outside China and house church leaders to explain the theological implications of these phenomena and to provide guidance on how to exercise spiritual power appropriately.²⁸ Dennis Balcombe, senior pastor of the Revival Church in Hong Kong, had been secretly working for house churches since the 1970s until recently when he was officially invited by a Three-Self church in Wuhan. He observed that many official churches were full of young people. Baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophecy, dancing and healing happened every Sunday. As spiritual experiences have been blurring the political boundary, it is hopeful that dialogue and reconciliation will happen among Chinese Christians in the near future.

Although grassroots unity has brought about an unprecedented ecumenical scenario, it is not the answer to all divisions. Sentimental unity through common experiences in the Spirit can create fellowship among laity, but it cannot solve the institutional and doctrinal issues that divide churches. The most obvious example is that Roman Catholic and Protestant charismatics cannot share the Lord's Supper together. Hence, grassroots unity and official dialogue need to complement each other. The former one can create a foundation of friendship preparing for honest and sincere conversations on some sensitive doctrinal issues. The latter one enhances mutual understandings and patience for each other, which is the criterion of any sustaining and mature relationship. The former one serves as a point of departure for an ecumenical journey; the latter one realises growth in agreements in the thorny pilgrimage. The former one brings about ecumenical enjoyment; the latter one requires and develops ecumenical commitment. Elements of both sides are important and more Pentecostals have committed to official ecumenical engagements besides unconsciously nurturing grassroots unity.

Official Ecumenical Involvements

For decades, Pentecostals and charismatics have been sceptical about ecumenical institutions. Some Classical Pentecostals who are influenced by fundamentalism condemn these institutions as the signs of the end times mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Their ecumenical bias is derived from their problematic eschatology consolidated with a subjective interpretation of

²⁸ Dennis Balcombe, 'New Wine in new Wineskins – Fires of Holy Ghost Revival Burning in China's Official and Registered Churches' (<http://rcmi.wordpress.com/>), accessed on 23 April 2012.

certain apocalyptic symbolisms in the Bible.²⁹ For example, in 1962, the General Council of the Assemblies of God in the United States accused the WCC as the scarlet whore and religious Babylon of Revelation in 1963.³⁰ The Roman Catholics have also been stigmatised by Pentecostals as the 'Whore of Babylon' as it is reflected from the book, *The Modern Babylon*, written by Frances Swaggart who is the wife of a Pentecostal televangelist, Jimmy Swaggart.³¹ Some of the churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America founded by missionaries from North America are pressurised by their mother church not to be involved in the ecumenical movement. Cecil Robeck notes that David Yonggi Cho, former senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, had authorised his members to be involved in the meeting of the Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and Classical Pentecostals in 2000, but he was under the pressure from the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and withdrew his decision.³² Some of them are willing to participate in the mainstream ecumenical movement, but it is difficult for them to accommodate themselves into the constitution, practice and worship style of these ecumenical institutions, which cater for the mainline Protestant churches. That is one of the reasons for the lack of Pentecostal membership at the WCC. Some of them find sufficiency in their wealthy mega-churches and they focus on expanding the church everywhere in the world; there is no need to collaborate with other churches. Some of them regard themselves as the true church and Christians of other churches as not saved. Similar to the pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church, ecumenism is about getting others to become Pentecostal. Some of them cannot easily lay down the continuing memory of being persecuted and marginalised by mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church in the early stage of the movement. In some instances, persecution against Pentecostals is a joint plot between the church and the totalitarian regime.³³ Despite all these negative factors, some independent Pentecostal ecumenists have actively engaged in ecumenical dialogues, including the official dialogues with the Roman Catholics since 1972, World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1996-2000,³⁴ World Lutheran Federation in 2004-2010³⁵ and Baptist World Alliance in December 2011.³⁶ A

²⁹ C.M. Robeck, 'Pentecostals and Christian Unity: Facing the Challenge', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 26:2 (Fall, 2004), 323.

³⁰ Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 250.

³¹ Frances Swaggart, *The Modern Babylon* (Baton Rouge, LA: World Evangelism Press, 2006).

John L. Allen, 'If Demography Is Destiny, Pentecostals Are the Ecumenical Future', *National Catholic Reporter* (28 January 2008, <http://ncronline.org/node/11567>), accessed on 17 April 2012.

³² Robeck, 'Pentecostals and Christian Unity', 328, n. 33.

³³ Robeck, 'Pentecostals and Christian Unity', 310-12.

³⁴ (<http://www.warc.ch/dt/er11/20.html>), accessed on 13 April 2012. Among the fourteen Pentecostal members, only two were Asians, Wonsuk and Julie Ma.

³⁵ *Lutherans and Pentecostals in Dialogue* (Strasbourg: Institute for Ecumenical Research, 2010), 2.

Joint Consultative Group between the WCC and some Pentecostals has met every year since 2000. However, these events are predominately initiated and participated by North American Classical Pentecostals, who are not endorsed by their churches to be involved in those dialogues. European Pentecostals are invited occasionally, but Africans, Latin Americans and Asians, whose churches are spectacularly thriving, are not represented at the same proportion as westerners.³⁷ Unfortunately, the history of Edinburgh 1910 has repeated itself in the Pentecostal circle.

Nevertheless, some Asian Pentecostal churches actively participate in the ecumenical movement. The Assemblies of God of Korea Yoido General Council and Assemblies of God (Seodaemun) became members of the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCCK) in July 1996. Since Busan in Korea has been chosen to be the venue for the WCC's tenth general assembly, the NCCCK has been responsible for the preparation. Lee Younghoon, the senior pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church, expressed his full support in the preparation to the WCC's General Secretary.³⁸ In Malaysia, due to religious oppression from the Muslim-dominated government, Pentecostal churches are in favour of joining ecumenical organisations. The Assemblies of God, Full Gospel Assembly, Full Gospel Tabernacle and the Sidang Injil Borneo Sabah, Sarawak and Semenanjung are members of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF), working together with Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and the Salvation Army. NECF was founded in 1983 in the light of the prohibition of non-Christians possessing a Malay Bible in 1981 and the restricted availability of worship sites, which caused independent churches not being able to establish themselves.³⁹ The NECF is a member of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) which is a national Christian umbrella that also includes the Catholic Diocese of Malaysia, and the Council of Churches of Malaysia formed by the Anglican, Methodist and Lutheran churches.⁴⁰ Through the CFM, Pentecostals can directly work with mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics.

³⁶ Bob Allen, 'Baptists, Pentecostals Seek Common Ground', *Christian Century* (20 December 2011, www.christiancentury.org/article/2011-12/baptists-pentecostals-seek-common-ground), accessed on 16 April 2012.

³⁷ Jelle Creemers, 'Intertwined Problems of Representation and Reception in Pentecostal Ecumenical Involvement: A Case Study', *One in Christ* 45:1 (July, 2011), 143.

³⁸ 'Korean Pentecostal Church Reaffirms Support for WCC 10th Assembly' (4 June 2010) (http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/korean-pentecostal-church.html?tx_ttnews%5Bwords%5D=Lee%20Young%20Hoon&cHash=cb10af730285a6589f48a82b25be073b), accessed on 16 April 2012.

³⁹ <http://www.necf.org.my/index.cfm?&menuid=3> (accessed on 16 April 2012).

⁴⁰ I am indebted to my Malaysian Chinese student, Joshua Fong, the chairperson of the Malaysia Christian Youth Association and Soul Works Ministries, kindly provided this piece of information to me.

Besides collaboration with other churches, ecumenism, as far as Pentecostals are concerned, is also about resolving the accumulated internal schisms throughout the last century. The Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) is a widely-recognised ecumenical organisation by Pentecostals.⁴¹ It was founded by David du Plessis, Leonard Steiner, J. Roswell Flower and Donald Gee in 1947, aiming to 'unite and mobilize the global Spirit-filled family in completing the Great Commission of Jesus Christ'.⁴² For decades, it was dominated by American and European Pentecostals, but in recent years, Asian Pentecostals have played a significant role. In January 2012, it accepted three new member churches and two of them were Asians.⁴³ The total number of its member churches has increased to 59 and amongst them, twenty-one are from Asia Pacific, fourteen from North America, eleven from Europe, nine from Africa and four from South America.⁴⁴ Since 2010, for the first time the PWF has been chaired by an Asian, Prince Guneratnam, who is the senior pastor of Calvary Church, one of the largest Assemblies of God churches in Malaysia.⁴⁵ The secretary is Mathew K. Thomas from India, the president of the Central India Theological Seminary. The advisory committee involves leaders from Japan, India and Hong Kong. On Sek Leang, the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Malaysia, is the host chairperson of the general triennial conference in August 2013 in Kuala Lumpur.⁴⁶ These leaders represent

⁴¹ It was formerly called Pentecostal World Conference.

⁴² (<http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

⁴³ The three new members are Jireh Evangel Church Planting Philippines led by Chuck Chua and Robert Lim and the Assemblies of God of Korea Yoido General Council (including the Yoido Full Gospel Church and the member churches of the Council) led by Lee Younghoon and one from South America, Federación Confraternidad Evangelica Pentecostal led by Ruben Salomone (<http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org/526>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

⁴⁴ (<http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org/526>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

⁴⁵ The leadership was shared by L. Steiner from Switzerland, Donald Gee from England, W.E. McAlister from Canada, H.P. Courtney and T.F. Zimmerman from the United States in the first two decades. Zimmerman, the former General Secretary of the Assemblies of God, was the chairperson from 1967 to 1989 (Percy S. Brewster took over the leadership in 1970 temporarily). He led the AG to be member of the National Association of Evangelicals and was strongly opposed any ecumenical efforts with other mainline churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Under his leadership, the AG relinquished David du Plessis' credential as the AG ordained minister in 1962 due to his ecumenical involvements with the Vatican and the WCC. They only recovered his credential in 1980. It was not surprising that PWC was also an anti-ecumenical Pentecostal fellowship. After Zimmerman, the PWC was continued to be chaired by Americans, R.H. Hughes (1989-1998), T.L. Trask (1998-2005) and James D. Leggett (2005-2010). (C.M. Robeck, 'Pentecostal World Conference', *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 973; Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 53, 146-147, 249-250; <http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org/history>, accessed on 14 April 2012.

⁴⁶ (<http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org/526>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

some of the fastest-growing churches in Asia and their collaboration conveys a significant message of unity to millions of Pentecostals.

More importantly, under Prince Guneratnam's leadership, the PWF has become more open to other traditions. He supported Bishop James Leggett's idea to invite the General Secretary of the WCC, Olav Fykse Tveit, to address to over two thousand Pentecostals from seventy countries at the 22nd general conference of the PWF in Stockholm in August 2010. Fykse Tveit's wife has Pentecostal relatives and he has been involved in processing the applications of some Pentecostal churches to become full members of the Christian Council of Norway. He was positive about the shared witness of unity between the WCC and Pentecostals, as he said, 'That you have welcomed me here today is one such sign of hope'.⁴⁷ Guneratnam is also a committee member of the Global Christian Forum (GCF) and met the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople at the GCF's meeting in Istanbul in January 2011.⁴⁸ He signed a letter, on behalf of the PWF, to endorse Harold Hunter to be a leader in the Orthodox-Pentecostal dialogue, which is the first endorsement of the PWF for such an ecumenical venture.⁴⁹ The GCF has been a more inclusive ecumenical umbrella to which not only mainline Protestants and Orthodox have been involved in, but also evangelicals, Pentecostals and the Roman Catholics. In 2004, the GCF held an Asian Consultation in Hong Kong under the theme, 'Jesus in Asia – Our Journey with Him', attended by about sixty representatives from different churches and organisations, including Anglican, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Mar Thoma Orthodox, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, the Christian Conference of Asia, Evangelical Fellowship of Asia, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference and World Vision. They acknowledged one another as Christians bearing distinctive identity. They also agreed to work together to tackle poverty, injustice and political oppression in Asia. One of the participants, Wonsuk Ma, acclaimed that 'We experienced a fresh sense of unity under the lordship of Jesus Christ and a shared passion for participating in his mission in the world'.⁵⁰

Relations with the Roman Catholic Church

Although Pentecostals have been in dialogue with Roman Catholics and the grassroots unity derived from charismatic experiences in the Spirit spread in the Roman Catholic Church, there is still a huge gap in doctrinal and

⁴⁷ Olav Fykse Tveit, 'Greetings to the 22nd Pentecostal World Conference, 24-27 August 2010 in Stockholm, Sweden' (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/speeches/greetings-to-the-22nd-pentecostal-world-conference.html>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

⁴⁸ (<http://www.pentecostalworldfellowship.org/52>), accessed on 13 April 2012.

⁴⁹ Email from Harold Hunter, 10 April 2012.

⁵⁰ Wonsuk Ma, 'The Spirit Makes Us One', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7.2 (2004), 184.

theological issues between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. From the Catholic perspective, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Asia is a threat of proselytism and is alarming the Church to respond accordingly. The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity (PCPCU), presided by Cardinal Walter Kasper, held a seminar in July 2006 in South Korea and was attended by representatives from ten Asian Episcopal Conferences.⁵¹ One of the discussions was about the ‘pastoral challenges posed by the growth of Pentecostals on the Continent of Asia’. Juan Usma Gómez, a Vatican official being responsible for Catholic/Pentecostal relations, highlighted that the biggest challenges to the Catholics was not the numerical growth of the Pentecostals, but their denial of Catholics as ‘true Christians’, manifested from their ‘illegitimate actions of evangelisation’, ‘acts of proselytism’ and ‘the lack of respect for Catholics and aggressive behaviours towards them’. As a result, it was impossible to build up ‘neighbourly relations and exchanges’ with them. To face this problem positively, Gómez recommended to the PCPCU to study the ‘forms, expressions, influence and presence in the local context’ of Pentecostalism. He also proposed that the Roman Catholic Church could take this situation as an opportunity to renew the church rather than as a threat to it. He listed some elements which the Catholics could learn from the Pentecostals regarding pastoral ministry, including ‘the immediacy and accessibility to Pentecostal teaching and doctrine; the effectiveness of their preaching, which can inspire emotion and sentiment in those it addresses; and their constant presence and closeness to people, which makes it possible to establish daily bonds of communion and brotherhood’.⁵² A similar conference, entitled as ‘The Search for Christian Unity: Where We Stand Today’, was held in the following year in Manila. Apart from mentioning the strengths and weaknesses of Pentecostalism, the Catholic leaders urged for a ‘necessary’ environment to retain members’ through creating a ‘warmer atmosphere in church, a more joyful worship service, and greater openness to the contributions of laity’. They also suggested launching weekly Bible studies as an arena for lay people to share testimonies and retreat.⁵³

Although Roman Catholics and Pentecostals see themselves very different from each other doctrinally, liturgically and pastorally, scholars

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⁵¹ They were from Korea, Indonesia, Macao, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, Bangladesh and Hong Kong. Juan Usma Gómez, ‘Marking Christian Unity Worldwide: Asian Pentecostalism, Methodist “Justification”’ (a report to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/eccl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070110_pentecostals_en.html), accessed on 13 March 2012.

⁵² Gómez, ‘Marking Christian Unity Worldwide’.

⁵³ Michelle A. Vu, ‘Pentecostal Growth in Asia Challenges Catholic Church’, *Christian Post* (14 February 2007, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/pentecostal-growth-in-asia-challenges-catholic-church-25817/>), accessed on 10 April 2012.

have observed that in fact, Pentecostals share more commonalities with Catholics than mainline Protestants and evangelicals.⁵⁴ Some people even name Pentecostalism as ‘Catholicism without priests’.⁵⁵ Instead of solely relying on the Bible, they both emphasise spiritual revelation and discernment in God’s presence in prayers and devotion. They both believe in salvation through faith and deeds, which was especially obvious among Classical Pentecostals in the early twentieth century who taught about restitution as a concrete way to show one’s determination of repentance, which can be found in medieval Catholic teaching on indulgence. Another commonality is the practice of healing although Roman Catholics regard it as a sacrament and Pentecostals as a charism. Jeff Gros suggests that healing can be a key to reconciliation between Catholics and Pentecostals as it can be used mutually not only for the restoration of the wholeness of physical bodies, but also the Body of Christ.⁵⁶ If ‘demography is destiny’, as Augustus Comte claims, then Catholics and Pentecostals who represent the two largest Christian populations in the world would probably determine the ecumenical future. Since Asia is one of the continents seeing rapid growth of Pentecostalism, Asian Pentecostals are potentially able to contribute to grassroots and official ecumenism in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

David Kerr and Kenneth Ross perceive that the ecumenical venture of Edinburgh 1910 reflects a more progressive vision of global Christianity. They state,

If we describe Edinburgh 1910 as a ‘proto-ecumenical’ conference, concerned with advancing ‘co-operation and unity’ in the study and practice of mission, its most significant achievement was that it raised – arguably for the first time in European Christian history – the vision of the Church as a global reality.⁵⁷

They admit that this vision was ‘only partially glimpsed’ by the Conference emerging from a colonial mentality. But after the two world wars and the weakening of colonialism, western churches had to review the

⁵⁴ Walter Hollenweger, *Origins and Development Worldwide* (Baker Academic, 2006), 144-80.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 178.

⁵⁶ Jeff Gros, ‘It Seems Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us: The Ecclesial Vocation of the Pentecostal Scholar’ (paper presented at the annual conference of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, 29 February-3 March 2012).

⁵⁷ David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross, ‘Introduction: The Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference: Its Eight Commissions in Historical Context and Their Continuing Significance’, David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), 17.

idea of global Christianity. The western churches were declining despite a relatively stable political environment. Asian churches were springing up and blossoming in the midst of endless political traumas following the Second World War: the mass exile of refugees after the partition of India in 1947, the series of tyrannical political movements in China since 1949 and the Korean War in 1950-53. In 1959, the first General Secretary of the WCC, Willem Visser t'Hooft, prophetically identified Asian ecumenism as liberation from division, from western Christian manipulation and from historians' wrong predictions of the decline of Asian mission and Christianity, based on the gloom of their western mother churches. He exhorted Asian churches to prove themselves by their 'spiritual independence', 'true rootedness in Asia' and their 'evangelistic passion'. He acknowledged Asians' acquaintance with the spiritual world and declared, 'It is their calling to provide a great surprise to the worldly-wise who count without the work of the Holy Spirit'. He also encouraged Asian churches to voice out when they noticed that the World Council of Churches was moving towards a 'western council of churches'.⁵⁸ His vision of global Christianity was certainly more coherent to the reality than that of Edinburgh 1910. I am not sure if Visser t'Hooft's prediction has come true for all Asian churches, but certainly it can be applied to Asian Pentecostalism. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Asian Pentecostal churches have developed their 'spiritual independence', 'true rootedness in Asia' and 'evangelistic passion'. The examples of the Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore, China, Korea and Malaysia listed in this article reveal that what they have achieved is not only their own spiritual and numerical growth, but also a deeper commitment to mutual acknowledgement and collaboration as one body of Christ. Since Asia has been a hotpot of religious conflicts, terrorism, poverty, injustice of global trade, sexism, racism, dictatorship, pollution and nuclear power, to face these complicated issues and be a witness to the world, Pentecostal and other churches need to lend strength and share discernments with each other.

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⁵⁸ W.A. Visser t' Hooft, 'The Significance of the Asian Churches in the Ecumenical Movement', *The Ecumenical Review* XI.4 (July, 1959), 375-376.

THE SEVENFOLD SPIRIT: A PENTECOSTAL APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS

Tony Richie

Introduction

Christian theology of religions wrestles with the reality of non-Christian religions. As a discipline it primarily attempts to understand their meaning and purpose in relation to Christian faith and life. It intends to relate righteously to the religions and their adherents from the perspective of an unapologetic, though not necessarily unsympathetic, Christian worldview. Of course, Christians have always known that there were other religions than their own; and, some theologians and other thinkers have occasionally tried to more or less address the fact of other faiths. However, as a separate and sustained discipline of studies Christian theology of religions is a relatively new development. An in depth Christian theology of religions has become a more pressing need in today's global context of ever-increasing contact among devotees of various religions in environments all-too-often involving conflictive and even violent confrontation. Clearly, interreligious competition and suspicion add to the dilemma, while interreligious cooperation and dialogue can help to alleviate it. However, it is necessary to have a solid and sure foundation for interfaith relationship building. Otherwise, we will risk, on the one hand, compromise of our own Christianity identity, or, on the other hand, condescension of the identity of religious others. Enter Christian theology of religions.

Accordingly, along with other Christian traditions, it is important that Pentecostals contemplate the reality of the religions and construct a theological and missiological worldview capable of encompassing their existence and activity. Arguably, because of the phenomenal global growth of Pentecostal-type movements, bringing Pentecostals into direct and frequent contact with other religions, Pentecostals have a special burden of responsibility to reach out to others rightly. That's the practical or pragmatic argument. The theological argument asserts that faithful identity as Spirit-filled disciples requires discerning reflection on the reality of other faiths in the context of divine providence. The biblical argument includes emulating the interactive example of Jesus toward devout others (e.g., Mt. 15:28; Lk. 17:18; Mt. 8:10). These arguments are underlying assumptions

of the present essay. It will proceed by first surveying the current field of Pentecostal theology of religions, then highlighting key topics for development and the place of dialogue in Christian mission, before projecting possibilities for the future.

Current State of the Discipline

Pentecostals are already actively addressing theology of religions.¹ Significantly, Pentecostal theology of religions appears to be developing in uniquely pneumatological directions. One recognized Pentecostal theologian who has led the way is Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen.² A distinctively Christian theology of religions, Kärkkäinen suggests, must be intentionally trinitarian. Kärkkäinen's trinitarian theology serves as a critique of the kind of pluralism which collapses the differences between religions. He maintains that the Triune God of the Bible is unique, and that a high Christology plays a critical role in the doctrine of the Trinity. The church in the power of the Holy Spirit anticipates the kingdom of God, always pointing beyond itself to the *eschaton*, that is, to the coming of the kingdom and unity of all people under the one God. Kärkkäinen argues that the doctrine of the Trinity indicates the communal nature of God, capable of relating in unity and difference. Therefore trinitarian communion can include critical relationship with religious others in tolerance. Essentially, Kärkkäinen suggests that a full-orbed trinitarian theology emphasizes the role of the Spirit not only in the trinitarian life of God but also in the presence of relationship between God and the church and in the relationship between the church and the world.

Pneumatologically robust, Kärkkäinen is nonetheless faithfully Christocentric and ecclesiological.³ The Spirit who reaches out beyond the church into the kingdom and into the world is the Spirit of Christ who abides in unique relation with his church. There is no wedge driven between the Spirit and Christ or between the Spirit and the church. Thus

¹ Tony Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit: A Pentecostal Model for Interreligious Dialogue* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011). While focusing on Pentecostal theologians, I gladly acknowledge indebtedness to the great 'charismatic' Baptist theologian, Clark H. Pinnock, esp. his *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), and *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994).

² See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, & Contemporary Perspectives* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), and *Trinity and Religious Pluralism: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology of Religions* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

³ E.g., Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions: A Pentecostal-Charismatic Inquiry', *International Review of Mission* 91: 361 (2002), 187-98, and 'How to Speak of the Spirit among Religions: Trinitarian "Rules" for a Pneumatological Theology of Religions', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30:3 (2006), 121-27.

although other religions are not salvific, discerning appreciation for the presence of the Triune God in their midst still is possible. This approach opens the way wide for relational engagement, and includes a responsibility for appreciative but critical interreligious dialogue and encounter. For Kärkkäinen, a truly trinitarian theology of religions enables interreligious dialogue as a mutually respectful process of learning and sharing.

Perhaps Amos Yong has attempted most consistently to develop a distinctively Pentecostal theology of religions.⁴ Yong argues that the Pentecostal experience produces its own ‘pneumatological imagination’, a way of thinking and theologizing informed by the Pentecostal/Charismatic experience of and orientation toward the Holy Spirit, which implies a possibility of the Spirit’s presence and influence in the world in general and in the world’s religions in particular. Pentecostal theology is sensitive to the fact that there are many ‘spirits’ in the world, much less in the world of the religions, which require Christian discernment. The criteria for discerning the Holy Spirit from other spirits includes the fruits of the Spirit, ethical conduct, and the signs of the coming kingdom. In this Pentecostal theological framework then, Yong emphasizes that, ‘the pneumatological imagination derived from the outpouring of the Spirit’ enables a relatively impartial, sympathetic, yet critical engagement with the world’s religions.⁵

More recently, Yong has also begun to emphasize a theology of incarnation and Pentecost excerpted from biblical and historical Christian hospitality practices as a model for interreligious understanding, encounter, and dialogue.⁶ In sum, he offers a biblical and theological study of positive results when the hospitable beliefs and practices of Jesus and the post-Pentecost church are applied to Christian relations with persons of non-Christian faiths today. He essentially argues that contemporary practice needs to catch up with the biblical teaching of extending hospitality beyond boundaries of faith, nation, and ethnicity.

My own work reclaims an optimism and openness regarding religious others by some of the most prominent leaders in the early stages of the modern Pentecostal movement. These historical and theological precedents supply helpful models for contemporary Pentecostals creatively confronting the challenges of radical religious pluralism in continuity with their movement’s authentic heritage. For example, Charles Fox Parham advocated an eschatological inclusivism of uncompromising loyalty to Christ coupled with compassionate openness to devout adherents of other

⁴ See Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), and *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).

⁵ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 254.

⁶ Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

religions.⁷ For Parham commitment to the absolute uniqueness and necessity of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour complements openness to a possibility of divine reality and redemption in extra-Christian religions consummated in the *eschaton* by Christ.

Another example is the optimistic and hopeful theology of Bishop J.H. King.⁸ Central and crucial for King was the universal significance of Christ, a refined doctrine of universal atonement, the reality and efficacy of general revelation, a qualified acceptance of religious experience over rigid doctrinal propositionalism, and, though somewhat less directly, a dynamic and progressive view of the process of salvation. King also accepted that ‘the religion of Christ’ – the religion centered in the person of Christ himself rather than in institutional Christianity – predates and exists apart from ecclesial Christianity, that is, among other world religions, though Christianity may be in a special sense called ‘the only true religion’.

A common thread throughout the work of Kärkkäinen, Yong, and me is a distinctive emphasis, with significant variations, on pneumatology as a critical aspect of Pentecostal theology of religions. The title of the present essay, ‘The Sevenfold Spirit’, highlights that emphasis as well. I first heard Rev. 5:6 applied to Pentecostal theology of religions by Frank Macchia.⁹ For him, this description of the global Spirit implies a universal pneumatology for Pentecostal theology of religions. For me, it also illustrates complex and diverse thematic elements of Pentecostal theology of religions, namely, pneumatology set in Christological and ecclesiological context against a background of cosmic divine sovereignty and providential care with redemptive or soteriological purpose. The ‘Sevenfold Spirit’ serves in suggesting these themes are essential elements of, or perhaps more accurately, building blocks for, contemporary Pentecostal theology of religions.

Obviously, a specifically Pentecostal theology of religions simply must take pneumatology seriously. I contend that pneumatological dynamism is critical for developing a distinctive Pentecostal theology of religions. Throughout *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, Pentecostal New Testament scholar Robby Waddell carries on an extended and recurring discussion of the Sevenfold Spirit, including Rev. 5:6. Out of that context he concludes that ‘The Spirit is working universally to draw all creation

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⁷ Tony Richie, ‘Eschatological Inclusivism: Exploring Early Pentecostal Theology of Religions in Charles Fox Parham’, *Journal of European Pentecostal Theological Association* 27:2 (2007), 138-52.

⁸ Tony Richie, ‘Azusa-era Optimism: Bishop J.H. King’s Pentecostal Theology of Religions as a Possible Paradigm for Today’, in Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (ed.), *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 227-44.

⁹ Clarence Abbott Lectures on the Book of Revelation at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN, February 22-23, 2011.

back to God'.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, he also lifts up the importance of interreligious dialogue, reminds of the 'Christological impasse', or the complexities of discussing Christ in certain interreligious contexts, and of Yong's suggestion for moving beyond it through pneumatology, and later identifies the Church as the 'primary' – not only! – 'location in which the Spirit operates' and assigns it 'a vital role in the Lamb's victory'.¹¹ I suggest that biblically and theologically Pentecostals are well advised to develop their theology of religions in light of their well-known pneumatology.

Perhaps the proceeding will serve to supply a sufficient survey of the current state of Pentecostal theology of religions.¹² For the moment, suffice it to say that Pentecostal theology of religions expresses both depth and diversity, and that it exhibits both dependence on and distinction from the broader Christian tradition. In fact, in a sense Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religions is simply a unique trinitarian version of the classic Wesleyan theology of prevention-grace in which the Holy Spirit's gracious power works before conversion and beyond the church based on the general benefits of Christ's atonement.¹³

Central Topics for Theological Development

So then, how might a pneumatological theology of religions positively affect Pentecostal theology in terms of major categories of Christian theology? Unfortunately, I will only be able to address a few examples, but perhaps these will suffice to show some general patterns. First, I will discuss the standard terminology or typology for the field, including its limitations and some proposed new directions, and second the preeminent importance of carefully interrelating Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and cosmology.

To begin, the accepted terminology or typology used for understanding theology of religions is an issue for Christian theology in general and also for Pentecostal theology. The standard typology identifies various views from the perspective of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. It's essentially a series of soteriological categorizations. Exclusivism usually signifies that none can be saved apart from the church (and its mission), and inclusivism that some may be saved through Christ apart from the

¹⁰ Robby Waddell, *The Spirit of the Book of Revelation*, JPTSUP Series 30 (Blendord Forum, UK: Deo, 2006), 90.

¹¹ Waddell, *Revelation*, 95, 177.

¹² Pentecostal theologians who address Christian theology of religions more occasionally include Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 178-90, or Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 40-44.

¹³ See Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit*, 52, 56, 73, 104, and 126.

church (those who haven't authentically heard the gospel through no fault of their own), but pluralism argues that all religions are salvific (and, often, otherwise more or less equal as well).¹⁴ Some ambiguity and overlap can occur among these broad categories. However, each has a fundamentally different view of religious others.

Usually Pentecostals are assumed to be exclusivists, and with good cause.¹⁵ Pentecostal exclusivism derives from a certain understanding of the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20). The call to go into the world and proclaim the gospel to everyone has led to viewing religious others primarily as objects of evangelism. Hence, Pentecostals have asserted that the Spirit's saving work is limited to the church, and it is only as members of the church allow themselves to be used by the Spirit to witness to their non-Christian neighbours, including those of other religions, that salvation is made available to the world.¹⁶ Insofar as Pentecostals think the evangelism mandate and inclusivist openness are incompatible, their ardent evangelistic orientation implies that they must be exclusivists.¹⁷

However, some traditional Pentecostals confess that firm belief in eternal judgment and a dramatic need for evangelism are not incompatible with the possibility of 'the final salvation of the mentally challenged, children who die at an early age, and people who never hear the gospel'.¹⁸ French Arrington suggests that 'all people will be judged according to what they have done with what God has given them'. The only way to be 'assured of salvation and eternal life' is through faith in Jesus Christ; but, because God is 'loving, good, and just' Pentecostals can energetically evangelize while leaving those who die without hearing the gospel 'in the hands of an all-wise and merciful God who always does what is right (Gen. 18:25)'.¹⁹ These words have a clear inclusivist ring. Of course, pluralism is not a viable option for Pentecostals.²⁰ At the same time, a narrow exclusivism restricting Christ and the Spirit entirely to the church or its members sits uncomfortably with a Pentecostal theology of religions that is pneumatic in nature. A more open inclusivism does fit with it, and it is noteworthy that those working most directly and pointedly in the area of

¹⁴ For the classic presentation of this typology, see Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983).

¹⁵ Yong, *Discerning*, 185.

¹⁶ Cf. Kärkkäinen, *Theology of Religions*, 140-42.

¹⁷ Yong, *Discerning*, 184, 186. Another way to understand Pentecostalism's exclusivism is through its connections with Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, 185-87.

¹⁸ French L. Arrington, 'The Truth about Hell', *Church of God Evangel* 101:6 (June 2011), 12.

¹⁹ Arrington, 'Hell', 12.

²⁰ See Kärkkäinen, 'A Response to Tony Richie's "Azusa-era Optimism: Bishop J. H. King's Pentecostal Theology of Religions as a Possible Paradigm for Today,"' *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15:2 (April 2007), 268.

Pentecostal theology of religions usually incline in generally inclusivist directions.

That having been said, perhaps part of the problem with determining just where Pentecostals fit is the fault of the typology itself. For one thing, it is preoccupied with soteriology while ignoring other important issues. That is, it only asks who is or isn't saved but does not inquire into other elements of religious identity and existence. For instance, the standard typology certainly does not specifically address pneumatology. As the biblical teaching on the global presence of the Holy Spirit (Num. 16:22; 27:16; Ps. 139:7; Rev. 5:6) is particularly important for any pneumatological theology of religions, this last problem is a stubborn sticking point.

The existing exclusivist-inclusivist-pluralist paradigm is perhaps good so far as it goes but it doesn't go far enough in several areas and especially not in specifically plumbing pneumatology. Both Kärkkäinen and Yong chaff at the shortcomings of the dominant categories of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism and push for us to advance beyond this paradigm.²¹ My own suggestion is an expansion or extension of the existing typology beyond soteriology effectively transforming it into a more holistic model. Building on the work of Lesslie Newbigin, I can say, my position is exclusive in the sense that it affirms the unique truth of the revelation in Jesus Christ, but it is not exclusivist in the sense of denying the possibility of the salvation of the non-Christian. It is inclusivist in the sense that it refuses to limit the saving grace of God to the members of the Christian Church, but it rejects the inclusivism which regards the non-Christian religions as vehicles of salvation. It is pluralist in the sense of acknowledging the work of God in the lives of all human beings, but it rejects a pluralism which denies the uniqueness and decisiveness of what God has done in Jesus Christ.²²

Newbigin has given us possibly one of the most beautifully balanced descriptions of Christian theology of religions ever. It perhaps displays the delicate, intricate balance necessary for Pentecostals to understand and endorse.²³

²¹ Amos Yong, 'Can We Get "Beyond the Paradigm" in Christian Theology of Religions? A Response to Terry Muck', *Interpretation* 61:1 (January 2007), 28-32. Note that Kärkkäinen organized his *Introduction* using a different set of categories altogether, 23-26.

²² Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), 182-83. See Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, on Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology and pneumatology, 155. See Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (London: SCM, 1953).

²³ Tony Richie, 'Effectively Engaging Pluralism and Postmodernism in a So-Called Post Christian Culture: A Review Essay of Lesslie Newbigin's *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*', *Pneuma Review: The Journal of Ministry Resources and Theology for Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministries and Leaders* (Fall 2007), 27-39.

Notice that this explication of the exclusivism-inclusivism-pluralism typology has a number of added benefits. For one thing, it addresses not only soteriology but also, quite explicitly, revelation, Christology, and ecclesiology, and quite implicitly, pneumatology, or the work of God in the world among all human beings. For another thing, it is able to identify both negative and positive elements of each category, and therefore to appropriate critically a broader range of contributions from each one, rather than simply choosing one over against another. Finally, in building on the existing typology it harnesses the momentum it has gathered from well-established and respectable usage but also opens up to possibilities of as yet unplumbed implications.

Next, carefully interrelating Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and cosmology (i.e., a theology of God's work in the world or created order) is of preeminent importance for Pentecostal Christian theology of religions. To illustrate, Amos Yong has been charged with sacrificing Christology for the sake of pneumatology.²⁴ I have elsewhere argued that this charge misrepresents Yong's position in particular and misunderstands Pentecostal pneumatology of religions in general.²⁵ However, it does indicate the importance of special precision in relating Christology and pneumatology (and, I will add, of ecclesiology and cosmology), when doing Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religions. My firm conviction is that a Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religions may help reclaim a too often neglected aspect of Christian theology through its attention to a truly cosmological pneumatology without in anyway relinquishing anything in Christology or ecclesiology. In short, properly understood the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not at odds with the doctrines of Christ and of the church. I think that statement is true for all Christian theology as well as for Christian theology of religions.

In any case, carefully interrelating Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and cosmology is necessary not only in order to satisfy suspicious critics.²⁶ The historic Pentecostal recovery of the Holy Spirit is

²⁴ James R.A. Merrick, 'The Spirit of Truth as Agent in False Religions? A Critique of Amos Yong's Pneumatological Theology of Religions with Reference to Current Trends', *Trinity Journal* 29:1 (Spring 2008), 107-25.

²⁵ Tony Richie, 'The Spirit of Truth as Guide into All Truth: A Response to James R.A. Merrick, "The Spirit of Truth as Agent in False Religions? A Critique of Amos Yong's Pneumatological Theology of Religions with Reference to Current Trends"', *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* (Jan 2010, <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyber19.html>). Clifton Clarke, 'Dialogue or Diatribe: Toward a Renewal Approach to Interreligious Conversation', in Amos Yong and Clifton Clarke (eds.), *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission: Towards a Renewal Theology of Mission and Interreligious Encounter* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011), 41, n. 66.

²⁶ On a context of quite real dangers of idolatry and issues of syncretism, see Lee Roy Martin, *The Unheard Voice of God: A Pentecostal Hearing of the Book of Judges*, JPTSup Series 32 (Blanford Forum, UK: Deo, 2008), esp. ch. 6.

in no wise a replacement of Christ. Relating a high Christology and a robust pneumatology is simply good Pentecostal theology. Subsequently, considerations of ecclesiology and cosmology arise naturally enough out of the primary categories of Christology and pneumatology. Consequently, although unable here to give a thorough overview of how various theologians are going about this task, I will rather give a brief example of how I've approached it. Yong has described some of my work along this line as 'pneumatologically expansive, christologically tethered, ecclesiologyally connected, and missionally driven'.²⁷ These four phrases well represent my endeavour. The following very short summary crudely describes a delicate and intricate interrelation of Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and cosmology.

Drawing on the famous dictum of Yves Congar, 'no Christology without pneumatology and no pneumatology without Christology',²⁸ essentially an explication of the biblical analogies of word and breath regarding Christ and Spirit, I argue that Christ and the Holy Spirit – and therefore, Christology and pneumatology – ought to always be related yet distinct, but that their relation is not assimilation or their distinction separation. Accordingly, I can 'simultaneously affirm the Spirit's expansive activity in the world and among the unevangelised and religious others' and do so even while 'ardently insisting on the absolute essentiality of Christ in and for all the Spirit does anywhere or anytime – even beyond the borders of the church'.²⁹ Thus I avidly affirm the significance of the church as the primary locus of the Spirit's work in the world in proclaiming the Christian gospel in word and deed even while also upholding the Spirit's wider work in the world as the Spirit of God and of Christ.³⁰ Here I'm suggesting some such scenario involving a truly cosmological pneumatology is essential for effectively developing a Pentecostal theology of religions.

There's actually a long, and quite strong, biblical tradition connecting themes of creation/cosmology and salvation/soteriology. For example, in the Psalms creation is not infrequently depicted as salvation from chaos through a heroic divine act bringing order.³¹ Pentecostals traditionally do connect cosmology and pneumatology (ala Gen. 1:2 and Ps. 104:30), but

²⁷ Amos Yong, 'From Demonization to Kin-domization: The Witness of the Spirit and the Renewal of Missions in a Pluralistic World', in *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism*, 164; Tony Richie, 'The Wide Reach of the Spirit: A Renewal Theology of Mission and Interreligious Encounter in Dialogue with Yves Congar', in *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism*, 43-70.

²⁸ Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 1. E.g., see Richie, 'Wide Reach of the Spirit', 52.

²⁹ Richie, 'Wide Reach of the Spirit', 54 (cp., 58).

³⁰ See also Macchia's 'critical dialectic' of Church and Kingdom, *Baptized in the Spirit*, 190-99.

³¹ Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 1999), 209, 307-08, 377, and 400.

usually without directly connecting these to soteriology – though contending for the Holy Spirit’s role in salvation as ‘re-creation’.³² Nevertheless, Arrington does argue that God providentially directs history out of loving concern for all nations and peoples, including heathens or pagans (i.e., religious others).³³ In eloquent language, Arrington exclaims, ‘How unlimited are the resources of God’s wisdom and power! Throughout the history of the world, from the Creation to the final consummation, God rules in history and will finally bring creation to its goal’.³⁴ These sentiments certainly resonate well with an inclusive pneumatological cosmology. I would argue that they naturally reinforce one another. Not surprisingly, Steve Stuebaker has picked up on the connectivity and unity of the Spirit’s creative and redemptive work to develop a profound Pentecostal theology of religions and mission as progressive and partial participation in the Spirit.³⁵

Christian Mission through Dialogue

Does doing theology of religions imply a move toward interreligious dialogue?³⁶ If so, must commitment to the practice of dialogue undermine or diminish historic Pentecostal commitment to evangelism? Can Pentecostals expand their missiology to embrace and integrate dialogue with evangelism as reciprocating priorities of Christian mission, and if so, how might we do it most effectively and consistently? In this section, I suggest framing Christian mission in terms of pneumatological theology of religions can add much to its effectiveness and vitality without subtracting anything from its existing values as traditionally understood and practiced within the Pentecostal tradition.

Pentecostals undoubtedly well deserve their reputation of being the most aggressive and active missionaries and evangelists ever.³⁷ They have understood their evangelistic fervour and effectiveness to be directly derivative from their distinctive experience of Spirit baptism (ala Acts 1:8). However, now it is becoming evident to many Pentecostals that biblically-based, Christ-centered, and Spirit-empowered mission is broad enough to

³² French L. Arrington, *Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 1992, 1993, 1994), vol. 3, 30-31.

³³ Arrington, *Doctrine*, vol. 1, 174.

³⁴ Arrington, *Doctrine*, vol. 1, 176-77.

³⁵ Steven M. Stuebaker, ‘Christian Mission and the Religions as Participation in the Spirit of Pentecost’, *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission*, 71-94.

³⁶ Clifton Clarke, ‘Dialogue or Diatribe’, 17-41, *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission*, 17-41, provides perspective on the history and issues of interreligious dialogue.

³⁷ Grant L. McClung, Jr. ‘Evangelism’, *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 617-20 (esp. 617, 220).

embrace such wide-ranging activities as evangelism, social activism, and interreligious dialogue.³⁸ Specifically, evangelism and dialogue are not competitive but complementary. Clark Pinnock has argued cogently for the missional compatibility of evangelism and interfaith dialogue in Pentecostal/Charismatic theology of religions.³⁹ Dialogue and evangelism are simply different modes of communication respectively suitable for specific situations. The following focuses on dialogue rather than evangelism mostly because there is already a disproportionate amount of attention in the tradition to the latter that demands some proportionate balancing out. Both evangelism and dialogue, however, are important topics for theology of religions.

Amos Yong suggests a Pentecostal-Charismatic theology of religions should 'free human beings for participation in the interreligious dialogue'. For him, the goal of dialogue is not to establish agreement or ignore differences, but rather to serve the righteousness, peace, and truth characteristic of the kingdom of God. Thus, dialogue can provide 'the kind of self-criticism that leads to the mutual and, ultimately, eschatological transformation of religious traditions, including the Christian faith'.⁴⁰

In fact, Yong argues that Christian theology of religions cannot be adequately developed in isolation from religious others but requires conversation with others.⁴¹ To critics of interreligious dialogue he replies that not all are called to formal interreligious dialogue though all are called as witnesses; that bearing witness can take the form of dialogical relationship; and, that Christianity is 'impoverished and debilitated' if it avoids directly asking the questions interreligious dialogue requires.⁴² Yong's work reflects a sophisticated theology of openness to interaction with religious others that labours to be loyal to its own inner Pentecostal ethos.

For Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, all knowledge of God has 'universal intention and is to be shared by all'.⁴³ In Christian dialogue with other religions the central tenets of the Christian faith are to be presented to religious others 'in the spirit of a confident, yet humble witness',⁴⁴ that is,

³⁸ Donald E. Miller and Tetsuna Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 1-3.

³⁹ Clark H. Pinnock, 'Evangelism and Other Living Faiths: An Evangelical Charismatic Perspective', in Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (eds.), *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization*, JPTSUP 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 208-14.

⁴⁰ Yong, *Discerning*, 313.

⁴¹ Yong, *Impasse*, 19-20.

⁴² Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, 256-57.

⁴³ Kärkkäinen, *Trinity*, 180.

⁴⁴ Kärkkäinen, *Trinity*, 180.

without arrogance with humility and respect. Nonetheless, dialogical purpose is not only information but also persuasion – though always ‘in ways that honour the Other and give him or her the right to make up his or her own mind’.⁴⁵ Yet interreligious dialogue is not a neutral experience or process. The followers of all faiths have convictions about ultimate questions that should be shared. A reciprocal shaping should also be expected, unless true dialogue degenerates into only ‘two or more monologues’. Interreligious dialogue, Christian missions, and cooperative social concerns are not incompatible.⁴⁶

Kärkkäinen argues that acknowledgement and critical assessment of the Spirit’s presence in other religions ‘ties the church to dialogue with the Other’ because wherever God’s presence is found ‘it bears some relation to the church’. Thus, discovery and discernment through dialogue of the Spirit’s gifts in the religions are demanded.⁴⁷ Kärkkäinen’s work reflects a subtly Pentecostal approach to interreligious engagement sustained by commitment to the major guiding principles of the movement’s belief and practice in conversation with the broader Christian tradition.

Walter Hollenweger has long been the premier historian and analyst of Pentecostalism.⁴⁸ His work includes important theology of religions and interfaith dialogue applications.⁴⁹ In a chapter on his pneumatology, Lynne Price notes Hollenweger’s use of the Acts 10 account of Peter and Cornelius for understanding interreligious encounter. For him, it is as much about the conversion of Peter as it is about the conversion of Cornelius. He thinks that it indicates that the gospel is objective, that it stands over against both evangelist and evangelized so that both may together learn of Christ, otherwise an evangelist is only a propagandist after all.⁵⁰ Hollenweger admits all Christians should share their experience of Christ with others but the question is how and how to do so without internal contradiction of the message. For Hollenweger, Peter and Cornelius are paradigmatic and therefore Christian evangelism should be ‘dialogical and situational’.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Trinity*, 181.

⁴⁶ Kärkkäinen, *Trinity*, 181.

⁴⁷ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘The Uniqueness of Christ and the Trinitarian Faith’, in S.W. Chung (ed.), *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 128.

⁴⁸ Hollenweger’s now classic work *The Pentecostals* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988) was first published in English by SCM Press, London in 1972.

⁴⁹ Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘Evangelism: A Non-Colonial Model’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995), 107-28. Cp. Tony Richie, ‘Revamping Pentecostal Evangelism: Appropriating Walter J. Hollenweger’s Radical Proposal’, *International Review of Mission* 96:382-83 (July-October 2007), 343-54.

⁵⁰ Lynne Price, *Theology Out of Place: A Theological Biography of Walter J. Hollenweger*, JPTSUP Series 23 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 113-14.

⁵¹ Price, *Out of Place*, 114-15. See Hollenweger, ‘Critical Issues for Pentecostals’, in Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century*:

Previously, Evangelical scholar Sir Norman Anderson had similarly used the example of Peter and Cornelius, observing that both benefited by the dialogue; that good dialogue may prepare the way for evangelism, or be a part of it; and, that true dialogue involves an element of risk but is worth it when carried out with confidence in the lordship of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.⁵²

My own work dedicates itself to the task of identifying and developing a model for Pentecostal interreligious dialogue with appropriate familiarity and specificity. In my mind, a model for Pentecostal interreligious dialogue must meet certain criteria. For one thing, of course, it must be adequate and effective in the practice of dialogue. For another, it must arise naturally out of authentic and already-existent Pentecostal belief and practice. Finally, it must be capable of application and development according to the current state of Pentecostal theology of religions. I offer the category of Pentecostal testimony as a possibility for meeting the need for a Pentecostal model of interreligious dialogue in accordance with these stated criteria.⁵³

Pentecostal testimony is part of a distinctive overall oral and narrative tradition that is far reaching in its power. It is characterized by energy and vitality, and presupposes an ability to communicate through inspired (and inspiring) speech that is supra rational. It is not dogmatic. It is emotive. It is engaging. It can easily address a widely diverse audience. I suggest testimony as a possible medium for encounter and dialogue beyond the confines of Pentecostal congregations.⁵⁴ Typically, Pentecostals view their tradition of testimony as a rich and rewarding experience for worshipers. I have come to think of it also a basis and impetus for sharing with religious others what Christ has done in one's life. That is, I wish to translate Pentecostal testimony into interreligious dialogue.⁵⁵ Pentecostals may view dialogue as an opportunity to share with religious others how the Spirit is moving so that all may be blessed by hearing and giving praise for God's wonderful works.

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Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition, JPTSup Series 15 (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 176-91 (esp. 178, 183-88, and 190-91).

⁵² Sir Norman Anderson, in *Christianity and World Religions: The Challenge of Pluralism* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1984), 188-91.

⁵³ For fuller treatment, see Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit*, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Moltmann belatedly discovered that listening to the stories/testimonies of Holocaust survivors greatly enhanced the Jewish-Christian dialogue process in which he and post-war German theologians engaged. See Moltmann, *A Broad Place: An Autobiography*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 276.

⁵⁵ See Tony Richie, 'Translating Pentecostal Testimony into Interreligious Dialogue', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20:1 (2011), 155-83.

A Conversation about Future Directions

In this section I address a few dimensions of future directions for Pentecostal theology of religions. First, I discuss some thoughts mostly on the general situation, and then some challenges arising from specific contexts. Kärkkäinen has helpfully suggested a general sampling of several key tasks demanding close attention as Pentecostals move forward in developing their pneumatological theology of religions. First of all, he observes that so much of Pentecostalism tends to be dominated by a conservative-often-fundamentalist mind-set that threatens to undermine or even destroy its original and authentic identity, spirituality, and theology. That this near monopoly is not intrinsic to Pentecostalism appears evident from the frequently virulent polemic of conservatives and (especially) fundamentalists against Pentecostals coupled with the often widespread appeal of the movement to individuals and groups outside that milieu.⁵⁶

Secondly, Kärkkäinen suggests possible connections between Pentecostal primal spirituality and spiritualities of religions, especially in Asia, call for exploration. Thirdly, a pertinent task for future research would be the positive effect of pragmatic contextualization on Pentecostal pneumatology in connection with theology of religions. Finally, Kärkkäinen suggests a challenging and controversial task lying ahead of us regarding the potential of a Pentecostal pneumatology of religions is an attempt 'to enhance dialogue within the wider Pentecostal family on the one hand and in relation to mainline theologies on the other hand'.⁵⁷

Now let's turn to a few more specific contexts. Out of Indian environs, which oft times include violent confrontations, Kirsteen Kim succinctly supplies examples of what Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religions does now and will face in the future both missiologically and theologically.⁵⁸ First, Christians should realize that economic, political, and social concerns (such as the caste system) can and do sometimes co-opt theology and mission. Second, Pentecostalism in particular can have a tendency to challenge already-established pluralistic theologies of religions common among other Christians in India. Third, and perhaps most significantly, Kim contends that Pentecostal theology has the potential to develop in a way that 'embraces religious plurality but steers a course between monistic and dualistic theologies of the Spirit'. This course certainly calls for critical discernment. Finally, Kim stresses that all Christians are called to fulfil the Great Commission even as she advises

⁵⁶ Kärkkäinen, 'Pentecostal Pneumatology of Religions: The Contribution of Pentecostalism to Our Understanding of the Work of God's Spirit in the World', in *Spirit in the World*, 177-78.

⁵⁷ Kärkkäinen, 'Pentecostal Pneumatology of Religions', 180.

⁵⁸ Kirsteen Kim, 'Theologies of Religious Pluralism: Pneumatological Foundations and Conversion in India', in *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism*, 117-35,

care in understanding what conversion and discipleship may mean in a specific cultural context (e.g., among the *Dalits*).⁵⁹

Garnering from the Ghanaian and Nigerian contexts, Cephas Omenyo offers some insights for the future regarding overcoming violence in interreligious environments through circumspect Pentecostal theology of religions.⁶⁰ Tragically, Pentecostals have often actually contributed to intensification of stress between Christians and Muslims. Pentecostals and Charismatics in Ghana and Nigeria often perceive Muslims as a major threat and are therefore prone to intemperate and provocative polemics and outright demonization of Islam. However, Pentecostal 'power evangelism', especially healing and deliverance from demonic powers, and demonstration of charisms, has been a positive factor in the relationship of the two religions. Many Muslims have received healing and help. Nevertheless, even this benefit has been clouded by controversy over conversions.⁶¹ Accordingly, Omenyo instructs Pentecostals to live with religious diversity in harmony and to 'learn the language of dialogue'.⁶² He suggests that Pentecostal ministries of healing and deliverance coupled with dialogue will help promote future peace without compromising the gospel.⁶³

I'll share one more concrete example from my own observation and reflection in the United States.⁶⁴ In my estimation, the United States is searching and struggling for a way to successfully integrate its historic values of religious freedom and an entrenched civil religion with increasing religious diversity and plurality overshadowed by the spectre of terrorism associated with religious extremism in the form of (what's known as) Islamic fundamentalism and militant or radical Islam. Islamophobia is increasing. Isolated but injurious incidents of prejudice and violence are occurring. Sometimes these incidents involve Pentecostals or Pentecostal-type individuals or groups.⁶⁵ I have suggested that a realistic political pluralism that respects the religious prerogative of the Christian majority and partners with it to build better relationships with minorities of other religions may well point the way forward into the future. Otherwise consequences could be grave.

⁵⁹ Kim, 'Theologies of Religious Pluralism', 128.

⁶⁰ Cephas N. Omenyo, 'Renewal, Christian Mission, and Encounter with the Other: Pentecostal-Type Movements Meeting Islam in Ghana and Nigeria', *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism*, 137-56.

⁶¹ Omenyo, 'Renewal, Christian Mission, and Encounter', 148-53.

⁶² Omenyo, 'Renewal, Christian Mission, and Encounter', 154.

⁶³ Omenyo, 'Renewal, Christian Mission, and Encounter', 154.

⁶⁴ See Tony Richie, 'A Politics of Pluralism: Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism as a National Resource in a Post-9/11 World', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45:3 (Summer 2010), 471-92; and Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit*, esp. chap. 7.

⁶⁵ E.g., see Tony Richie, 'Pentecostals on Publicly Burning the Quran', *Faith News Network* (September 8, 2010, <http://www.faithnews.cc/2010/09/08/pentecostals-on-publicly-burning-the-quran/>).

These few insights and examples should serve to illustrate the kind of tasks lying ahead for Pentecostal theology of religions. The Asian, African, and American contexts are vastly different and yet so much the same. They suggest that Pentecostals should yield to what one Pentecostal administrator called ‘the Spirit’s stretching ministry’ that helps ‘prevent dull and stolid thinking’.⁶⁶ The urgent need of the near future is for Pentecostal academies, denominations, local congregations, and parachurch organizations to become part of the solution rather than part of the problem regarding the complexities of interfaith conflicts in the contemporary world. In the days ahead, it is our solemn duty to engage theologically and practically in interreligious encounter and dialogue in an innovative fashion.

I realize some fear compromise. I too consider compromise a legitimate concern. However, staunch commitment to biblical inspiration and authority, high Christology, soteriological clarity, and missional ecclesiology – all in a context of robust pneumatology – as our guiding presuppositions will help us steer clear of compromise.⁶⁷ In my humble opinion, Pentecostals must not be too timid ‘for such a time as this’ (Esther 4:14). The way forward for Pentecostal pneumatological theology of religions and mission involves values of careful boldness and thoughtful openness. And the need is enormous.

Conclusion

Given the description of Christian theology of religions set forth in the introductory remarks, and the unfolding of the task of Pentecostal theology of religions throughout this essay, what shall I humbly presume to say at this closing point? First, I suggest that as Pentecostals we ought to view pneumatology both in terms of the church and also in terms of the Spirit’s universal working to draw all who will into God’s providential and redemptive purposes in Christ. Second, this possibility recognizes the need for keen spiritual discernment as Pentecostals if we are to relate rightly to religious others. Third, as Pentecostals we should labour to understand religious others on their own terms, that is, as who they really are rather than some caricature or stereotype, and to relate to them on our own terms, that is, as committed followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fourth, as Pentecostals we can conscientiously integrate, whenever possible, the critical mission of evangelization, or of saving souls from eternal judgment, with interreligious dialogue and cooperation, so as to affirm human life and liberty through a more just and peaceful society in this present age to the everlasting glory of the Triune God.

⁶⁶ Raymond F. Culpepper, *The Great Commission: The Solution...* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2009): 169.

⁶⁷ Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit*, 26-29.

Fifth, and perhaps most important, none of the above hints even a little bit that we as Pentecostals deny or dilute our own commitments to the Bible as God's word, Jesus Christ as God's Son and as our crucified and risen Lord and Saviour, or our experience of the Holy Spirit's regenerating, sanctifying, and empowering presence. The history of Christian theology of religions and of interreligious encounter and dialogue clearly indicate that those most devoted to their own faith are usually best equipped for talking and working with those of other faiths. Therefore, Pentecostal theologians prayerfully respond to the call to wrestle with the providential reality of non-Christian religions in today's world.



PENTECOSTAL INTERACTION WITH RELIGIONS: A NEPALI REFLECTION

Bal Krishna Sharma

Introduction

Pentecostal interaction with religions is one of the important topics being discussed in mission circles. At the outset, it may be appropriate to ask a question on whether Pentecostals have meaningfully interacted with other established religions. If yes, then how have they done it; if not, then what are difficulties that they are finding to engage with other religions.

It may be appropriate to trace the beginning of this movement biblically and historically and see how Pentecostals interacted with existing religions as they expanded in different parts of the world in various cultural and religious milieus. Their response to religious beliefs and practices may have had a significant impact to their mission activities.

Pentecostals trace their origin in the book of Acts where it is recorded that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christian believers on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:4 reads: 'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability'. The Pentecostals believe that Jesus fulfilled his promise of sending the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. According to Pentecostals, baptism in the Holy Spirit enables a person to have spiritual gifts and be witness for Christ. Acts 1:8 says: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...'. Coming of Holy Spirit was promised to the disciples who were already born again and believers in Christ. This power of the Holy Spirit was experienced by them in order to be witnesses. The disciples of Christ depended on the power of the Holy Spirit to carry on the mission of God in their generation. The Spirit-filled disciples of Christ made the world upside down. The first century Christianity experienced the power of Holy Spirit and continued in that Spirit-filled life until the church was hijacked by the imperial power. Book of Acts vividly portrays Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life as disciples and first century Christians engaged in the world for evangelism and discipleship. According to the Pentecostals the twentieth century Pentecostal movement is a recovery of the first century Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Christianity. First century Christians were living in multi-religious contexts and they were to respond to the religious challenges.

Christian Response to the Non-Christian Religions in the First Century

Christianity was born and spread in a multi-religious context in the first century. Antioch became the centre for evangelism to the non-Jewish world. As non-Jews began to become Christians, a question arose on the issue of their relationship with the Jewish law. Some thought non-Jews need to become first Jew, and then only they can become Christians. Other progressive people like Apostle Paul thought non-Jews are not required to become Jews in order to become Christians. Even Apostle Peter, who sometimes acted as hypocrite, was determinative not to burden Gentiles with the requirements of Jewish law. The Council of Jerusalem made decisive decisions on how non-Jewish Christians need to conduct themselves. Apostle Peter says: 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality' (Acts 15:28, 29). Jerusalem Council set principles on how Jewish Christians need to relate with non-Jewish Christians or Gentile Christians in their community when latter come to Christian faith. Anyone who wanted to become a Christian was asked to abstain from idolatry, from eating blood and strangled animals and sexual immorality. These practices were common among the religions that surrounded Israel. Some of the religious centres, like temples, practised temple prostitution. In such a religious context, biblical principles and values were upheld by the church.

Paul and other disciples had to encounter challenges from other religious groups when they presented the gospel and confronted evil powers in their ministry. The event of Acts 16:16-18 is one example of confrontation. Paul discerned in heart about the slave girl that she was a fortune teller by the power of evil force, so he orders the evil spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus, and it did come out and she became free or she was delivered. Power encounter has been one of the main characteristics of first century Christianity. As Christianity spread in various geographical and religious milieus, Christian leaders were expected to confront hostile environment encountering evil forces. Now with this background, let me move to the twentieth and twenty first century Pentecostal movement and its interaction with other religious faith.

Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movement

The beginning of the Pentecostal experience is traced back to Acts 2, where people experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). The apostle Peter preached that this phenomenon was the fulfilment of the prophecy of prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21). It is believed that this type of experience, with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, signs, wonders, was common for early Christians.

Pentecostalism has accepted Protestant theology along with holiness and emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Beatriz Muniz de Souza quotes the statement of a Norwegian pastor:

With respect to salvation through justification by faith we are Lutherans. We are Baptists because we practice baptism by immersion. In regards to holiness we are Methodists. Our aggressive evangelism makes us like the Salvation Army. But in relation to the baptism of the Holy Spirit we are Pentecostals.¹

David Martin in his book *Tongues of Fire* argues that ‘the early stages of Methodism in England and America closely resembled the present condition of Pentecostalism.... Methodist meetings had wild excitement, screams, “jarring song”, and shouts of “glory”, and also people falling down on the floor or leaping over the forms. Such services went on hours, as do their Pentecostal successors’.² He further argues that twentieth-century Pentecostalism derives its inspiration from the Wesleyan tradition. The Holiness revival meetings ‘were full of godly hysteria, holy dancing, and laughter’.³ He says that ‘during a revival in the University of Georgia in 1800-10 the students even spoke in tongues’.⁴ Before the commencement of modern Pentecostalism in the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the major holiness groups were formed.⁵ The Pentecostal phenomenon was experienced in a global context.⁶ In North America, revival was going on in various places. Charles F. Parham, a leader of the Topeka, Kansas revival in 1901, claimed that ‘speaking in tongues (understood to be unlearned human languages) represented indispensable evidence of the Spirit baptism’.⁷ An Afro-American Holiness minister, W.J. Seymour was associated with the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, where the Holy Spirit baptism was experienced. Though it was a deep spiritual experience, it also had profound sociological implications, according to Gary McGee:

William J. Seymour, an African-American and understudy of Parham who shared the latter’s millennial urgency and belief in Spirit baptism, shepherded the interracial and intercultural Azusa Street revival. Azusa notably accentuated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the poor and oppressed (e.g., Americans of African and Hispanic descent) and the reconciliation of races as fundamental to the work of the Spirit. The publication of the

¹ Juan Sepulveda, ‘The Pentecostal Movement in Latin America’, in Guillermo Cook (ed.), *New Face of the Church in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 69.

² David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 28.

³ Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 28.

⁴ Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 28.

⁵ This category includes groups like Church of God, the Church of God in Christ, the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

⁶ Gary B. McGee, ‘Pentecostalism’, in Scott W. Sunquist (ed.), *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 647.

⁷ McGee, ‘Pentecostalism’, 648.

Apostolic Faith magazine (1960-68) and subsequent travel of the persons who visited the revival greatly contributed to making the Pentecostal movement worldwide in scope.⁸

In Asia, before any influence of American Pentecostalism arrived in India, the Pentecostal phenomenon was evident with 'the occurrences of tongues beginning in July 1906'.⁹ Prior to this, the Khassia hills of northeast India also experienced the similar phenomenon. Ivan Satyavarta is of the opinion that as early as in May 1860, the Pentecostal phenomenon was present in South India.¹⁰ Within a very short period of time, missionaries from Euro-America travelled to various continents. McGee gives a very brief sketch of the places where the early Pentecostal missionaries arrived.

The Pentecostal missionary Diaspora from Euro-American began in 1904, when two women travelled from a revival in Fargo, North Dakota, to South Africa. However, the larger expansion commenced in 1906-7 with Pentecostals going to the traditional sites of Protestant mission endeavour: Africa, the Middle East, British India, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and Korea. By 1910 at least 200 Pentecostals served as missionaries.¹¹

In Latin America, the Pentecostal movement was introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it has expanded greatly since the late 1940s.¹²

Pentecostalism in the South Asian context has to be understood in relation to traditional Christianity and other religions. The impact of the movement should not be evaluated in terms of how old it is, but how influential it has been. None of the newer movements in the history of Christianity had been readily accepted by the older tradition of the 'day', but as their influence grew, and their beliefs were assessed, they came to be 'accepted'. Pentecostalism in South Asia in general and in India in particular has gone through that stage. One of the reasons that mainline churches were reluctant to accept Pentecostalism when it first appeared in India might have been that the Pentecostal churches got their members from the mainline churches. However, Nepalese Christianity is unique in that all its members are from a Hindu/Buddhist background and there is no transfer of members from one Christian tradition to the other.

Given this background, let me highlight some of Pentecostal beliefs and practices and see whether those phenomena are present in Nepalese

⁸ McGee, 'Pentecostalism', 648.

⁹ McGee, 'Pentecostalism', 648.

¹⁰ Ivan Satyavarta, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View', in Murray W. Dempster (ed.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 204.

¹¹ McGee, 'Pentecostalism', 648.

¹² Robert Mapes Anderson, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity', Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 11, 234.

Pentecostalism. Robert Mapes Anderson gives a general definition of what this movement is all about. He says:

This form of Christianity centers on the emotional, nonrational, mystical, and supernatural: miracles, signs, wonders, and ‘the gifts of the Spirit’ (charismata), especially ‘speaking in tongues’ (glossolalia), faith healing, and ‘casting out demons’ (exorcism). Supreme importance is attached to the subjective religious experience of being filled with or possessed by the Holy Spirit.¹³

The above citation is not the full picture. Anderson himself acknowledges that Pentecostalism has a very important socio-religious dimension in contexts where it exists. As cited earlier, McGee also sees that aspect as an important contribution to social reconciliation. David Martin in *Tongues of Fire* describes the Pentecostal experience of divine healing by citing the study done by Dirksen.¹⁴ It is interesting to note that miracles, signs, and healing have a very important social and religious dimension. It may be one of the main reasons for the success of Pentecostalism worldwide. By nature, human beings want to see and experience things. The Pentecostal emphasis on experience helps people to feel accepted and find a sense of purpose in living.

These are some of the general characteristics of the Pentecostal movement which appear across contexts. Juan Sepulveda points out some characteristics of Latin American Pentecostalism that can be found even in Nepalese Pentecostalism, though the context is different, one being from a Roman Catholic and the other being from a Hindu/Buddhist background. One of the characteristics of the movement is that it offers a new experience of God. People can have a direct and personal access to him and experience him personally. Another characteristic is that ‘the encounter with God is intense’.¹⁵ The Holy Spirit takes full control of a believer’s life and gives her or him an inner experience and meaning of life. His or her life is transformed dramatically in such a way that other people can notice and testify to it. ‘The ecstatic manifestations, such as speaking in tongues, dancing in the Spirit, and uncontrollable laughter or weeping, constitute something like the language of this unspeakable experience’.¹⁶ Through this inner experience and change, it is believed that a person receives a new identity based on being accepted and a hopeful view of life. The Pentecostal movement emphasizes community life, and people from various social strata accept each other readily and easily. Every member of the church is expected to be a ‘missionary’ in her or his own context. ‘Everyone feels called to develop and a witnessing role in accord with his or her gifts – such as worship leaders, street preachers, visitors of the sick,

¹³ Anderson, ‘Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity’, 229.

¹⁴ Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 164.

¹⁵ Sepulveda, ‘The Pentecostal Movement in Latin America’, 72.

¹⁶ Sepulveda, ‘The Pentecostal Movement in Latin America’, 72.

etc'.¹⁷ Another characteristic of Pentecostalism is that it proclaims the experience of God in the language of the people. People understand what is being communicated, and they are inspired to act on faith, believing that God will answer their prayers.

Nature of Non-Christian Religions

Christianity exists in multi-religious contexts, especially in South Asia. Religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have challenged Christianity in their own way. Each of these religions has philosophical and popular dimensions. Majority of the adherents of these religions have very simple faith in their religions and they are open to new experiences. Attempts have been made and being made to share the love of God to the people belonging to these various religious groups. Hinduism and Buddhism have the nature of being accommodative. People have no difficulty in identifying other religious experiences as their own religious experiences. For example, when healing happens to a Hindu or a Buddhist in a church or an evangelistic meeting organized by Christians, they will acknowledge that God of Christians has healed them and Christian God is one of their gods. There is no hesitant in being inclusive. In such religious milieus, Pentecostals are operating. Now let us see how Pentecostals are interacting in religiously pluralistic contexts.

Pentecostal Interaction with the Non-Christian Religions in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries

The nature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries Pentecostal Christianity has been its grass-roots basedness. People from the poor and oppressed groups have responded to the Pentecostal message. As stated earlier, Pentecostals tried to recover the first century Christianity with emphasis on signs, wonders, miracles and healings. These phenomena and experiences have given a positive message to the non-Christians, though sometimes 'other' Christians are critical on these issues. Let us see how Pentecostal interaction is operating in religiously pluralistic society.

First, Pentecostals interact with non-Christians through the gospel message. From the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, missionaries were sent to the non-Christians world and they preached the gospel. The Pentecostals believed that salvation for humans is possible only through Christ and without him all people go to hell. They strongly believed what they preached. Pentecostals also used strong language of judgement for unrepentant sinners.

Second, some Pentecostals see non-Christian religions being inspired by devil and there is nothing good in it. When Pentecostal missionaries

¹⁷ Sepulveda, 'The Pentecostal Movement in Latin America', 73.

reached to various nations with the gospel message they encountered diverse religious beliefs, practices and cultures. Some of the practices they witnessed were very evil and they saw demons at work. They saw people being possessed by the evil spirits and tormented. They saw the negative aspects of religion strongly and because of which the cultural dimension of a religion was ignored. Majority of the missionaries thought that non-Christian religions had nothing good in them. With such negativism, they approached religions. They did not study other religions, but their observation and zeal for Christian message made them to think that these religions have nothing good to offer. Not only they did not study religions, but they discouraged anyone reading or studying other religions or beliefs. Despite their negativism towards other religions, they had positive thinking about people. The missionaries prayed for people and they wanted to see them to believe in Christ as the only saviour. Pentecostal zeal for evangelism has been fantastic.

Third, Pentecostals penetrate in societies. They appeal to the grass roots and their ministries are experienced by ordinary people in communities as they emphasize in deliverance and healings. There a sense of God's power being manifested in the meetings. Jim Feeney writes:

There are revival fires breaking out in various localities around the world. One highly respected researcher estimates that 80% of these revival fires in the United States are Pentecostal-charismatic in nature. He states further that *outside* the USA, virtually 100% of current, major revival activity is Pentecostal-charismatic. Many have read of the November 2000 Reinhard Bonnke crusade in Lagos, Nigeria. An estimated 6 million people attended in six days! 1.6 million were present for the final night. There were miraculous healings, multiple salvations, and hundreds of thousands baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. It was through and through a Pentecostal revival!¹⁸

Pentecostal revival or renewal meetings have impacted millions of people around the globe. Some of these meetings may be questionable in their approach to the society, but there have been immense effects from these meetings. Such meetings are attended by both Christians and non-Christians. Such meetings are not teaching sessions, but they are more of celebration and praise. Revival meetings are taking place across the nations.

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The Beginnings of Pentecostalism in Nepal

Nepalese Christianity began in 1951 and is so far developing with evangelical conviction and tradition. Pentecostalism has been part and parcel of this tradition. Pentecostal churches were active in the Nepal-India border region of Rupaidia, where some American Assembly of God missionaries

¹⁸ Jim Feeney, 'Pentecostal Beliefs and Doctrines' (<http://www.jimfeeney.org/pentecostalreligionbeliefs.html>).

were working. Along with gospel preaching, they were involved in the social work of caring for orphans.

A Pentecostal preacher Barnabas Rai came with his wife to Rupaidiah from Darjeeling in 1936 and started to work there. Then Barnabas and his family moved to Nepalganj in Nepal in 1951, after democracy was declared in Nepal. John Singh Pun, Laxman Thapa, and Dalbir Singh were some of the early converts through Barnabas Rai and the Rupaidiah Assemblies of God Mission. Similar movements were found in other places in Nepal. Among those known were Pokhara and Gorkha. In Pokhara this Pentecostal/Charismatic experience came upon believers at Green Pasture Hospital, which was started in 1952 when the International Nepal Fellowship came to work in Nepal. This experience took place in 1966, when believers, both Nepalese and expatriate, were praying for revival in Nepal. A similar experience took place in Kathmandu in 1968 when Pastor Robert Karthak¹⁹ of Nepali Isai Mandali, Gyaneswor was baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Gorkha a similar experience took place in 1966.

The Impact of Pentecostalism in Nepal

After 1990, several open-air evangelistic meetings were held in various parts of the kingdom, and most of those meetings were Pentecostal/Charismatic in performance and expression. Sick people were prayed for, and thousands were present and took notice. Such movements are increasing within the nation.

I have personally witnessed the impact of various open air meetings and other church based evangelistic and personal evangelism where non-Christians are being prayed and God has changed their lives. I may say about 80 percent of Nepalese Christians have become Christians by experiencing healing or deliverance. Nepalese Christianity in its Pentecostal form has interacted well with the non-Christian religions. Common people are developing a positive concept towards Christians as they experience the power of God in their lives.

The above brief description of the Pentecostalism in Nepal highlights its humble beginning with a few people. Pentecostalism is very important to understanding Christianity as a whole in the Nepalese context, because various Christian denominations and Pentecostalism entered into the nation at around the same time. Non-Pentecostal Christians from India and other nations have become Pentecostals or Charismatic in Nepal. This movement has allowed the church to remain energetic and face political and social persecution in the years since its inception.

¹⁹ Pastor Robert Karthak is the most senior pastor in Nepal. He came to Nepal from Kalimpong in 1956 to work for the Lord. Nepali Isai Mandali was started in 1957 and moved between various rented facilities. The present church land was purchased in 1965, and the first church building was erected in 1970. Since then the church has been meeting in this place.

Pentecostal churches put an emphasis on prayer and fasting, with an ardent thirst for revival, the promotion of the gospel, and the conversion of the people. People are encouraged to pray for the nations, for the salvation of unbelievers, for the Christian community, and for revival. It is generally believed that such emphasis on prayer and fasting builds up believers and encourages them to trust God for the answer to their prayers. The young church of Nepal is fervent about continuing to evangelize and be a witness in the community. It believes that when the people are changed by the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit, they make a difference in their society. Pentecostal churches are also involved in social work to some extent. Though they emphasize the spiritual aspect of a person more than the physical, by no means do they neglect the physical aspect. People have been encouraged to meet the overall needs of a person. The members of the church are taught that they need to be committed to spiritual warfare for the welfare of the nation. The leadership of the churches believes that the people need to be built up spiritually by helping them to balance between spiritual gifts and fruits of the Spirit. Over the years people have seen the impact Pentecostalism has made in their own lives, in the lives of other church members, and in the lives of communities and the nation.

Contributions of Pentecostalism in Nepal

In the history of Christianity various traditions have developed over the years as the church was being established in different periods. There are the apostolic tradition, Orthodox tradition, Roman Catholic tradition, Protestant tradition, and the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. The Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition claims its authority from the apostolic tradition. Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians claim that they believe and exercise the full gospel. This section of the Christian community 'emphasizes repentance, individual experience of grace, spiritual new birth, miracles, intense prayer, spiritual revivals, public witnessing, evangelism, fasting, prophecy, dreams, visions, enthusiastic worship, tithing, and fervent speaking in tongues, writing in tongues, faith healing, and faith ministry'.²⁰ This movement refers to the Book of Acts, where the believers, according to the promise Christ made to them earlier, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians believe that what happened in the Gospels and books of Acts still can happen today, because Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. This movement meets the felt need of the people spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially. Therefore, it is today reported to be the fastest growing Christian community in the world. It is estimated that about 19 million people in a year join Pentecostal churches. Nepal is no exception to the influence of global Pentecostalism.

²⁰ P. Daniel Jeyaraj, 'Pentecostalism' (editorial), *Dharma Deepika* 6:2 (July-December 2002), 2.

As stated earlier, the gospel came to Nepal along with Pentecostal preaching, especially in the mid-western part of Nepal. Along with the Christian witness, people started to have Pentecostal/Charismatic experiences in other parts of the country. Graham Scott-Brown, a missionary physician from the United Kingdom who worked in Pokhara, in the western part of Nepal, testifies to this experience when he says,

In 1962 during an all-night prayer meeting the Holy Spirit was poured out on St. Mark's church, Gillingham. I was a member of that church, and although I was in Nepal, 5000 miles from England, I had a vivid and powerful experience of God's Spirit. It did not change my theology in any marked fashion, but I moved from being a very cerebral and intellectual Christian to one with an increasing experience of the presence and life of the Spirit of Jesus.²¹

The people working in Green Pastures mission hospital in Pokhara experienced the visitation of the Spirit of God, and they could see the great change taking place in their own lives and the lives of other people. People were hungry and thirsty for more of God's Spirit. Scott-Brown describes these phenomena thus:

Dreams and visions multiplied among the Nepali Christians. One lady dreamed that she was in a vast palace where she saw wonderful things. They were all speaking a new language, which she could also speak. When she woke up she could still speak it. There was no pressure for people to have an 'experience' or to speak in other tongues; it just happened. There were also some notable healings.²²

Scott-Brown expresses the importance of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in Nepal by stating what had happened in Green Pastures was and is continuing. To quote:

The coming of the Spirit also had a profound effect on the church. In common with many infant churches in countries where the gospel is first preached, many of the new Christians had believed following a vision or a dream. There had been healings, but there came to be an entirely new expectancy of what God would do for them. Following the refreshing at Green Pastures, several churches in other parts of the country were also touched. It seemed to be the spark that set off the expansion of church growth.²³

A similar Pentecostal/Charismatic movement was experienced in Kathmandu. Robert Karthak has said that a prayer meeting was organized by some of the missionaries who were part of the Green Pastures experience. Several people were baptized in those prayer meetings. As mentioned earlier, Robert Karthak was one of those people. This happened

²¹ Graham Scott-Brown, 'The Coming of the Spirit', in Mark Arnett (ed.), *Himalayan Vision: 50 Years in Nepal: The Story of the International Nepal Fellowship* (n.p., 2002), 65.

²² Scott-Brown, 'The Coming of the Spirit', 66.

²³ Scott-Brown, 'The Coming of the Spirit', 67.

in 1968 and afterwards. The people who gathered for these prayer meetings were concentrating their prayers for revival, holy living, fullness of the Spirit, the manifestation of gifts, and the internal change of individual believers.²⁴

The impact of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is increasing every day. But some of the church leaders feel that Pentecostal/Charismatic church leaders should do much more than is being done today. Some church pastors expressed their concern over the percentage of Holy Spirit-baptized believers in their churches. One of the pastors said that about 70 percent of the believers in his congregation have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but two other pastors said that only 50 percent and 20-30 percent have had this experience in their congregations. They also thought that without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the church will not be able to accomplish the task the Lord has entrusted upon her. They all believed that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has to be taught right at the beginning when a person comes to Christ from Christian or non-Christian background. One of the pastors strongly recommended that the church should teach repentance from sin, baptism in water, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit together. People need to be taught what the Bible says about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These leaders also expressed that there has to be continuous teaching of God's word, and the emphasis must be given on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. All the leadership of the church must have the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and because of this they will be able to share their experience with others. Revival meetings, special prayer meetings, fasting, and prayers must be conducted for church leaders and believers, whereby they will be able to receive fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit and enlarge their vision for evangelism and church planting among non-Christian communities. According to the leaders Pentecostalism has to do with the extension of God's kingdom.

Characteristics of Pentecostalism in Nepal

The above statements made by the Nepalese pastors are in line with the Pentecostal convictions that I have described above as general characteristics of Pentecostalism. The following observations highlight some of the important characteristics of Nepalese Pentecostalism.

First, it provides a place for cultural expression and organizational autonomy. Nepalese Christianity in general and Pentecostalism in particular express themselves in a language that is culturally acceptable. With the absence of traditional church buildings, congregations worship in simple structures, such as rooms in a rented house or in a hall. The church prefers singing songs in Nepali folk melodies. People sit on the floor, which is also a part of Nepalese culture. Cultural ties are strengthened with the

²⁴ Interview conducted with Pastor Robert Karthak on 17 February 2003.

community spirit. Hospitality becomes a part of cultural expression. Though some of the Pentecostal churches are members of a denomination, they have full autonomy in regards to their administration, activities and expansion. They can be proud of their own national leadership.\

Second, it emphasises a new experience of God. In the context of a ritual-based society, the direct experience of God has a profound appeal. No mediation is needed to experience God. Deep and persistent thirst for spiritual fellowship and the experience of God can be observed in the lives of believers. The people experience healing, deliverance, and spiritual gifts. People from non-Christian background also receive healing experience.

Third, it overcomes social barriers. Inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage among the Christians shows the overcoming of social barriers in a Hindu society. People from all strata of society are welcomed to participate in church functions. This kind of mixing does not usually happen in Nepalese Hindu/Buddhist society. The church has taken a step towards identifying with people of all caste and ethnic groups.

Fourth, it emphasizes group efforts. All believers are encouraged to participate in the use of gifts for the church. Everyone is important in the kingdom of God. Every believer is encouraged to be a witness for Christ wherever she or he may be. It is believed that such emphasis on involvement has led to the spread of the gospel.

Fifth, it emphasizes giving. Church believers are encouraged to pay their tithes and give offerings generously. This has helped, to an extent, facilitate the self-support of the churches. Apart from giving money, people are encouraged to give their time for the ministry of the church.

Sixth, it is persistent in teaching and strives to build believers up in discipleship. Teaching is imparted on the basic Christian faith right from the time of a person's conversion. It is believed that such teaching will equip a person to live a Christian life and be a witness for Christ.

Seventh, it emphasizes holy living. Strict abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and other intoxicants is required. People are required not to participate in Hindu/Buddhist festivals and rituals. Prayers are offered in a convert's house, and all images of deities are removed. If there are non-Christians in the home then, their permission is requested for prayer or removal of images; if they disagree, their wish is honoured.

Eighth, it encourages family and social continuity. In spite of family and social pressures, new converts are encouraged to associate with their immediate family members and other relatives and friends. Becoming a Christian has been looked down socially and culturally.

The above descriptions of the characteristics of Nepalese Pentecostalism provide a basis for an assessment of the movement. As far as my knowledge is concerned, nothing has been written to assess critically this phenomenon in the Nepalese context. But one thing must be acknowledged by missiologists and scholars: something has happened in the nation of Nepal in regards to the Christian witness. Further research has to be

conducted to understand the nature of the church from the various points of view of social, religious, cultural, political, and economic dynamics. The purpose of this paper has been simply to make readers aware that there is a nation in the world where Christianity started with Pentecostalism and influenced the people of other Christian traditions coming from outside. Pentecostalism is here to stay, and it has to be assessed critically in order to give hope for the future of Christianity worldwide.

Evaluation

It is difficult to evaluate the merits and demerits of Nepalese Pentecostalism when nothing has been written critically from that perspective. But as I have seen and experienced how this movement has interacted with other religions, I see the positive contribution of it. Non-Christians have responded to the gospel and experienced healing and deliverance by the power of the Holy Spirit. How Pentecostals need to present themselves in the days to come has to be assessed and evaluated. So far any attempt at an assessment would be based on Pentecostalism elsewhere. Certain assumptions could be made on the basis of Pentecostalism in general reflecting its characteristics, but the unique context where it emerged would be missed. It is appropriate to perceive the movement in its own context and evaluate it accordingly in order to do it justice. My own observations and some interviews I have conducted with leading pastors show that Pentecostalism has great potential in the nation. It meets spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of the people to an extent. It uses ordinary languages of the people to communicate, and its music and singing attracts people. It emphasizes preaching and teaching as a part of the mission of the church and believes that full transformation comes only with the power of the Holy Spirit. The emphasis on prayer, faith healing, and the exercise of spiritual gifts has a special place in its overall ministries. The above characteristics of Pentecostalism make it a new phenomenon in the tradition of Christianity. The movement has positively contributed towards evangelism and church growth among the people of other faiths.

The assessment of Nepalese Pentecostalism must be done from the context where it has emerged. An important aspect of Pentecostalism which will have to be critically assessed in order to gauge its future impact is the nature of its leadership. Leadership in Pentecostal churches seems to be more autocratic, probably because of the charismatic nature of leaders. It is high time to think critically about the performance of Pentecostal leaders in relation to their on-going activities of evangelism, church planting, increasing numbers of believers, and successful stories. Such a critical assessment would enhance the balanced and holistic growth of the movement.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been observed that Nepalese Pentecostalism is a part of the wider Pentecostal movement around the globe. Pentecostalism entered the nation in a Hindu/Buddhist context where no traditional Christianity was present. Nepalese Pentecostalism has a direct interaction with various religions that exist within the nation. Pentecostals have worked among non-Christian communities and they have seen the conversion. If we would like to see how the Pentecostals have interacted with other religions, Nepal will be one of the best countries to study. Studies show that Pentecostals' identities tend to be based on experiences of revival, and they have much to contribute in the way of a spiritual dimension to the church worldwide. In general, people around the world are seeking some kind of spiritual experience, and Pentecostalism is there to offer this. Let me conclude with a quotation from Wonsuk Ma, who sees the impact of Pentecostalism as a very positive contribution to Christianity as a whole, with its holistic approach:

Developing spirituality rooted in God's word found in Scripture and nurtured by the Holy Spirit is greatly needed if Pentecostals are going to successfully negotiate effective ministry in a post-modern world. Such biblically-based spirituality will empower Pentecostals to address the issues of the institutionalization of Pentecostalism, the engagement of Pentecostal social concern, the inclusion of women in Pentecostal ministry, the continued vibrancy of the church's global mission, the necessity of racial reconciliation, and the renewal of the vision held by early Pentecostal pioneers for a healthy ecumenical relationship with other Christians.²⁵

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²⁵ Wonsuk Ma, 'Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow', in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 63-64.

WORD, WORK, AND WONDER AS HOLISTIC MINISTRY¹

Douglas Petersen

Virtually every major biblical teaching undergirds and demands social concern and helps shape its character.²

Jesus' teachings to the disciples in the Gospel of Mark provide the marching orders for holistic ministry, i.e., for discipling people to faith in Jesus Christ and demonstrating our faith through our actions and service among the needy. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the transformational experience of salvation, the ethical actions of social concern, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, as seen primarily in the Gospel of Mark, are inextricably linked together in any expression of holistic ministry.

Focusing on Mark 8:22-10:52, the core of Jesus' teaching on discipleship, I contrast the social and ethical norms of power, authority, control, knowledge, status and wealth, which were accepted in first century culture, with the polar opposite ethical standards – the reversal of the order of things – that Jesus required of his followers under the rules of the kingdom of God. Greatness in leadership, as God measures, is directly related to our actions on behalf of the marginalized and disenfranchised: the poor, sick, disabled, unclean, outcasts, outsiders, the insignificants, and especially, or perhaps specifically, the children.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

Mark's account, the first of the Gospels to be written, begins with a bang – no birth narrative, no build-up, just a single statement: 'The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (1:1). When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism, he was anointed to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God and

¹ This chapter is originally published in Paul Alexander and Al Tizon (eds.), *Following Jesus: Journeys in Radical Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2013).

² The three dimensions of social action are often described as: 1) relief, or providing short term assistance to people in the midst of a mess; 2) development, or equipping people with the tools to move towards self-sufficiency; and 3) structural change, or addressing the societal structures that enable or not well-being, justice, and dignity. See Ronald J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 139.

to inaugurate God's right to reign through his ministry. Mark followed the baptism account with Jesus' startling announcement, 'The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the good news' (1:14-15).³ The central theme of Jesus' mission and message was 'the good news of the kingdom of God'. The Messiah, the king of this kingdom, had come!

The Miracles, People's Response and Religious Opposition (1:16-3-6)

The nature and character of Jesus' identity as the Messiah revolved around powerful deeds of exorcisms and miracles and his teachings about the kingdom of God. After Jesus cast out demons (1:28), news about him spread everywhere. People brought to him 'all who were ill' until the 'whole city' had gathered at the door (1:32-34). When Jesus healed a leper his popularity grew so grand that he could no longer enter a city. He stayed out in the countryside (1:41, 45) or went to the seashore (2:13), but the people still came to him from everywhere. One time when Jesus entered a home, the press of people was such that men cut a hole in the roof of the house in order to lower down a paralytic so that Jesus could heal him (2:4-12).⁴

On the surface, Mark's telling of Jesus' powerful deeds synced perfectly with Jewish expectations about the coming Messiah. When the 'time is fulfilled', the Messiah would usher in God's kingdom. The mere fact that God proposed to bring in his kingdom was no secret. People expected it. And they expected that when God instituted the kingdom it would be with apocalyptic force exercising his power over all creation. Led by the Messiah, a great day of messianic salvation, as foretold by Isaiah, would bring good news to the poor, the blind would see and the deaf hear, and best of all, the oppressed would be set free (Is. 35:5-6; 61:1-2). God would right all the wrongs caused by exploitation and injustice and the hated Roman regime would finally be thrown out. The coming of the kingdom would result in the reversal of the order of things. Indeed, Jesus cast out demons, performed mighty miracles, and amazed everyone with his teaching. The crowds loved him. The religious establishment hated him. And the disciples, whom Jesus called to be with him, were just confused.

Clearly, when Jesus announced the new rule of the coming kingdom, people were beside themselves with excitement and anticipation. They came in droves to see Jesus and to bring to him the sick, disabled and

³ See Gordon Fee, 'Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission', in Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (eds.), *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 7-21. In this brilliant essay, Fee summarizes the concept of the kingdom of God in the teachings of Jesus and its significance for the global mission of the church.

⁴ For the most comprehensive treatment of miracles in the Bible, see Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

demon-possessed. The crowds, captivated by his miracles, were ‘amazed’ and ‘astonished’ exclaiming that they ‘had never seen anything like it’. It was not long before Jesus’ own disciples were asking, ‘Who is this man that even wind and the seas obey him?’ (4:41)

In contrast to the excitement of the people, the religious establishment reacted with growing hostility, because Jesus did not seem to recognize their authority. He broke the rules. They were the guardians of God’s affairs on earth and they intended to use their positions of power and authority to enforce the rules. They determined to control both Jesus and the crowds. When the leaders discovered they could not control Jesus, they began to plan his death.

Jesus, the Disciples and the Mystery of the Kingdom (3:7-8:21)

At times, even his disciples were not so sure about him. They were confused. They did not understand (5:31; 7:18; 6:52; 8:17-21). Certainly, Jesus acted like the Messiah. He cast out demons, healed the sick and disabled, and even raised the dead. He calmed the storm, fed thousands, and walked on water. The disciples saw plenty of miracles. These signs of the kingdom were exactly what they expected. However, the great reversal wasn’t happening. Jesus didn’t seem to be doing anything about the powerful, the religious, the rich, and especially the Romans. Rather he was spending his time with the poor, the sick, the insignificant, the outcasts, and of all people, the children. And what Jesus said to the disciples in private about the nature of life in the kingdom of God made no sense at all. What was the problem?

The kingdom of God – the dynamic, redemptive reign of God – had come in power. God had broken into history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil and to deliver people from the grip of evil. By casting out demons and healing the blind, the deaf and the mute, Jesus was establishing his right to rule. The miracles and wonders of Jesus’ ministry were critical signs demonstrating that the kingdom of God had come. The future had broken into the present. Because the kingdom was God’s gift to overthrow sin and evil, it was good news to be believed. This good news meant that in Jesus Christ there was forgiveness for all, people would be set free from Satan’s tyranny, and everyone was invited to attend the banquet.

But the kingdom was also a mystery; much of what the disciples saw and heard was not quite what they expected. The kingdom, which would appear fully at the end of the age, was for now, according to Jesus, operating in hidden form working imperceptibly, invisibly, and secretly in people’s lives. Moreover, Jesus taught that the Messiah who forgives sins and performs spectacular miracles would also have to suffer at the hands of the Romans. Everything changed and yet nothing changed! How was this good news?

Quite simply, the disciples didn’t get it. The disciples were painfully slow to understand Jesus’ kingdom agenda (6:52). The miracles they

understood, but the rest – not so much! Mark illustrates the conundrum with which the disciples wrestled: The kingdom of God with all its power had indeed broken into the present, but the Messiah who ushered in this kingdom and did great miracles, was also the Messiah who must suffer and die. And this ‘good news’ required a human response – repentance, a complete turnaround of life, dependence on God’s mercy, submission to his rules, and a life of discipleship, which meant in essence ‘to become like Jesus’ in self-denial and self-sacrifice on behalf of others (8:34).⁵ This is what Jesus’ disciples were slow to understand. If miracles in and of themselves could unlock the window to their understanding, then when Jesus walked on the water (6:48) or fed the multitudes from almost nothing (5:33-44; 8:1-9) – then they should have had the key; and yet they remained locked out. Shortly after the miracle feedings, the disciples grew hungry and began ‘to discuss with themselves that they had no bread’ (8:16). Jesus asked them how many baskets of food were left over after the feedings, and without missing a beat, the disciples answered, ‘Nineteen’. Jesus, surely in frustration, asked them, ‘Do you not understand?’ (8:16-21)? The irony escapes the disciples.

Kingdom Rules: Upside Down Discipleship (8:22-10:52)

As Mark approached the middle of his telling of the gospel story, he focused like a laser on what Luke Timothy Johnson calls, ‘the drama of discipleship’.⁶ The setting for this drama took place during the journey of Jesus and his disciples toward Jerusalem (8:22-10:52). The crowds and the religious leaders, for the most part, faded into the background. The window narrowed to a slit. Jesus directed his full attention on the disciples as he laid out the elements of a ‘pedagogical project’ designed to reshape their understanding of the Messiah’s mission, which in turn would define their own.⁷

The curriculum revolved around the theme that Jesus as the Messiah must suffer, die, and be resurrected. His disciples had trouble understanding, and Jesus continued to teach them, both by showing and telling, the true nature and cost of discipleship. The disciples had witnessed his miracles and correctly identified Jesus as the Messiah, but they never dreamt that the Messiah would have to die. Richard Hays states the dilemma precisely: ‘The secret of the kingdom of God is that Jesus must die as the crucified Messiah’.⁸ Nor could the disciples comprehend that if they entertained any hopes of greatness in this new kingdom, they too must

⁵ Fee, ‘Kingdom of God and the Church’s Global Mission’, 13.

⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Writings of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 174-75 and *Jesus and the Gospels* (Chantilly, VA: Teaching Company, 2004), 26-27.

⁷ Johnson, *Jesus and the Gospels*, 26-27.

⁸ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 76.

take up the cross and follow Jesus through a life of suffering and service. Indeed, for the disciples, the mystery of the kingdom would represent a reversal of the order of things in ways that they had never imagined. Life under the new rule of God required a dramatic change in the rules of leadership.⁹

From beginning to end, Mark sets his narrative against the backdrop that that his audience knows how the story turns out.¹⁰ Mark sequences the stories and teachings in this section to make it appear as though the confusion of the disciples goes from bad to worse, moving from merely a lack of understanding to a full-blown misunderstanding of who the Messiah really is and what is required of them as followers. Mark is not so concerned whether the disciples understand who Jesus really is. As his readers are well aware, after the resurrection and the Day of Pentecost, the disciples turned the world upside down. Clearly, Mark's primary concern is for readers to answer for themselves the open-ended question, 'Who do you say that I am?' (8:29).

In response to this question, Mark weaved together a beautiful tapestry¹¹ that demonstrated the disciples' rather difficult journey toward understanding the nature and character of Jesus and what the ethical attitudes and behaviours of authentic leadership should look like under God's reign (8:22-10:52).¹² In just 118 verses, Mark uses a variety of literary techniques to reshape the disciples' perspective of the Messiah and establish a pattern of what the ethical attitudes and behaviours of authentic leadership should look like under God's reign. Moving rapidly through seventeen episodes, cutting rapidly from one scene to the next while interacting with more than a dozen characters, Mark keeps the focus on the teacher and his students. As the narrator, he provides the kind of information that guides readers to align themselves with 'God's point of

⁹ Since Jesus' teachings were directed specifically to the Twelve – to those in whom he placed his ultimate trust and to whom he passed the torch of kingdom mission, I will use the terms 'leader/disciple' and 'discipleship/leadership' interchangeably.

¹⁰ For a veritable treasure chest of online resources for the study of the New Testament and the Gospel of Mark, see Felix Just, S.J., '*The Gospel according to Mark*' (<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Mark.htm>), accessed 29 May, 2012.

¹¹ Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Texts and Subtexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *Speaking of God: Reading and Preaching the Word of God* (Peabody: MA: Hendrickson, 1995). On the Gospel of Mark, Camery-Hoggatt is recognised as one of the best scholars in the world. I am privileged to have Jerry as a colleague. His office is 20 feet from mine and he is never too busy to answer my questions. The content of some of our discussions are reflected in this chapter.

¹² For a detailed treatment of Mark's use of literary devices in his telling of the story, see David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

view', the reversal of the order of things, rather than with the cultural and ethical norms that represent a 'human's point of view'.¹³

Leadership Norms Contrasted with Kingdom Discipleship

As we work through the episodes that follow, we must be careful not to read into the stories our own cultural attitudes framed by accepted social and ethical standards of the twenty-first century, or we will lose the reasons why the disciples were 'amazed' and 'astonished' at what Jesus was asking of them, and of us. A brief review of 'the order of things' in the world of leadership in the first-century may be helpful.

People who have grown up in more or less democratic societies, far removed from first-century beliefs and practices, may find it difficult to comprehend the massive power imbalance that existed between those in authority at the top of the ladder of civil, political, and religious society and the women, children, the poor, the unclean, and the outcast at the bottom. It is even more difficult to fathom that the shared social and ethical standards – beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours – that sustained and reinforced these societal structures were understood by almost everyone, from top to bottom, to be the 'order of things', the way God had allegedly ordained.

To get the full import of the dimension of the reversal for which Jesus was calling, we must recognize that the ethical and social norms of Jewish antiquity were the acceptable standards of an orderly society. The Jewish leaders adhered to a set of values and traditions that were justifiable and normative within Judaism. For Jewish authorities, and certainly for Romans, leadership was synonymous with power, authority, influence, and control.¹⁴ Wealth was considered a symbol of the blessing of God. Leaders held posts of honour and power and derived their identity from their status. And their position of power ensured that they were able to hold on to their power. Regardless of position, to some degree, all leaders exercised religious, economic, and political power because these spheres were so intertwined as to be indivisible.

Leaders acted as agents. They spoke and acted on behalf of the group they represented or the one who sent them. Both Jewish and Roman leaders believed that God authorized their right to rule, even though they had allegiances to others. Jewish leaders were accountable to the Romans and

¹³ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 45.

¹⁴ Many scholars have argued that by the time of the first-century Jewish culture was not culturally monolithic. The cultural norms of the Mediterranean world, most overtly represented and dominated by the Romans such as honour and shame, status and role, patron/client relationships and the concept of reciprocity, had penetrated Jewish culture, having a much stronger impact on Jewish society, than had been previously acknowledged. In any case, while this may be true, these types of social and ethical norms, perhaps to a lesser extent, were already part and parcel of the fabric of Jewish culture.

in so many ways dependent upon the popular support of the people. Since these religious leaders feared both the Romans and the people, it was impossible to 'love the Lord with all their minds' because they were dependent upon other human powers who wielded more clout than they.

Leaders did not like to serve. Service, in first century culture, was neither noble nor honourable, but was viewed by all leaders to be the labour of women and slaves. However, leaders did serve themselves. They used their power to ensure that those below them served them; they 'lorded their authority over others;' they used their power to secure their positions. Their role, as they understood it, was one of domination rather than service. They guarded the temple, kept the rules of the religious and social order, and at all costs, did whatever they needed to maintain power and control.

These social, economic, and political norms enabled the continuation of an orderly and predictable society that was already precariously located within the larger environs of a chaotic world. To replace existing attitudes and behaviour in such a context with the countercultural and paradoxical demands of Jesus could never be accomplished through human efforts. It is little wonder why the disciples were 'astonished' by the nature of Jesus' demands of discipleship.

Jesus' teachings were perceived by his disciples as countercultural and by the authorities as subversive and revolutionary. The disciple who followed Jesus was not to act anything like the religious and political authorities. Behaviours that were highly prized, characterized by position, power, authority, influence and wealth, needed to be reversed. Jesus challenged the traditional social and cultural norms with Scripture. He accused the leaders of his day of being hard-hearted because they substituted human traditions for God's intentions (7:9-13). Worse, they were blind and deaf to the rule of God and to the Son of God through whom this rule was inaugurated.

Mark wanted all to see that the cultural norms that everyone accepted – whether in Judea or in Rome – were contrary to the ethical demands of the kingdom. This upside-down way bore the mark of authentic discipleship. The manner by which they treated the people without earthly power or influence – the unimportant, unclean, outcasts, children, women, beggars, blind, foreigners and widows – would be the measurement of success.

It is with Peter's confession that Jesus was the Messiah, a critical turning point in the disciples' journey toward discipleship, that Mark begins the heart of his gospel – Jesus teaching his disciples (8:22-10:52). Throughout this entire section, he introduces a new sub-theme that carries with it a sobering implication: What happens to Jesus will happen to his followers, too. The disciples must learn that for them, as for Jesus, leadership is service, defeat is victory, and death the pathway to life. Mark will accomplish this remarkable transformation by embedding the narrative with three specific predictions of the coming passion (8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). The predictions are quite explicit, but the narrative indicates with equal

clarity that the disciples failed to understand their meaning. Following each prediction there is a dialogue with the disciples that indicates that they were blind to what Jesus was saying to them. It is not insignificant, then, that the entire discipleship section is bounded on either side by stories of blind men (at Bethsaida, 8:22-26; Bartimaeus, 10:46-52).

On the front end is a story about the two-staged healing of the blind man from Bethsaida, and on the backend, a healing story of blind Bartimaeus from Jericho (10:46-52). In between these two healing stories, Jesus revealed the core content of authentic discipleship, by foretelling his suffering, death, and resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). After each of these 'passion predictions', the disciples were more confounded, as they seemed determined to shape Jesus' announcement according to their own expectations. In response to their misunderstandings, Jesus combined teaching with riveting visual examples, a 'show and tell' approach, to hammer home the ethical norms of authentic discipleship.

The Blind Man at Bethsaida

The first bookend is the healing of a blind man of Bethsaida. After Jesus touched the blind man the first time, he could see, but not very well. The man said, 'I can see people, but they look like trees, walking' (8:24). It was only after Jesus touched the man a second time that his sight was completely restored. Certainly, Jesus healed the man out of a heart of deep compassion, but by placing the story where he did, Mark established a critical pedagogical stake that will become evident after Peter's confession of faith. The disciples could see too, but like the blind man, not very well. They needed a second touch that would not come until after the resurrection. This story, the healing of the blind man, sets up this entire section.

Lose Your Life in Order to Save It (8:27-9:29)

Mark uses the story of the blind man of Bethsaida to redirect the focus from the disciples' earlier question about Jesus, 'Who then is this [man]?' (4:41) to the more central question Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do you say that I am?' (8:29).¹⁵ Peter's immediate response, 'You are the Christ', a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, was the right answer. But in this first passion prediction (8:31), when Jesus announced that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, die and after three days rise again, Peter was flabbergasted. He had just declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Messiah, and he couldn't comprehend all this suffering and death talk. Jesus' words made no sense to him or to any of the other disciples. Of all the expectations the disciples may have had of

¹⁵ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 75.

what the kingdom of God might look like, the concepts of service, suffering, and death were not among them.¹⁶

Peter's confession made explicit the blindness of the disciples.¹⁷ Peter rebuked Jesus, and Jesus rebuked him right back, saying that Peter was thinking from a human point of view (8:33). But from God's point of view, Jesus had to suffer, and further, that all who wished to follow him were 'summoned to a similar vocation' to lose their life in order to save it.¹⁸ Jesus taught, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it' (9:1). Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah was 'a shadow of the truth', but he was really like the blind man who saw 'trees walking' after Jesus' first touch. Peter and the rest needed a second touch in order to see clearly.

Mark followed Peter's confession with two episodes to underscore how little the disciples really understood: the transfiguration of Jesus (9:2-8) and the healing of the boy with an unclean spirit (9:14-29). In the first episode, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a 'high mountain' (understood in Scripture as a place of divine revelation), where the three disciples caught a glimpse of Jesus in his divine glory as king. Even Moses (the law) and Elijah (the prophets) affirmed that Jesus was the Messiah. But after Peter suggested that they set up three booths, one for each of these divine personages, God himself spoke: 'This one is my beloved son, Listen to him!... And suddenly the disciples no longer saw anyone except Jesus alone with them'. The Transfiguration pointed to the future of the glory of Christ, that the suffering to which Jesus referred after Peter's confession was but for a season. But Peter (the other two) still didn't quite get it. The glory of the transfiguration enraptured him; but that the purposes of God would also include a road of suffering and service escaped him completely.

The splendour of the transfiguration quickly became a fleeting memory for Peter, James and John, because as they returned down the mountain, they were confronted with the reality of evil. A man, beside himself and desperate for help, had brought his child to the disciples. 'Teacher, I brought you my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it' (9:17-18). As Jesus turned to the boy, the evil spirit immediately acted out throwing the boy to the ground in convulsions. When Jesus asked the father how long these horrific episodes had been going on, the father responded, 'From childhood' (9:21). Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, saying, 'You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of

¹⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Living Gospel* (London: Continuum, 2004), 52.

¹⁷ Camery-Hoggatt, *Mark*, 157.

¹⁸ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 79.

him and do not enter him again'. The evil spirit, shrieked for the last time, convulsed the body of its victim, and then left the boy (9:22-27).

To be sure, Jesus performed this exorcism because of love and compassion toward the boy and his father. But there was a lesson to be taught as well. The disciples, like the blind man who saw 'men like trees walking' after Jesus' first touch, were incapable of seeing the full picture of the glorious but suffering Messiah. Similarly Mark related the story of the boy who was a deaf mute to demonstrate the disciples' incapacity to hear or speak of the mystery of the kingdom of God. It was not enough to know that 'Jesus is the Christ'. The disciples must also face the terrible consequences of that reality. Mark's narrative structure, mirroring this double understanding, required that Peter's statement of faith be deepened into a commitment of faith. The call to discipleship was and is more than following a miracle worker; it was and is also about taking up the cross.¹⁹

To Be First, You Must First Be Last (9:30-10:31)

With the second passion prediction, Jesus again foretold his death, announcing that, 'The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later' (9:31). Despite coming off a fresh mountaintop experience, the disciples started arguing among themselves as to, 'Who is the greatest?' Jesus' rebuttal to their arrogance was sharp. He overturned the social norms of leadership with his next statement, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all' (9:35). Leadership in God's kingdom from now on would be characterized by a life in the service of people whom society unimportant, and what's more, those who would be served had no power to repay the kindness. These standards of measurement were different than anything the disciples had ever heard. No wonder they were surprised when Jesus placed children on the stage as the main characters of his attention. The centrality of children in Mark's Gospel is often treated as an aside, misinterpreted or missed altogether by both contemporary scholars and readers. It is unlikely, however, that the earliest audiences missed the point.²⁰

Mark twice told a similar story of Jesus with the children, each set in a different context (9:33-35; 10:13-15). In between these two interactions with children, there are three other episodes, which when read in isolation seem unrelated, but when linked together shine light on the two stories that frame them. And vice versa: the two interactions with children clarify and

¹⁹ David E. Garland, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 80.

²⁰ Wesley D. Avram, 'The Missional Significance of Children: A Look at the Gospel of Mark' (Devotional presented at the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, CT, 30 April 2006). See also John T. Carroll, 'Children in the Bible', *Interpretation* 55:2 (April, 2001), 121-34.

deepen our understanding of each of the three episodes.²¹ The interchange between Jesus and his disciples in each of these scenes hammers home the themes of service and humility – the reversal of the order of things.

In the first story of Jesus with the children, Jesus announces an essential element for this new upside-down type of leadership. He took a child in his arms and made a startling statement: ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me’ (9.37). The word for ‘welcoming’ (*decomai*)²² implies serving and was generally used in the context of hospitality. How the disciples welcomed a child, Jesus said, was a measure of how much they really welcomed him. And how they welcomed him was then a measure of how much they welcomed God! The treatment of children – the least of all – was the new measurement of greatness.

The irony in Jesus’ statement was obvious to the reader, for children were underneath the social scale.²³ While children were not marginalized in Jewish antiquity in the same sense as were the poor, the unclean, or the outcast, children were the most vulnerable of the lot because of their utter defencelessness. They were completely dependent upon an adult and their social standing as the ‘least of these’ was indeed at the bottom of familial structures. In an adult world, where leaders established, reinforced, and fought to retain power, children were wholly and totally unimportant. In effect, for any factors related to leadership, they were ‘non-persons’. But according to the upside-down kingdom, ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all’. In other words, from now on, Jesus established that greatness would be measured by one’s service to children in contrast to the normative measures of power, influence, control, or wealth.

Therefore, children were to be first; they were to be at the top of the list of leadership priorities. Further, a leader’s actions could not just be mere expressions of tokenism or ‘displays of affection’, but as Judy Gundry-Volf insists, ‘True greatness meant not just love but service that...places children at the centre of the community’s attention as prime objects of its love and service, and requires all who would be great in the community to serve

²¹ The reader is also prompted, through a series of ‘strings’ that connect them, to recall at least two other distinct but similar children’s stories that Mark had told earlier.

²² The NRSV translates *decomai* in the second children story as ‘receiving’ (10:37).

²³ It is important to recognize that there is a fundamental difference between the ‘unimportance’ and ‘insignificance’ of children and the ‘non-person’ status of the outcast. In the Old Testament, the Jews believed that children were a gift of God, and served as a symbol of the guarantee of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. Children were occasionally instruments of God’s activity. In the sense of personhood, children had immense value. However, similar to the outcast, children had little value from a perspective of leadership. To leaders, children were at the bottom of the food chain.

children'.²⁴ In dramatic fashion, Jesus redefined care for children as a mark of greatness.²⁵

The scene shifts momentarily to underscore the disciples' lack of understanding of this. Still bound by a paradigm of leadership that prized authority and control, the disciples complained to Jesus about others who were casting out demons in Christ's name without their expressed permission (9:38-41). Dripping with irony, the disciples were anxious to put a stop to these unauthorized outsiders casting out demons, even though they were successful and they, the disciples, were not (9:14-29). In trying to control outsiders in this way, the disciples were attempting to exercise authority in the very way that Jesus was trying to reverse.

The story returns to the importance that Jesus placed upon welcoming children as the quintessential marker describing the nature of transformational leadership or kingdom discipleship. The verbal thread referencing 'Christ's name' links the prior episode about 'controlling outsiders' to this one when Jesus declared that no act of kindness to the least of these is too small. Jesus cautioned the disciples that no matter what they might do, they must never be guilty of putting a 'stumbling block before one of these little ones.... It would be better for you if a great millstone was hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea' (9:42).

Children were of such inestimable value to God that the disciples were to welcome children, protect them, and never do any harm them. The disciples found it inexplicable that the path to kingdom greatness included concrete acts of service to the least in their community or that the manner in which they treated children could be equated with how much they loved Jesus.

The next scene drills in on the same point from another angle. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus with the hopes that he might touch or bless them, not unlike accounts of relatives and friends bringing the sick, the possessed and even the dead scattered throughout Mark. But rather than welcoming the opportunity to demonstrate what leadership should look like under the new rules of the Kingdom, the disciples confronted and scolded the parents for bothering the Master.

In similar settings earlier in his gospel, Mark tells a variety of stories where the multitudes came bringing with them their sick with hopes that Jesus might just touch them. In these stories, there was no extent to which people would not go in order to get near to Jesus. They begged, cajoled, cried, or just tried to get close enough to touch the hem of his robe. Given Mark's penchant to include 'stories of a kind', it would not be too much of a stretch to think that Mark intended the reader to recall the healing of the

²⁴ Judith M. Gundry-Volf, 'The Least and the Greatest: Children in the New Testament', in Marcia J. Bunge (ed.), *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 43.

²⁵ Gundry-Volf, 'The Least and the Greatest', 43, 44.

demon-possessed daughter of the mother from Phoenicia who was living in Syria (7:24-30) or the healing of the 12-year old daughter of Jarius, a leader of the synagogue (5:21-24, 35-43). Jesus raised the little girl from the dead! And in the middle of that story, Jesus was interrupted by the woman with the flow of blood. All she wanted was to touch the hem of Jesus' robe. Jesus restored her to health and fertility, making it possible for the woman to fulfil the dream of her heart to have a child (5:25-34). None of stories, including the one we treated earlier about the boy with an unclean spirit romanticize a joyful world of beautiful, happy, and healthy children. The stories are about sickness, desperation, and despair. The children are suffering such severe disabilities that it would be easy for anyone to feel uncomfortable in their presence. Although Mark does not explicitly say so, this scene of parents bringing the children to Jesus so he might touch them may well have been similar. While it is possible, that the disciples were overcome by the immensity of the task and simply don't know what to do in the face of such need prompting them to overreact, more likely, they were behaving in typical fashion.

Just as they did in the case of the unauthorized exorcists, the disciples simply wanted to exercise. In the midst of Jesus' massive popularity, they were after all, the guardians of the gate.²⁶ They would decide who got access to Jesus. They did not believe that the parents or their children should be wasting Jesus' time. Whatever the case, the disciples had already forgotten that children were to be served first. So they rebuked the parents, failing to see the place that children had in the kingdom of God.

Jesus was indignant with their actions and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. After saying this, he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them' (10:13-16). In the first episode, the way one welcomed children was the way one welcomed Christ. Slightly but significantly different in the second episode, Jesus did not tell his disciples to become like little children, but rather he said, 'The way one receives/welcomes children is the way one receives the Kingdom of God'.²⁷ How they treated a child was a measure of how seriously they operated under the rule of God. To be great would mean putting children first.

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Mark presented a vivid contrast by way of the story of the rich young ruler between the ethical standards of the kingdom as represented by its treatment of children and the ethical standards of the day. Too committed to his own possessions and glory, the rich young ruler could not bring himself to do what Jesus asked of him – namely, to sell everything he owned and

²⁶ Garland, *Mark*, 384.

²⁷ Johnson, *Living Gospel*, 57. The theological significance of 'receive the Kingdom as a child' is an interesting debate, but not central to this essay where the focus is on the essential character of Christian leadership.

follow him. After the rich young man left, Jesus remarked to his disciples that it was, 'hard...for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God' (10:24). The disciples were both amazed and astonished! If this young man with all his money was lost, they asked, 'Then who can be saved' (10:26). The disciples, like everyone else, equated riches with God's blessings. As astonishing as it may have been for the disciples, the truth was that greatness in the kingdom could no more be generated by wealth than it could be by power and authority. The rich young ruler, unable to put Jesus first, stands in the pages of Scripture as an example of failed discipleship.

Can You Drink the Cup? (10:32-45)

In 10:33-44, Jesus once again foretold of his death – the third 'passion prediction' – and added in graphic detail that the Son of Man will be delivered over, condemned to death, mocked, spat upon, scourged, killed, but three days afterward will be resurrected. And for the third time, the disciples misunderstood. With Jesus' impending death, James and John, still coveting positions of authority, asked for places of honour when Jesus is seated in glory (10:37); to which Jesus retorted, 'Are you able to drink the cup that I drink'? They heard the part that Jesus will rise again, but seemed conveniently deaf to the part about his suffering and death! In response, Jesus told them that worldly leaders measured greatness by their capacity to exercise authority and reminded them that they were not to imitate that (10:43). The path of the disciple passes through suffering and service. Jesus taught, 'Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (10:42-45).

Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, those who follow him (disciples) receive true life. Indeed, this true life is the gift of salvation now and forever. The power of Satan, as Gordon Fee writes, 'is on its way out; its stranglehold on humanity in every form – sin, sickness, oppression, possession, injustice – has received its deathblow'.²⁸ Recipients of this good news are forgiven because of God's grace and mercy. And because they have received such inestimable grace and mercy, true disciples extend it to others in abundance. This messianic salvation not only sets them free, but by the power of the Spirit they are also enabled to imitate Jesus. The mystery of the kingdom is that the suffering servant, who was crucified, is the Messiah, and he is the Messiah precisely because he suffered. In this light, the true disciple must take up his cross and follow in his footsteps.

²⁸ Fee, 'Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission', 14.

Blind Bartimaeus

The instantaneous healing of the blind beggar named Bartimaeus is the second of two bookends (10:46-52), the first being the ‘twice-touched’ blind man of Bethsaida (8:22-26). In viewing these two stories at the beginning and end of ‘the discipleship segment’ of Mark’s Gospel, the irony is evident: In contrast to the disciples’ misunderstanding and hardness of heart, the blind man from Bethsaida and blind Bartimaeus – two people who could not even see – recognized that Jesus was the Christ.

In the story of Bartimaeus, a blind man, a beggar, was sitting on the side of the road just outside Jericho when Jesus, the disciples, and a large crowd were leaving Jericho on their way to Jerusalem. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was in the crowd, he cried out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me’. (10:46-47). Several irritated people in the crowd told him to be quiet, and there was no indication that the disciples felt any differently, thus reflecting their continuing ignorance that the new rules of life in the kingdom, ‘involved serving precisely the weakest’.²⁹

Ironically, while Bartimaeus was considered a public nuisance because of his blindness, most scholars hold that identifying Jesus as the Son of David in his cry for mercy displayed prophetic insight.³⁰ When he asked ‘that [he] may see again’, he got even more: ‘your faith has saved you’. Bartimaeus emerged from the story as an exemplar of faith and a real life example of how a leader should respond – to see and follow Jesus.³¹ This is what being a disciple means.

An Open Ending: A Charismatic Community

Whether the final chapter of Mark ends in v.8 or v. 20 the conclusion is the same – namely, that all of these events had to take place in order for the disciples to finally get it. After the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples, like the blind man from Bethsaida after Jesus touched him the second time, ‘began to see everything clearly’. The disciples would never have understood the miracles and teachings of Jesus without the cross, resurrection, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

²⁹ Craig Keener, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 489. In addition, see also Sherman G. Johnson, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 182; A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 85; Morna Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1967); Vincent Taylor (ed.), *Gospel According to St. Mark* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1963).

³⁰ John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington (ed.), *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: Sacra Pagina, 2002), 319.

³¹ I am indebted to my colleague, systematic theologian Frank Macchia and his brother, Michael Macchia, for their generous time and input working through with me the implications of the stories of the blind man from Bethsaida and the blind Bartimaeus of Jericho.

Within 25 years, this little rag-tag band, empowered by the Holy Spirit, crossed geographic, linguistic, cultural, sociological and demographic frontiers taking the good news of the gospel and planting churches from Jerusalem to Asia Minor and into Europe. Holy Spirit baptism and empowerment, available to all believers after the Day of Pentecost, equipped the disciples and the entire community of believers to do and teach all that Jesus did and taught.³² The ministry of Jesus as the Anointed One by the Holy Spirit inaugurated the kingdom of God in human history.

The kingdom of God, the central theological concept used by Mark in his Gospel to describe Jesus' mission and ministry, set the agenda for the ministry of the believers in the early church community. The kingdom mission and ministry of Jesus are transferred and made operational within the charismatic community by the empowerment of the Spirit at Pentecost.³³

The Acts narrative offers an organizing principle for a holistic ministry infused by the power of the Spirit. In Acts, the Holy Spirit is presented as the one who empowers the church to overcome the entrenched gender, economic, cultural, and religious barriers of a divided world within its own community. Accordingly in the outpouring of the Spirit on the entire Christian community at Pentecost, the unfolding of 'God's will for justice becomes an empowering dynamic'.³⁴ The charismatic community not only enjoyed the visible signs of the promised kingdom age, but by the power of the Spirit, they also exhibited the 'reversal of the order of things' by breaking down the barriers between Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor, and slave and free. By the time the story of Acts concludes, the Spirit-empowered community of faith had taken the gospel everywhere in word and deed.

A Reflection

Mark's account is brilliant; finely and carefully crafted. He wrote his Gospel to people who were enduring suffering. Mark arranged the stories about Jesus to remind the reader that though Jesus may have seemed like an unexpected Messiah, his suffering and death were not an accident. Jesus was the Messiah, God's Son. By the time Mark told his story, the disciples were the paragons of the faith. And if hearers would allow it, what Christ had done in and through the disciples, he also could do for them.

Mark's Gospel is also a story of the present. As a present-day reader, two millennia later, I, too, must encounter the disciples' confusion. I must make some sort of judgment. I must come to a position, but the rhetorical structure of the narrative rigidly limits the kinds of positions I am free to

³² Murray W. Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God', in *Called and Empowered*, 49.

³³ Dempster, 'Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God', 23.

³⁴ Murray W. Dempster, 'Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice', *Pneuma* 9 (Fall 1987), 148.

take. If I *agree* with the disciples, or share their misunderstandings, I will come under the judgment of the story's implied point of view. Indeed, Mark manages my response to Jesus' teachings, and the methods by which that management takes place are clearly visible. Mark accomplishes his ends by stating the point, then belabouring it, then driving it home into my heart over and over.

I confess that I also struggle with the issues that troubled Jesus' disciples and often for the same reasons. Sometimes I don't understand, misunderstand, or don't want to understand. I tend to tailor Jesus' teachings to my own interests. I read what I want to read. The ethics of the kingdom are still a complete reversal of what we accept as normative in the twenty-first century. I freely recognize that I have no chance to imitate Jesus' model of service in leadership without the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in my life.

One Father's Day, a few years past, my wife Myrna gave me a plaque to hang in my office, as a constant reminder of what really matters:

One hundred years from now,
It won't matter what car I drove,
What kind of house I lived in,
How much I had in my bank account,
Nor what my clothes looked like,
But, the world may be a little better
Because I was important in the life of a child.

Unknown

BLESSING IN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY AND MISSION

Wonsuk Ma

The popularisation of the prosperity gospel (PG) in the 1960s in North America and its spread throughout the world have been a controversy ever since. In popular minds, the PG with sensational promises and claims has become the unfortunate epitome of Pentecostalism. As the faith movement began to capitalise on the PG, it was also called the 'name it, claim it' movement.

There has been a plethora of literature by PG preachers such as Kenneth Hagin, and critical assessments of the movement. Now having become a popular religious phenomenon, the simple understanding of the PG as the combination of Pentecostal Christianity and western consumerist capitalism no longer holds to diverse socio-economic contexts. Increasingly more reflections are published, especially out of life experiences with diverse social contexts.¹ Nowadays such assessments are extremely nuanced, and this is a stark contrast to blanket dismissal of many theological analyses.

The purpose of this study is to investigate theological elements of the PG to explore its potential in the shape of a particular social and religious attitude and behaviour. I believe that the generally positive and immanent religious attitude of the global South has much to do with religious dynamism directly and indirectly shaped through PG teachings. If this can be proven, a properly revised PG Christianity can continue to fuel the growth of the church in the South and provide an important spiritual key to the rejuvenation of Christianity in the North. Sociological studies, for example, have presented a variety of generally positive impacts of the PG in Africa,² Latin America,³ Asia, and even Western Europe.⁴

¹ For example, Katerine Attanasi and Amos Yong (eds.), *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

² Paul Gifford's case study on Ghanaian Pentecostal churches provides an excellent window to the PG type churches in Africa: Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

³ For example, Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) on Brazilian context. Also Eloy H. Nolivos, 'Capitalism and Pentecostalism

My own journey with this initially unfamiliar stream of Pentecostalism, in this non-western social context, will serve as a small window into the PG. From there, several theological logics will be presented, which are commonly found among PG preaching. Then the crux of the investigation: the PG's influence on an attitude (both religious and existential) and behavioural change. The study is concluded with a reflection for the future development of the PG. Once 'redeemed' and revised properly, the PG can become a Theology of Blessings (TB). The new expression will have the advantage of moving the issue away from the negatively tainted image of the PG.

Before we move on, several disclaimers are in order. First, it is helpful to remember that there is no such thing as THE PG, but many PGs. Similarities in terminology and even sometimes in behaviours of many PG preachers often conceal racially diverse motivations and theological orientations.⁵ This is not to simplistically condemn the western original of the PG, while blindly upholding the PG promoted in the Southern continents. Even within the West, major differences in motivation and context are found between white GP preachers, black ones, and recently emerging congregations among young urban professionals. It is also helpful that most of PG preachers are found among Charismatic and independent Pentecostal groups, but less among Classical Pentecostal denominations in the West. In fact, a number of Pentecostal theologians and denominations have been quite (self-)critical about the PG. Second, due to the motivation of my study, I do not include any historical and theological analysis, particularly of the West. My immediate focus is the growing South, and eventually the global scene of Christianity. I published a case study of David Yonggi Cho and familiarity with this may also be helpful.⁶

A Korean with a Second Pentecostal 'Conversion'

I was a post-Korean War lad, growing up out of war rubble and dire poverty. My Christian life was the traditional fatalism with a western outlook. Growing up under a Christian mother, I became serious about Christian faith in my early teen years, when my mother took a sister of mine, stricken by polio, to a healing evangelist in a nearby city. For the first time, I got up early in the morning (yes, 4:30 a.m.), beat the cold and went to the early morning

in Latin America: Trajectories of Prosperity and Development', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 87-105.

⁴ For example, Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵ See Katherine Attanasi, 'The Plurality of Prosperity Theologies and Pentecostals', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 1-12.

⁶ Wonsuk Ma, 'David Yonggi Cho's Theology of Blessing: Basis, Legitimacy and Limitations', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35:2 (April 2011), 140-59.

prayer meeting at the church. The first change I noticed as a boy was a positive expectation of things around me. It was a change in my perspective rather than the circumstances, and this impression has remained with me since.

However, a change in my view of God came with much struggle. The Pentecostal church my family began to attend in my late teen years wasn't much different from other churches: God is to be revered or more accurately to be feared. The woman pastor of this 'weeping church' shared the fatalistic theological outlook, except there were more fervent behaviours, such as clapping hands while singing and praying in tongues. Yes, healing was expected, but the basic outlook was still other-worldly: there is nothing good about this side of heaven. In fact, through the early 1970s, the immanent return of the Lord was the most popular theme of annual revival meetings throughout Korea. Any hint of material prosperity ran the danger of reducing a high Christian religion to the territory of extremely despised Shamanism.

When I began my theological education in the early 1970s, my exposure to David Yonggi Cho with his theology and growing church, was a confusing experience. My biggest theological struggle was the parity in the nature of the Christian gospel between my hometown pastor and Cho. The former advocated almost a denial of worldly comforts and prosperity in order to be more spiritually attuned and committed. But Cho was the exact opposite: God cares, not only for our spiritual needs, but also for our daily needs, thus physical and material ones. Another area where nervousness sprang up was the thin line (at least to me at that time) between Christianity and Shamanism. Of course, it all boiled down to my understanding of my Christian God. Was he is an object of fear or the subject of love?

My faith journey up until this time fostered a rather passive attitude towards God; that is, we were just to accept whatever was laid before us by God. This corresponded with the Korean traditional psyche of fate or lot. But the new Christian stream I encountered brought 'I' more prominently into the religious and spiritual equation. My needs, my desires, and my goals matter as importantly as what God wanted me to do or to become. Initially my resistance against this kind of gospel was due to the dichotomist view of religions: 'higher' religions aim at higher issues, such as holiness, spirituality and salvation, while 'lower' religions cater to mundane issues, such as sickness, prosperity, and good luck. Bringing the 'I' factor into a deep dialogue with the 'God factor' took a considerable process and time, but my reading of the scriptures, especially the Old Testament, encouraged me to think of human life and the Christian message more holistically. Consequently, I have settled on my own version of the theology of blessing.

This 'conversion' process took into serious consideration both the reading of the scriptures, and also the role of the social context. Throughout my faith journey, I have come to conclude that Pentecostal pneumatology

has much to do with the 'prosperity of life'. The role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament provides a rich resource for this understanding, in creation, sustenance and re-creation of life.⁷ This was a significant addition to the traditional Pentecostal emphasis on the empowering role of the Spirit. And the prosperity of life, according to the scriptures, begins with the physical⁸ and material dimensions, but also includes emotional, communal and spiritual aspects of human and created life.

The early 1970s was a politically turbulent time under a military dictatorship. However, political oppression and human rights violations of the regime were easily preceded by the economic agenda: the provision of daily bread, and even more. A war-torn nation was struggling to grow out of the image of naked war orphans, along with shattered and destroyed streets.⁹ In this social context, an emphasis on the afterlife looked more like escapism, instead of an active engagement with the issues in order to find a resolution. In this setting, the widespread of imminent eschatological expectation was not a coincidence. Consequently, in spite of harsh allegations against Cho being 'shamanistic', that is, just going after daily needs, his church grew exponentially. His prayer mountain and the church's (daily) evening prayer meetings (in addition to the early morning ones) drew thousands of believers and non-believers with the expectation of God's intervention. Cho aptly described his half-century ministry as that of 'hope'.¹⁰ The formation of his theology of blessing began with his keen attention to the social context, his own life experience, and the 'informed' reading of the scripture. Throughout his own journey, various influences can be detected, including North American faith teachers such as Oral Roberts and Robert Schuler. However, the subsequent application of his theology of blessing to the socially marginalised and to the care of creation attests to his own unique theological journey and formation.¹¹ It was just a matter of time before other churches slowly but consistently adopted this

⁷ A reflection on the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches deals with human flourishing: Wonsuk Ma, 'Life, Justice and Peace in the Spirit: A Reflection from a Korean Pentecostal through Isaiah', *Ecumenical Review* 65:2 (July 2013), 225-57.

⁸ It is noticeable that classical Pentecostals have grounded their belief in healing not on the work of the Spirit (thus, pneumatologically), but on the atoning work of Christ (thus, Christologically). For example, the 'Fundamental Truths' of the (US) Assemblies of God lists one on divine healing based on Christ's atonement. This is one of four cardinal doctrines of the denomination: 'Assemblies of God Fundamental Truths (Condensed)' (http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_short.cfm, March 2010), assessed on 4 Jan, 2013.

⁹ World Vision and Compassion International began in Korea to care for war orphans.

¹⁰ David Yonggi Cho, *Dr. David Yonggi Cho: Ministering Hope for Fifty Years* (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2008).

¹¹ Younghoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), 115-29.

theological path, to the point that the main theological focus of Christianity in Korea seems to be on this world, rather than the other, thus, another case of lop-sidedness.

Theological Logics Put Forward

From the beginning of the relatively short history, several theological reasonings have been put forward as a foundation for the PG. Several typical types will receive brief attention, with their contributions as well as weaknesses. It is important to be reminded that the matter is not that one of them is right, while others are wrong. In fact, all of them have at least one important theological element that deserves sufficient attention. Therefore, each has made a useful contribution to the development of Pentecostal theology and spirituality as well as that of the PG. However, two common weaknesses are also observed to make them controversial: 1) theological logic is stressed beyond the limit of biblical evidence, and 2) an overemphasis is made to weaken the balance of theological wholeness.

'Sowing Seed'

The first is the cause-effect logic. The most typical of this line of theological argument is the sowing-seed preaching. Several biblical passages are frequently referred to. A more traditional one is the admonition of tithing in order not to steal what belongs to God, and second, so that God will 'throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it' (Mal. 3:10). Bringing a financial gift to the church is considered to be an investment for a future return, 'thirty, sixty, or hundred-fold' (cf. Mk. 4:8). Some preachers take this to the extreme as obligating God to return the gift with multiplied blessing. This then becomes a binding 'covenant' with God.¹²

In a massive gathering of the El Shaddai Catholic Charismatic movement in the Philippines, the movement's leader 'Mike' Velarde asked his congregation to pull out their wallets and lift them up open, so that God could fill them with his blessings, which is then given back to God. This giving-returning cycle continues, while the volume of transaction grows every time.¹³ In fact, Patrick Ngozi Anwuzia, a Nigerian PG preacher is

¹² Kenneth Copland, *The Laws of Prosperity* (Fort Worth, Kenneth Copland Publications, 1974), 79 takes a step further by arguing that a tither has a special right to prosperity based on God's covenant, and 'Satan has no chance against you [because] God will rebuke the devourer for your sake'.

¹³ See Katherine L. Wiegale, 'The Prosperity Gospel among Filipino Catholic Charismatics', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 171-88.

quoted as having said, 'If you haven't deposited anything, you have no right to ask for anything'.¹⁴

It is not difficult to see the possibility for abuse in several areas. On a theological level, this has the danger of reducing human relationships with God into that of a transaction. This is precisely what the prophets accused the Israelites of: reducing their relationship with God to the level of Baal and its worshippers. This instrumentalisation of God is a strong pull of many indigenous religions, such as Korean Shamanism and African religions. On the practical level, there are exceptions to this rule of 'sowing and reaping'. Suffering of the righteous is an age-old quest (Habakkuk and Job), and any unqualified claim on the rule can end up with a false promise. It is the poor of the poorest who scape their barrel to give their last penny to the Lord as the 'best' investment. There is a strong possibility for this to become the poor's religious lottery. Several cases have raised an ugly ethical issue when ministries invested in massive property developments, and/or their leaders exhibited extravagant and flamboyant lifestyles at the cost of the mass' sacrificial giving based on the presented 'secure' promise.

Already in Redemption

This is another rather simple theological logic that has been widely used. All suffering, including poverty and illness, is a symptom of human sin after the fall. Since Christians have been redeemed through the work of Christ, sins have been forgiven and our status in God has been restored. As part of the redemptive parcel, Christians now live with curses undone, that is, poverty and illness no longer apply. The strongest scriptural quote used is, 'with his stripes, we are healed' (Is. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:24, KJV). Applying the same logic, poverty is also part of the Christian past, and not for today. This is a powerful re-orientation of one's self understanding. The declaration of becoming a 'new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:10) lays a firm foundation for a transformed attitude and lifestyle.

At the same time, it is also true that this can lead to a euphoric 'realized eschatology': that the full restoration has been complete. However, biblical evidence is clear that the full consummation is still to come. In fact, 'the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time' (Rom. 8:22). Our life is sandwiched between what 'already' took place in the redemptive work of Christ and the full consummation that has 'not yet' happened. This dilemma provides a room for the place of various questions such as the presence of evil, suffering and illness. Simple ignorance of this eschatological reality would deprive the Christian life of a legitimate place for suffering. For example, in a PG

¹⁴ Aeji Isaac Ayegboyn, 'A Rethinking of Prosperity Teaching in the New Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria', *Black Theology: An International Journal* 4:1 (2006), 74.

environment, a persistent illness of a Christian, after a repeated prayer for healing, may be explained as the presence of un-repentant sin. Doubting one's Christian authenticity can easily add the excruciating pain of suspicion and marginalisation to the existing suffering. The other side of the coin is the quick judgment of one's spirituality by his or her health and wealth. This will eventually make the church a place for the rich and the healthy, not for the poor and the sick. A more serious concern, however, is the distortion of Christian discipline. If discipleship is to deny oneself and follow Christ bearing one's cross, the PG can present the danger of placing Christians in the opposite of what Christ intends. If what Christians pursue is no different from what the world does, whether it is in highly developed western urban centres or in under-developed poverty-stricken villages, but counting on God's help in reaching the goal, this is a degraded form of Christianity, far from what it is intended to be.

Faith and Power of Word

Frequently observed in many PG preachings is a stress on faith, and positive confession to reinforce the power of faith. The Faith Movement was born in the United States by Kenneth Hagin in the 1930s, and it has been developed through people like Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin, Jr. Although with a different origin, positive confession became popular at approximately the same period through celebrity preachers such as Robert Schuler. Also, both groups argue the potent of faith and the spoken or confessed word.¹⁵ This is one line of the PG which many western, particularly American, preachers propagate through the power of TV.¹⁶ Hagin has popularised the idea of *rhema* vis-à-vis *logos*. He argues that *rhema* is a personalised word of God given into a specific situation.¹⁷ Pentecostal denominations officially condemned such teachings, and important responses were made.¹⁸ And yet, many churches and Pentecostal believers both in the north and the south have adopted such teachings. As already seen above, the impact of this strand of

¹⁵ Kenneth, *The Laws of Prosperity*, 96-97 has a section on 'the Power of Confession', in which he teaches that '*You can have what you say!* In fact, what you are saying is exactly what you are getting now'. (Italics are the author's).

¹⁶ Isaac Phiri and Joe Maxwell, 'Gospel Rich', *Christianity Today*, July 2007, 24, 'The worst brand of African prosperity teaching is, perhaps unsurprisingly, an American export', and 'TBN Africa airs wall-to-wall peddlers of plenty' (25).

¹⁷ A heavy emphasis on this is found on the 'About Us' page of the Kenneth Hagin Ministries website (http://www.rhema.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=2, assessed on 15 Feb 2013), repeating 'It's all RHEMA' three times. Its central position is clearly stated: 'And RHEMA is all about one thing – helping to usher in the last great move of God's Spirit and the second coming of Jesus Christ'.

¹⁸ See the (US) Assemblies of God's position paper entitled 'The Believer and Positive Confession' (http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position_Papers/pp_downloads/pp_4183_confession.pdf, 1980), assessed on 15 Feb, 2013.

the PG has impacted Africa tremendously. Vinson Synan is quoted to contend that churches in Nigeria exploded after a teaching tour of several faith teachers such as Kenneth Hagin, Jr. and Kenneth Copeland in the early 1990s.¹⁹ Although the exact extent of their role cannot be ascertained, the contribution of the PG to the growth of African Christianity is generally acknowledged. Also accepted is its role in providing motivation for a better life with hope, in the midst of grinding poverty.

Attraction to such preaching is a remarkable contribution to the growth of Christianity. It is through the transformed attitudes and behaviours of millions through, often reinforced through their 'positive confession'.²⁰ This change in turn presents the possibility of community and national transformation. The message of prosperity may be argued as a 'starter' towards an introduction to the kingdom, just as Jesus fed the hungry but ultimately he preached the kingdom of God. Nonetheless, like the two models we discussed, risk is tantamount to the authentic message of Christianity. The most serious problem with this faith-word strand of the PG is the preoccupation with, and priority to, material prosperity. This misplaced orientation will be problematic even for any human being, not to mention for a Christian. The distortion of Christian blessing as it presented is almost like an unrealistic glitter of stars by night, but in reality a make-shift town in a dry desert. In fact, an extreme form of this can take Christianity into a territory that is simply foreign to its intended reality. Also a strong criticism has been raised against the use of biblical passages, such as 3 John 3, and the idea of *rhema*.²¹ But equally problematic can be the combination of scriptural evidence and positive thinking. There is nothing wrong with faith that is combined with other elements, e.g., emotion, self-help, etc. However, if the positive thinking stream is made a pseudo-biblical truth, then the issue enters risky territory.

'Praying Through'

From the beginning, the modern Pentecostal movement developed a serious emphasis on prayer. In the early North American Pentecostal circles, such concerted, sustained and dedicated prayers were known as 'praying through'. One does not stop praying until there is assurance from God. Expressed in

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¹⁹ Phiri & Maxwell, 'Gospel Rich', 26.

²⁰ One of the most influential books of David Yonggi Cho is *The Fourth Dimension: The Key to Putting Your Faith to Work for a Successful Life* (Seoul: Seoul Logos, 1979) which has a chapter 'The Creative Power of Our Spoken Word' (75-94). Its sequel, *The Fourth Dimension*, vol. 2: *More Secrets for a Successful Faith Life* (S Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1983) has a similar chapter, 'The Creative Ability of Your Words' (119-145).

²¹ Gordon D. Fee, *The Disease of the Health and Wealth Gospels* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1985), 10-11 on 3 John passage.

various ways, such as a 'breakthrough',²² or 'touching the throne of God, an assurance is experienced in most cases in 'tangible' ways. They range from hearing God's voice, a scriptural passage standing out, a message in tongues with interpretation, someone's prophecy, or a word of knowledge.

Various biblical examples are used to admonish one not to give up in hope and prayer. The most frequently heard story is the parable of a widow pleading with an unrighteous judge (Lk. 18:2-8). Her persistent and repeated pleas persuaded the unrighteous judge to grant her justice. Equally powerful is Jacob's wrestling with an angel (Gen. 32:23-32), who eventually granted Jacob God's blessing. The efficacy of prayer is best shown in Daniel's prayer (Dan. 10:12-13). This passage is particularly significant as his prayer was immediately heard by God as he sent an angel to him (v. 12). Also when God's messenger was detained by the prince of Persia, through the prayer, God caused Michael to break the imprisonment of the angel to finally deliver God's message to Daniel (v. 13). Moses' intercessory prayer is also significant as his prayer practically changed God's plan (Ex. 33:12-16). Thus, power of supplication is stressed as a potent tool to influence God's action, including healing and material prosperity.

In places where existing religiosities teach devotion, piety and discipline, many programmes are used to focus on prayer. Large Pentecostal gatherings are recorded in Africa, sometimes even in millions, to experience God's presence. In Korean Pentecostalism, first of all, the prayer mountain movement has been a unique feature, particularly contributing to the Pentecostalisation of Korean Christianity. Daily dawn prayer meeting and unison prayer are long-held traditions tracing its origin back to the 1907 Pyoungyang Revival.²³

At least two questions can be raised. The first is the influence of indigenous religiosities. Cho has even been criticised as a shaman *par excellence*.²⁴ East Asian shamanistic religiosities have influenced all other religions, including Christianity. A strong emphasis on prayer is common throughout religions. Korean Buddhism, for example, practices dawn prayer, seven-day, forty-day, or 100-day prayer. Fasting and keeping

²² A strikingly similar experience is reported of the Pyoungyang Great Revival of Korea (1907) where western missionaries, after a seemingly disturbing lack of the Spirit's work for a week, 'cried out to God...and "refused to let God go till He blessed"': Chang Ki Lee, *The Early Revival Movement in Korea (1903-1907)* (Zoetermeer, the Netherlands: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2003), 103.

²³ C. Lee, *The Early Revival*, 169-70

²⁴ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 100, n. 2. Also Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2005), 218-29. Both, however, describe Cho as an excellent model of incorporating indigenous religious functions to Christianity.

oneself ritually clean are part of the devotion. Such an influence is not all negative: in fact, it has made Korean Christianity far more dynamic than early missionaries might have anticipated. Also as people move from one religion to another (that is, to Christianity), it is natural to look for parallel concepts and spiritual practices. Often the biggest failure in missionary work is when Christianity does not provide a functional substitution for the old religion. Of course, the real danger is when core indigenous religious ideals remain, but are just packaged in Christian symbols and languages. That is when shamanisation of Christianity takes place. The second risk of an overemphasis on prayer is a possible theological imbalance: prayer as a merit may result in a stress on human agency. Any form of devotion and piety is always positive. However, when it becomes a practice that would warrant what the believer prays for, then the answer to a prayer is not graciously gifted by God but rather earned by the believer. Most classical Pentecostal churches have held the 'healing in atonement' teaching, and this may serve as an example for a theological counterbalance to the PG tendency on prayer as a merit.

Summary

Had space allowed, I would have included the rather controversial notion of spiritual warfare, introduced by the Third Wave advocates from the early 1980s. Some of its ideas and practices are extremely problematic, thus, not taken very seriously in mainline theological circles.

It is also important to realise that there is no 'pure' type, and every PG preacher combines two or more, or even all, the theological traits. One's preaching often undergoes a developmental process depending on the context and audience as well as his or her theological understanding. For instance, Cho's earlier life was characterised by illness and poverty, as well as external elements such as the nation being under a colonial rule. As he frequently interpreted for American healing evangelists, it is reasonable to recognize their influence on the formation of his theology. As an Assemblies of God preacher, he subscribed to the standard theological notion of healing in atonement. Then in the 1970s and on, positive confession was greatly stressed along with faith and prayer, as he developed close relationships with Oral Roberts and Robert Schuler. The inclusion of fasting was more credited to the spirituality of Jashil Choi, his mother-in-law, who was responsible in the establishment of the renowned Jashil Choi Fasting Prayer Mountain.²⁵ In recent years, as the Korean society has gained economic prosperity, his stress is now placed on philanthropy and missionary work.

²⁵ Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 242-59.

Impact to Lifestyle

‘Can knowledge change one’s behaviour?’ is an age-old question among behavioural scientists. The foregoing discussion investigated the ‘knowledge’ dimension of the PG which impacts a believer’s lifestyle. It was noticed that all of them are potentially controversial. This section is to explore further Pentecostal resources that have contributed to the formation of the PG, and have impact on the believer’s attitude and behaviour. Unlike the previous section, the practices and values presented here are more generally accepted. Being a theologian, I am not claiming any expertise in behavioural science: this is purely a reflection based on a layperson’s observation. I found studies of social science including sociology and economics extremely helpful. The PG has potential to turn religious faith into social capital. I find, for example, Heslam’s ‘appreciated enquiry’ into the human and social capital towards the betterment of economic life particularly helpful.²⁶

Shaping of Attitude: ‘Baptism in the Spirit’

It is generally agreed that Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians have developed a unique attitude towards their daily life. First, they tend to possess a more positive outlook of their life and the future. Considering early western Pentecostals came from lower social strata, and today most Pentecostal/Charismatic believers throughout the world follow a similar demographic spread, this change in attitude is significant. The cause of the traditionally negative or pessimistic outlook towards life often comes from socio-economic and cultural influence, such as dire poverty, oppressive political system, and/or culture that provides little alternative lifestyle. This is the same stock where Pentecostals are drawn from. Sometimes existing forms of Christianity, as my own story attests, further reinforces this never-ending cycle of adverse attitude. Thus, ‘poor’ is one of the most common adjectives used to refer to the socio-economic status of common Pentecostal/Charismatic believers.

Therefore, an important question can be asked: what turns the attitude and behaviour of these ‘poor’ not only to become overcomers, but also change agents: or in other words, ‘to fire up the poor’?²⁷ One of the most important conceptual building blocks is the belief and experience around what is called ‘baptism in the Spirit’. Its main focus on empowerment has

²⁶ Peter S. Heslam, *Transforming Capitalism: Entrepreneurship and the Renewal of Thrift* (Cambridge: Grove 2010); and ‘Happiness through Thrift: The Contribution of Business to Human Well-Being’, in John Atherton and Elaine Graham (eds.), *Political Economy, Religion and Wellbeing: The Practices of Happiness* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), 54-65.

²⁷ W. Ma, “‘When the Poor Are Fired Up’: The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal-Charismatic Mission”, *Transformation* 24:1 (Jan 2007), 28-29.

been firmly established among Classical Pentecostals based on Acts 1:8.²⁸ In spite of the continuing theological debate on the nature of it, this belief has a powerful consequence in change of attitude. When we talk about this empowering experience, one is believed to have already been called to be ‘witnesses to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). Based on the Old Testament reading, before the Spirit comes upon chosen leaders, there was the process of a divine call, such as Gideon (Judg. 6) and Saul (1 Sam. 10). For average Pentecostal believers who are ‘nobody’ in the eyes of the secular and even Christian worlds, this is a revolutionary concept that they are really ‘somebody’ in God’s eyes. This, often attested by tangible experiences, such as speaking in tongues, healing, or sensual experiences such as ‘heat striking from the head through the whole body’, reinforces one’s conviction of calling, and an actual empowerment for God’s service.

Even if today’s diverse Pentecostal/Charismatic communities throughout the world do not share exactly the same doctrinal standards, no one would object that Pentecostal Christianity is a radical sort of religion.²⁹ At the centre of its belief and experience is an encounter with God in rather tangible and sometimes striking ways. Pentecostal spirituality does not reduce divine into a manageable size, as many ‘worshiper-friendly’ religions do, but maintains God’s transcendental nature, and brings him to an encounterable, close proximity. This religious tendency is particularly prevalent in religious cultures where such religious encounters are part of indigenous religiosity. The rise and exponential growth of the African Independent Churches in sub-Saharan Africa is in part attributed to the appropriation of this indigenous religiosity into Christian beliefs and practices.

The belief in Spirit baptism further implies the ‘commissioning’ of the Spirit into witnessing. This has a strong behavioural implication. Pentecostals have understood from the beginning that this blessed experience is for every believer, whether for professionally commissioned cross-cultural missionaries or ordinary men and women who live their daily life in market places and at home. In the process of one’s obedience, the accompaniment of the Spirit is expected, both in perseverance as well as in signs and wonders.

The effect of this theological orientation is enormous, both in theology and practical living.³⁰ In everyday terms, this translates into new purposefulness in life, a positive outlook in the future, new confidence in their work, which in turn forms a positive attitude towards God, life, and

²⁸ For example, Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005).

²⁹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 74-76 characterises Pentecostalism a religious ‘fundamentalism’.

³⁰ Several areas of its theological effect are discussed in W Ma, “‘When the Poor Are Fired Up’”, 29-34.

future.³¹ However, it is more than hope: it is almost expectancy. The unique religious belief and experience in the Pentecostal/charismatic circles forms a deep sense that things one hopes for is a real possibility. In many cases, these believers live the future today. The much criticised emphasis on sowing by offering resources to God is not viewed as a bogus scheme to empty the pockets of the poor, but as a sincere investment for a real possibility of blessing.

For this reason, it is understandable that David Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church summarises the primary character of his half-century ministry that began in the war-torn Korea: a ministry of hope. The effect of his consistent preaching of God, who is good and able, has resulted in testimonies that typically overcome formidable life challenges.³² It is therefore not difficult that this attitude change leads to a change in behaviour.

From Attitude to Behaviour: Reinforcing the Values

Max Weber believed that Protestantism fosters a disciplined, industrious behaviour and constraining spending for today thus building a mind-set towards capitalism.³³ If Reformed faith has proven this behavioural possibility, how much more would radical Pentecostal belief and experience create a kind of human capital that would produce a radical outcome!³⁴ Change of behaviour requires more than right information. A theological orientation, not just information, provides a right attitude towards a change of lifestyle or behaviour. This combination of an energy source and a direction produces an intentionally directed behaviour. This makes Pentecostalism a dynamic religion, setting it apart from other traditional forms of Christianity today. To make this orientation and change, a repeated and regular reinforcement is necessary.

Pentecostal worship is typically loud, full of emotion and body movements, spontaneous in expression, and sometimes chaotic. This can be seen as a consequence of the unique Pentecostal belief and experience. At the same time, worship serves to constantly reinforce Pentecostal spirituality and orientation. Preaching is a critical part of worship, and this

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³¹ This potential is aptly presented in the case study of an urban Christian community: Gerardo Marti, "I Determine My Harvest": Risky Careers and Spirit-Guided Prosperity in Los Angeles', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 131-150.

³² Myung-soo Park, 'Korean Pentecostal Spirituality as Manifested in the Testimonies of Believers the Yoido Full Gospel Church', in W. Ma, W. Menzies and H.S. Bae (eds.), *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 2004), 43-67.

³³ Max Weber's classic, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

³⁴ For example, Peter L. Berger, 'Max Weber Is Alive and Well, and Living in Guatemala: The Protestant Ethic Today', *Faith and International Affairs* 8:4 (2010), 3-9.

is where the most important theology-making takes place in Pentecostalism. By nature, pastors are called to provide pastoral care and encouragement.³⁵ A typical Pentecostal sermon would challenge worshippers to look beyond the circumstance and have hope in Christ, the miracle worker. Many preachers would adopt some form of the PG theological logics discussed above. Illustrations, especially drawn from known and contemporary individuals to the congregation, whether in healing or overcoming difficulties, will enhance the sense of hope.

In fact, a generous time has been allocated in a typical Pentecostal worship for testimonies. Any member can share his or her experience with God to the whole congregation. They become a raw material for grassroots theological formation, as the experience is now shared, evaluated, processed, and finally communally owned. Also important is the singing of simple songs, sometimes short lines repeated, to the accompaniment of modern instruments such as drums, guitars and an electronic organ. They create an ambiance conducive for worshippers to 'surrender' to the powerful leading of the Holy Spirit. This highly explosive Pentecostal worship often includes prayer times, sometimes by laying hands on them, or other times in a let-out unison prayer.³⁶ They all create a powerful atmosphere with high expectancy of God's intervention. Believers become quite certain that they live with firm promises and they are in a likeminded company.

As a result, zealotry and religious convictions have become a hallmark of Pentecostal/Charismatic life. They are highly motivated by, and charged with, purposefulness and sense of empowerment. This provides resilience to withstand hardship and creates an immune system to cushion the impact of adverse circumstances one is facing. This also leads to a persistent pursuit for better. In fact, often the goals are audacious ones. In many minds, they are not day dreams but reachable realities through hard work, religious devotion, and God's gracious and miraculous intervention. They often live their future today, of course, in hope and faith.

In the early days of my mission work, I made a short visit back to Korea. Once I was asked to accompany a pastor on her visit to a member. One wonderful Christian pastoral routine in Korea is unannounced visits to homes for prayer. The host family was living in a room rented house (that means just one room, no separate living room or kitchen) for a family of five (with three school-age children). The woman, struggling just to survive each day, shared with us her grandiose prayer of owning a three-storey building. Two levels with three apartment units for rent, and the third level for her family. She made sure that there would be a secluded 'prophet's chamber' on the roof of the building for visiting missionaries. She and her

³⁵ Ma & Ma, *Mission in the Spirit*, 240-41 argues that a local pastor is the main driver in Pentecostal theological formation.

³⁶ Today many churches in Korea would begin a season of unison prayer by calling 'Lord!' three times, known as *Juyo gido*.

pastor had set this prayer item firm in their minds. She was diligent in daily dawn prayers, Friday overnight prayer, and once she spent a week of fasting in a prayer mountain. It was not an attitude common among many Christians, including the traditional sort of my growing years. If God answers, that's wonderful. If not, nothing to lose. After all, he is the Boss, who knows what's best for us! Years later, we were able to revisit the church and the family. Lo and behold! This time, the family was occupying a three-story building; her husband was now joining her in the church, although there was not yet a prophet's chamber.

Of course, not everyone who 'opens the mouth wide' would their mouths be filled in this drastic way. However, many Pentecostal believers, like this woman and her pastor, attribute any positive outcome to their spiritual capital (or faith) to dream something really big. The effect of the inner reorientation through Pentecostal belief and experience to individual, family and community life has been well attested.³⁷ Behaviours change and a new lifestyle is born with constant community reinforcement, often resulting in betterment in daily life, or an upward social mobility.

Setting the Course: Eschatology and Context

The net result of this process is a behavioural change based on an attitude change, constantly reinforced and strengthened by Pentecostal worship and religious experiences. The most discernible outcome is a highly positive and aggressive attitude in spiritual and daily life. A goal has been set high, attitude is positive with firm faith, expecting God's supernatural help, working diligently with a conscientious lifestyle. Spiritual obstacles are countered through prayer, while the Bible provides a stream of God's promises. Social upward mobility is rather a natural outcome. This zealotry can be expressed in various ways, in witnessing, in work places, family life, and others.

This high level of energy is guided by a theological orientation and interacts actively with a given context. That is why this PG potential has found various expressions depending on the theological guidance of the time and the context of a given location. One example of the theological guidance system is eschatology.³⁸ In the early years of the modern Pentecostal movement, eschatological urgency was wide spread. The coming of the Spirit was clearly understood as a sign of the last day. Naturally early Pentecostals had an extreme other-worldly perspective of

³⁷ For Latin American experiences and beyond, with many case studies, see David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 205-232.

³⁸ One example of this perspective is found in Wonsuk Ma, 'Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean', in Harold Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (eds.), *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2006), 227-42.

life and the world. In this context, this highly charged spiritual, emotional and practical energy was drawn to mission. This explains why within ten years of the modern Pentecostal movement, there were 200 missionaries to Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin American countries.³⁹ This was a pure voluntary movement, as the Azusa Street Mission did not develop any structure to recruit, train, deploy or support missionaries. *The Apostolic Faith*, the official publication of the Mission regularly included many missionary reports and a good amount were miraculous works of God. This is a clear example of the Pentecostal PG potential theologically directed to mission. This also shows how mission was understood in that particular circle: crossing a geographical and cultural border to preach the gospel. Other factors, of course, contributed to this move, such as their generally lower socio-economic status.

A discernible shift in the North American scene emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, especially since the emergence of the Charismatic movement in the 1960s. Pentecostal spirituality and experience now found its home in historic churches: socially more middle class and eschatologically less millennial. Also by this time the second generation Pentecostals began to exercise pulpit leadership. It is not clear if the more amillennial or post-millennial eschatological tendency of the mainline churches also affected this de-eschatological move of Pentecostalism. This time, the Pentecostals were more preoccupied with their theological identity as several key doctrines such as 'speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit' were attacked from without as well as within. Its religious dynamism is expressed in various forms. Ensuing decades witnessed the rise of famous televangelists in the United States, often armed with the PG message of healing and prosperity, but the eschatological emphasis slowly disappeared. Such ministries often followed a secular corporate sales model in their funding strategy. Some of them invested in properties in the name of ministry, a clear sign that the Lord's return was no longer expected any time soon, and their lifestyle emulated that of Hollywood. One's eschatological understanding clearly determines the direction of daily and ministerial life. Ethical scandals and legal charges of some 'stars' revealed the dark side of this change in eschatology. (Of course, there is nothing wrong with, let's say, post-millennialism or amillennialism. The problem was the lack of an intentional theological process to 'revise' Pentecostal eschatology.) A heavy 'this-worldly' orientation was also expressed in the rise of large and impressive suburban church buildings. By this time, eschatological urgency remained only in the theological memory among Pentecostals. Comparing this observation with Western Europe, the unique American consumerism and

³⁹ G.B. McGee, 'Missions, Overseas (N. American Pentecostal)', in Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2003), 888.

entrepreneurial spirit may have contributed to the rise of the PG. If this is the case, it is a huge theological challenge as Christianity is no longer for worshippers to serve their God, but God serving his followers.

Pentecostal/Charismatic churches that mushroomed from the 1980s throughout the world generally align with this non-eschatological Charismatic trend more than classical Pentecostal traditions, except for the infilling of the Spirit. Even Pentecostal churches, such as the Yoido Full Gospel Church of the Korean Assemblies of God, adopted several Charismatic elements. The change in eschatological orientation resulted in several tangible expressions. The first is an emphasis on growth. The growth of individual congregations and global Pentecostalism in its incredibly diverse forms cannot be explained by any organizational ingenuity or training system. It is through the voluntary mobilisation of ordinary believers, who went through a change in their attitude and behaviour. I was genuinely impressed by common housewives who serve as cell group leaders with a minimum theological orientation. At the Yoido Full Gospel Church, many of them spent several days of the New Year holidays at the prayer mountain for fasting and prayer. Yes, they pray for their own needs, but it is not unusual that they also fast for their cell group members for healing, the salvation of their family members, or for the solution of life's problems. What can motivate a common woman, who would be otherwise enjoying the winter holidays with extended family gathering for celebration, to devote her time for prayer, especially for someone else? No wonder that the church has grown into the largest single congregation in the world! This story repeats itself: be it in the highly sophisticated urban centres like Hollywood, or deep mountain villages of Latin America. The second is the expanded missionary scope. Unlike the earlier focus on evangelism and church planting, there have been clear signs that Pentecostals have developed, or are developing, a holistic understanding of mission. Although Pentecostals have intuitively exercised holistic aspect of mission, it was not intentional or theologically articulated. Care of the needy has been motivated by an immediate social context and for evangelization. However, in the last several decades, more Pentecostal denominations and agencies have expressed their commitment to care for the needy, and even justice issues.⁴⁰ For example, the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) has embraced community development, HIV/AIDS care, and even social justice into its mission thinking and operation.⁴¹ The commitment of the Yoido Full Gospel Church to church unity and creation

⁴⁰ Understanding of mission as evangelism, care of the needy and the establishment of justice is argued as the full spectrum of Pentecostal mission: Ma and Ma, *Mission in the Spirit*, 7-14.

⁴¹ One example of this expanding mission scope is epitomised in an YWAMer's recent study: Stephanie L. Goins, 'The place of forgiveness in the reintegration of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone' (PhD dissertation, University of Wales/Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2008).

care is another example.⁴² These are positive outcomes of the changed eschatology of Pentecostalism which has brought the potential of the attitude and behaviour change. This firmly supports my thesis that throwing away the PG water may result in a loss of something valuable.

Towards a Future

If the foregoing exploration appears to have blindly advocated the PG as it has been presented today, it is neither my intention nor my belief at all. But this is to serve as a devil's advocate against 'angels' who have been accusing the PG all the while. Most criticisms are very valid and theologically sound, I admit. My assumption has been, however, that in the package of the PG, in spite of its ugly face, there may be theological elements inherent in it that beg to be liberated from abuses and stereotypical dismissal. And some of them may indeed be a unique gift of the Spirit to rejuvenate dying churches while continually fuelling the growth of global Christianity.

My brief study has been focused on one of them: the quest for dynamic and passionate Christianity. With a risk of overgeneralisation, today's Christianity may be evaluated by this criterion: the western church has been losing its strength, number and influence as the average mind-set of mainstream Christians has become increasingly moving away from an expectation of God's direct and immediate presence and work. The traditional heart bed of Christianity has been steadily eroded by secularisation, pluralism, rationalism, and a good degree of suspicion towards claims of Christianity. As a consequence, Christianity's role in the public sphere is decreasing, and this is no different even in individual life. Relative affluence and stable social systems have left less room where God is meaningfully needed. The bottom line is clear: not much is expected from God any longer. On the other hand, places where Christianity grows, sometimes in spite of harsh circumstances, it is almost the exact opposite. God is assumed to be involved in every part of daily life. In many places, this religious expectation may have been also shaped by their previous religious experiences, thus, Christianity offering functional substitution. Equally critical is the social context where many struggle for daily survival. In such situations, where social systems provide little or no provision for daily sustenance or protection from threats to survival, religions flourish. The expansion of the PG in Africa and Asia, and in a less degree in Latin America, can be partly explained by this. Often in such cases, the PG generally represents Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity which takes immediate concerns seriously. The most tangible sign of this vibrancy is a huge size in buildings, crowds and media presence. Equally oversized is a 'big mouth' with audacious claims and promises. Beneath this 'size' lies explosive enthusiasm for the Christian message as people receive it, with

⁴² Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 126-29.

changes in social and religious attitudes and behaviours. This attitude of involving God in every aspect of human and social life is exactly what is needed to jump start waning Christianity and continue fuelling Christian expansion. Thus, I have argued that a proper theological 're-visioning' of the PG is an urgent crucial call.⁴³

Although not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive, a healthier version of the PG, or now I may propose to call it 'Theology of Blessing', may contain the following components, while maintaining the religious attitude and behaviour discussed above.⁴⁴ The first is repositioning 'prosperity' from its place as an end of Christian aspiration to a means to fulfilling God-given mandate, or mission. This may be compared with Jesus' feeding of five thousand. Seeking physical and material blessing has a rightful place in Christian life, but only as a starter or means, not an end in itself. The second is moving one's attention from 'what I want' to 'what we all need'. This has two elements for re-visioning: the motivation and the community-centred thinking. Physical and material needs for daily living are legitimate Christian prayer to, and expectation from, God. This is moving the PG from consumerist secular motivation. Moreover, such quest is for common good, instead of selfish desire to serve oneself only.⁴⁵ The third, I propose, is a holistic understanding of blessing. The current narrow preoccupation of physical and material aspect of abundance is not different from what the secular world is pursuing. They are part of the very basic level of Maslow's human needs for survival. Human is distinguished from animals by our desire for social, emotional, relational, ethical and spiritual welfare. Vision for God's shalom (for example in Is. 32:15ff) reveals this enlarged holistic view of blessing. The fourth is the recognition of suffering as part of human reality. This is where an eschatological balance is essential. The wisdom literature illustrates this reality well. We not only have rules for a successful life in Proverbs, but we also have a clear case of exceptions in the Book of Job. The righteous suffer while the wicked prosper. That is an age-old theological question, as Habakkuk complained to God (e.g., 1:13). A healthy pastoral theology will not criminalise victims as lacking faith, but rather, will build a life with a right existential and religious attitude informed by biblical teachings. Ultimately, this is a matter

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⁴³ This call is clearly issued by Frank D. Macchia, 'A Call for Careful Discernment: A Theological Response to Prosperity Preaching', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 225-37.

⁴⁴ From an economic perspective, Amos Yong presents several models: Amos Yong, 'A typology of Prosperity Theology: A Religious Economy of Global Renewal or a Renewal Economics?', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 15-33.

⁴⁵ Whether the PG can affect national economy is an on-going inquiry. At least a South African case is presented with a tentative, inconclusive, yet positive verdict: The Centre for Development and Enterprise, South Africa, 'Under the Radar: Pentecostalism in South Africa and Its Potential Social and Economic Role', in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity*, 63-85.

of Christian discipline: We do not use God, but we surrender ourselves for God's use. He is indeed our Lord (*kurios*).

This short list already suggests problematic areas of the PG. The worst theological combination will be, therefore, combining the wrong extremes together: 1) making prosperity the goal of Christian life; 2) using Christianity to fulfil one's selfish consumerist desire; 3) one's blessing and spirituality is measured only by health and wealth; 4) denying complexity of life, condemning poverty and illness as the sign of spiritual bankruptcy; and 5) ultimately God is used and abused for my own desire. This worst case scenario can become further worsened, if such preachers maintain a lavish and celebrity lifestyle at the cost of the poverty of the mass. This is more than an ethical problem: it's a crime.

The most ideal form of the PG, which we agreed to call 'Theology of Blessing', provides a key to the dynamic and passionate strength of the church. But the worst case scenario is so destructive, and we indeed have seen many injured financially and spiritually, sometimes resulting in broken families. This is a deadly fox but with the cover of Christianity sheep. This is where the role of 'theological prophets' can decisively influence the future of Pentecostal mission and the global church. So God help us!



CHURCH AND SOCIETY: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE FROM THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Japie La Poorta

Introduction

In an attempt to do justice to the topic, I want to declare from the beginning from which part in the Southern Hemisphere I am speaking, given our own historical developments with regard to the issue of church and society. Secondly, I want to give an introductory definition of the church and how it relates to society. Thirdly, will I be examining the various ways in which the church has understood its role and what the consequences were? Fourthly, will I compare the various ways in which the church has understood and fulfilled its mandate with specific reference to society in particular?

I am a South African by birth that has never had the luxury of living outside the country. This means that I have lived through the various stages of our countries development from an oppressive apartheid past to the new found democracy, with all its challenges. I am a third generation Pentecostal and member of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa. I have been exposed at an early age to the Pentecostal doctrines and practices of my denomination, and after completing my formal training at my denominational Seminary, where I was made to understand that all have sinned, and are in need of a Saviour. Everybody have to be born again, baptized by immersion and be baptized by the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. Thereafter I went on to study at three different South African Universities. At the first one I was exposed to the Dutch Reformed tradition with the emphasis on the importance of scripture, at the second I was introduced to the Liberal English tradition with the focus on individual human rights, and at the third, I was confronted with notion of doing theology from below and to employ the 'hermeneutic of suspicion',¹ in which the importance of community was highlighted. My contribution on church and society will therefore use the South African context as a case study.

¹ J.P. Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press (1970), 27.

Introductory Definition of the Church

The church is an ambivalent entity. On the one hand it is an *eschatological reality* which is made up of all those who have been called out of the worlds in which they indulged in all kinds of sin, that created separation and enmity between them and God their Maker. They are called out to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ His Son and they are than baptized into One Body, by the same Holy Spirit.

From its origin the church could be viewed as an entity that is not of this world, but is a spiritual phenomenon.

On the other hand the church is a *sociological reality* because it is made up of ordinary people who are both part and parcel of the eschatological reality, while they are citizens with certain rights and responsibilities within the confines of various countries. These rights may include the right to life, the right to dignity, equality and freedom, and the right not be discriminated against, to mention but a few.² In the light of the mentioned fact the church is part of society and is therefore regarded as an institution similar to the institutions of learning and training, or as a non-profit organisation in the same way that cultural or recreational bodies are viewed.

In the one instance the church is to be regarded as not from this world, because it owes its origin and allegiance to God, who is the author and finisher of its faith. While on the other instance the church is in this world because it is made up of finite humans with weaknesses and tendencies to sin, and with allegiances to various political parties or opinions.

The Church's Understanding of its Role in Society

Flowing from the above mentioned definition, many churches made a choice between the eschatological and sociological reality of the church, as if it is an either or matter. Many churches looked at society and said to themselves, the greatest problem of society is sin, and therefore the greatest need of society is salvation. For this reason the churches zoomed in on Mathew 28:18–20 in which the great commission is explained, and preach the gospel of salvation at every occasion. The notion of Christ is the answer to the world today.³ F.P. Moller, a former President of the AFM White Church wrote a book in 1988 on *Church and Politics: A Pentecostal View of the South African Situation*.⁴ Moller said,

² United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Amsterdam, 10 December, 1948).

³ T. Skinner, *If Christ Is the Answer, What Are the Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974).

⁴ F.P. Moller, *Church and Politics: A Pentecostal View on the South African Situation* (Braamfontein: Gospel Publishers, 1988).

The Pentecostal churches in South Africa and their members have generally kept aloof from political matters. The traditional point of view amounted to more or less that the members were free to vote for political candidates of their choice, but were discouraged from becoming actively involved in party politics. It was felt that the church should safeguard itself from fraternal quarrels, unethical practices and sundry things of the flesh associated with party politics. On the other hand members were encouraged to pray for the authorities and to be good and law abiding citizens. With the passage of time Pentecostal churches gradually accepted the participation of its members in party politics, but then always with the qualification that party political matters were never to be brought into the church, and that the interest of the Kingdom of God were always to have precedence over political views and actions.⁵

The Black Pentecostal churches felt different about party political involvement, because they were suffering the brunt of these oppressive laws and actions by the Apartheid regime. In 1985, the Apartheid government declared a state of emergency in which the security forces would have a carte blank to act ruthlessly and with impunity against the enemies of the state. The Workers' Council of the then Coloured Church adopted the following resolution:

- We reject the present apartheid system of the South African government for the following reasons:
 - Apartheid cannot be biblically defended nor morally justified and it has become practically unbearable;
 - The present violence, loss of lives and damage to property is a direct result of the apartheid system;
- That the church commits itself to do everything in its power, within the bounds of its God-given calling, to change the apartheid system;
- That the church will support those who suffer because of the system, both practically and in an advisory capacity;
- That the church would like to respond in the following way to the detention of its member and others under the security legislation;
 - That none of these members have been found guilty in a just court of crime in relation to just legislation;
 - That we wish to support them;
 - That we sympathise with the families affected by this situation;
 - That they should be released unconditionally or charged under just legislation;
- That the church expresses its discontent with the brutality of the Police and Defence Forces towards our children; and we also reject the violence of those who react to this violent system, because we do not believe that violence provides a solution to our problems.

⁵ Moller, *Church and Politics*, 3.

- That the State of Emergency be lifted immediately'.⁶

Coupled with this notion was a tendency to be highly spiritual in their proclamation and practice. The sum total of this option was flight from the world because it constitutes everything that was evil. Christians were encouraged not to get involved in any kind of politics, because they are not citizens of this world but from above.

In some instances this highly spiritual approach was toned down and was gradually substituted for a support for the dominant political parties or the support for the status quo, whatever that may be. In this regard supporting the dominant political parties was not seen as politics, politics was construed as those actions that were aimed at and against the dominant political forces.

Many churches in our country and Pentecostal ones in particular had nothing to say about the issues of injustice, but they condemned the action by those against the injustice as religious people that were missing their calling, because they were called to preach the gospel and not to get involved in politics. They would frequently quote Rom. 13:1-7 in which subjects are admonished and instructed by scripture to obey the government. They were willing to get involved in the issues of injustice, oppression and poverty with works of compassion or benevolence, and to pray for the government. They were willing to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, care for the sick and give donations to the poor. They were not willing to ask critical questions such as: Why are the people poor? Or why are the majority of poor people in our country black?

On the other hand there are churches that look at society and say the greatest dilemma in society is a severe lack of love and fraternity and what we need to do is to make this world a better place by removing all obstacles in the way of achieving both mentioned factors. They zoomed in on biblical texts like Mt. 22:34-40 in which the great command is explained. Their main focus would be on the transformation of the macro socio economic and political structures that created divisions, imbalances and obstacle to some in the same society, while it advanced other at the expense of the marginalised. Equality, fraternity and dignity were the main objectives to achieve here and now. The purpose of proclamation was to bring about socio economic and political transformation, while personal salvation was not that much important. Human suffering, economic deprivation and political oppression were seen as the main enemies of society and the church had a moral responsibility to challenge these ills in society.

The response that was forthcoming from the churches to the dilemma of society was dependent on the view of what was regarded as the actual problems in society that needed to be addressed. If the view was that personal sin was the greatest problem than person salvation was the answer. This response advocated a stance in which personal salvation will solve all

⁶ *Minutes Workers' Council of the 'Coloured Church' (AFM of SA), 1985.*

other problems in society, and if it seemed to be difficult than people were encourage to endure the present suffering because it will be outweighed by the glory that will be revealed to the saints when the Lord comes, either through death or at the second coming of Christ. This flight from the world approach was linked with the pie in the sky when you die theory. No socio, economic and political involvement, because they see themselves as heavenly citizens. *The Kairos Document*⁷ calls this 'State Theology' that is nothing else then a simple justification of the status quo.⁸ Linked with this state theology was the notion of a church theology that propagated some kind of reconciliation in which justice is disregarded.⁹

The second response is support for the status quo on the basis of Rom. 13:1-7 interpreted in way that the subjects had no other alternative but to obey the government because it is an institution ordained by God. No critical questions were asked, no debates were allowed without making people feel guilty of contravening God's word. People who dare to ask critical questions were dealt with severely and the responses from the churches were that they deserve the brutal treatment they receive from the powers that be, because they were out of line with the biblical instruction as explained and highlighted in Rom. 13:1-7. These churches and some of those mentioned in the previous chapter were prepare to get involved in social and welfare projects, to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit the sick and those in prison, care for the poor and the needy, because Jesus said you will always have the poor with you.

Some churches were not only involved in social and welfare projects only, but they were willing to ask the serious questions about injustice, violence, peace and war, but they fail to ask questions about personal salvation. Their interpretation of Rom. 13:1-7 was different, because they did not uncritically accept the fact that the government had unchecked power, but that they had a responsibility for the good or benefit of all citizens, according to verse 4.¹⁰ They then maintained that if the government did not act in the interest or good of all citizens, the issue of civil disobedience was an option to those who were disadvantaged. This matter of civil disobedience could include peaceful protests and nonviolent means to focus the attention of the media and thereby the world on their plight. If these actions of peaceful protests were met with vicious and brutal action from the government, these churches revert to the biblical text like Rev. 13,¹¹ where the government is regarded as the beast that had to be resisted at all cost. This option was seen as the last resort wherein violent means could be used to topple the repressive regime. Archbishop Emeritus

⁷ Kairos Document, *A Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment to the Political Crisis in South Africa* (Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers, 1986).

⁸ Kairos Document, *A Challenge to the Church*, 4.

⁹ Kairos Document, *A Challenge to the Church*, 11–12.

¹⁰ Kairos Document, *A Challenge to the Church*, 4.

¹¹ Kairos Document, *A Challenge to the Church*, 5.

Desmond Tutu once said, 'We have tried everything peaceful and we have failed. Our last resort is to fight for the right to be human, to be South African.... We are still committed to justice, reconciliation and peace'.¹² Civil disobedience could take different forms. It could employ all kinds of peaceful means of protests such as prayer vigils for the fall of the government, non-cooperation with government structures, including the advocacy and lobbying for economic sanctions and means to persuade investors to stop investing in the country where injustice is perpetrated. Rev. Frank Chikane maintained that churches in the western countries need to challenge the bankers, businesses and multi-national corporations on the moral basis for doing business with an oppressive regime such as the Apartheid government.¹³ This actually asserts the fact that the state cannot claim divine authority simply on the basis of Rom. 13:1-7 without complying with the requirements of the benefit of all citizens, because in the final analysis only God has to be obeyed according to Acts 5:29.¹⁴ When all peaceful means failed, because it led to brutal force by the state machinery, violence seemed to be the only solution according to Mokgethi Motlhabi.¹⁵ 'The days of non-violence, it was felt, are over. This conclusion was first reached after the outlawing of the ANC and the PAC in 1960. Although the BCM continued the non-violent approach in the late sixties till the time of its banning, it left open the possibility that non-violence might not be the only way'.¹⁶

However, there were other groups in the above mentioned churches who believed that a holistic approach was needed. This approach should be one in which both the eschatological and societal realities could be embraced in the same ministerial model. These groups were the Concerned Evangelicals¹⁷ and the Relevant Pentecostal Witness¹⁸ proponents.

Comparison of the Various Understandings of the Church's Roles in Society

The first response from the church to society, namely to disengage completely from society and the third response namely to over engage society as if it was the only important issue at stake are both lob sided and not

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¹² D. Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa* (London: Mowbray, 1986), 20.

¹³ F. Chikane, *No Life of My Own* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1988), 131-32.

¹⁴ Chikane, *No Life of My Own*, 131-32.

¹⁵ M. Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid: A Social – Ethical Analysis* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1984), 193-99.

¹⁶ Motlhabi, *The Theory and Practice of Black Resistance to Apartheid*, 193-99.

¹⁷ *Evangelical Witness in South Africa: Evangelicals Critique Their Own Theology and Practice* (Dobsonville: Order of Preachers, 1987).

¹⁸ *Relevant Pentecostal Witness* (Durban: Chatsglen, 1988).

an approach to be espoused. The one wants to flee from the world to another in such a way that the present is sacrificed for the sake of the unknown future. While the other want to live for the here and now only, at the expense of the transcendental future. Personal sin and salvation are disregarded at the cost of structural sin and liberation. The one is as bad as the other and does not really offer a sustainable and realistic solution to the dilemmas facing the church in the communities and countries with its various challenges.

The first approach tends to be too spiritual and wants its members and proponents to live in denial with regard to the social, economic and political issues that affects them. If it affects them positively they regard it as the will of God, and when it affects them negatively they spiritually declare it a God-given burden or cross that they must bear. They see themselves as hopeless entities with no choice that are simply tossed to and fro by the circumstances to which they can do very little. They are prepared to pray about these matters and if nothing changes they accept it as God's will for their lives. This highly fatalistic view in the modern times in which we live seems to be inconceivable, but it is a reality particularly in many Pentecostal churches.

The other view is to bring about change in the here and now with everything at their disposal. What matter is here and now? God is left out of the picture or at best request for strength to be able to get rid of the oppressive structure and replace them with more human structures.

Both these proponents are prepared to get involved in the social, economic and political misery of people in actions of the mercy ministry. To feed the hungry, care for the homeless, the sick, the prisoners, the dying, to cloth the naked, to set up refugee camps for the displaced. Those who are so spiritual will only do these acts of mercy ministries, but they will never ask critical questions about the structures that upholds and perpetuate these injustices. The other group however will only ask these critical questions that relate to the structural and systemic issues that oppress and enslaves people.

Praying for the authorities' plays an important role in the approach of both groups, but the essence of what is prayed separates them further. The first group would like to pray for the blessing of the powers that be so that they may live safely and happily, while the other group would have no problem in praying for the downfall of the authorities if they are regarded as an obstacle to a free and more human system in which people can live and let live. This kind of prayer made headlines in South Africa in 1986, when Dr Allan Boesak led a prayer vigil for the fall of the oppressive apartheid regime, and not so long ago it made the news again in Zimbabwe when a prayer vigil was held where they were planning to pray the downfall of the oppressive Zanu PF regime of President Robert Mugabe.

The third view relates to those churches who originally contemplated the fleeing from the world by non-political engagement on the basis of their understanding of the scriptures, but who gradually became aware, interest

and involved in politics on all levels. This group has the amazing analysis of regarding involvement and association with the dominant political forces of the status quo as normal give. This involvement and association is not regarded as politics in general or as party politics in particular. The dominant political party who won the elections and are governing the country, which ever country it may be, govern on the basis of principles and promises they made as a political party, before they became the government. This however is not an issue with those who uncritically support the government in whatever ventures they may engage in, because they argue the bible commands us to obey the government as an institution ordained by God. The only actions that are regarded as negative and party political are those actions which are aimed at the status quo. If and when people on the basis of their conscience and their understanding of the scriptures defy and oppose the status quo they are seen as being disobedient to God. If they are ministers of the Gospel they are regarded as political preacher who proclaims a social gospel.

The final approaches allude to the fact that we do not have to make a choice between the eschatological and the sociological aspects of being the church. We should rather opt for holistic approach that encompasses both aspects. The importance is to understand that Psalm 24 says, 'The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it'. And John 3:16 says, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not Perish, but have eternal life'. In his high priestly prayer Jesus says the following John 17:15, 'I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one' (personal translation).

One can safely deduce from these texts that a holistic approach, which also happens to be the Hebrew worldview and understanding of life as a total unit, not divided into spiritual and material worlds. This dichotomy or separation between material and spiritual world is a product of the Greek worldview and philosophy of Plato. This dichotomy therefore has no Hebrew origin, but a Greek origin which was later transported to the Two Thirds World by missionaries who came to work in these countries. One can safely say that the worldview that is prevalent in the Hebrew context is the same as the African worldview, where there is no separation between sacred and secular spheres. Therefore, the issue of church and society is not contradictory or in conflict with each other.

Concluding Remarks

Pentecostalism in South Africa had to grapple with the issues between black and white, under apartheid. In that context we had to deal with various issues and through the grace of God we are slowly moving ahead into a new way of responding to our called to ministry in the context of society. We realise our threefold responsibility towards society, these are our evangelistic, pastoral

and prophetic ministries. In the first place to remind everybody in our context that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore we need to preach the gospel of personal salvation, baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Secondly, we fully accept responsibility for poor, marginalised and down trodden voiceless majority in our country. We need to feed the hungry, care for the frail elderly, terminally ill and those who are HIV positive and are living with Aids, the wandering strangers like the refugees from Zimbabwe, Somalia, Darfur, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Rwanda. And thirdly, we are acutely aware of the fact that we have a moral duty to ask critical questions about the fact that the gap between rich and poor is so wide, in the face of the fact that our economy is blooming as never before? Why is the level of HIV/AIDS infections so high? Why are the refugees streaming to our country?

We are concerned about the fact that Pentecostalism globally with acceptance of a few individual leaders and academics condemned apartheid, and whether they are concerned about what is happening in Gods world globally, or are their interest located around themselves and those who sing in the same choir as they are doing. A further concern is the fact that Pentecostals seem to be very vocal on issue pertaining to sexual ethics and they are not prepared to engage in broader issue affecting God's world, such as social, economic, political, peace and ecological matters. If they are we are not aware of any statements and condemnation in this regard. Pentecostals are on the forefront to condemn issues such as pornography, prostitution, abortion, homosexuality, alcohol abuse to mention but a few, while they are awkwardly quiet on issues of social injustice, the suffering of the Palestinians and the people of Darfur and the issue of peace between the Jews and the Palestinians, the genocide in both Rwanda and Bosnia, the issues of Global warming to mention but a few issues.

PENTECOSTALS, SOCIETY AND CHRISTIAN MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA

Miguel Alvarez

This is a study of Pentecostal theology on public service and political participation. The approach to these matters may seem too close to Roman Catholic theology and the discussion may become controversial in some Pentecostal circles. However, more than 500 years of the presence of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), its culture and theology has presided in Latin America. Although at some point I make reference to certain characteristics that are typical in a Honduran context, the discussion is still valid because it builds on concrete realities. Since Pentecostals have been here for a little over 100 years, dialogue between Pentecostals and RCC scholars seems to be in order. But this dialogue is made possible only under the auspices of an ecumenical initiative.

Fortunately there are some Pentecostals who are willing to dialogue and reflect on issues related to public life and social concerns. Nevertheless, these issues are neither recognised by the Pentecostal establishment nor found in the syllabi of their academic circles. From this point on the discussion will focus on the said themes, although controversial, furthermore implicating the reason why they are not openly discussed by Pentecostal scholars.

In this study I built on the matter of public service, the value of democracy and political participation. Some of the matters discussed here may appear foreign to some Pentecostals, but that does not mean I am 'pentecostalising' someone else's mission theology of public service and political participation. On the contrary, these issues are intentionally presented as input for a Pentecostal idea of public service and political participation.¹

¹ The impact of Pentecostals in the community can only be observed through the lifestyle and behavioural change occurred in the believers. Community transformation takes place as a result of the spiritual change in the life of Christians. Hence, this transformation is concurrent with the doctrinal definitions of most Pentecostal denominations. One example is the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee, USA). In its doctrinal commitment the Church of God teaches about the 'baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to cleansing; the enduement of power for service (Mt. 3:11; Lk. 24:49, 53; Acts 1:4-8)'. See, Church of God, *Minutes of the 71st General Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2008), 14. Thus from this

Moreover, I will emphasise those areas that Pentecostals are now utilising, which are making them more effective in their mission service. I selected several issues that are incipient or non-existent among most Pentecostal networks in Latin America. These statements are derived from research that examined the RCC doctrine of social and public service in an open dialogue with Pentecostal scholarship, which makes reference to these matters. Most of my observations in the document are based upon themes that have been neglected or ignored by some Pentecostals mainly due to their theological and practical approach to mission and public service.

Mission, Humanity and Politics

With their service among the poor and the marginalised, Pentecostals have emphasised that the human person is the foundation and purpose of Christian mission, humanity and political life. They have understood that the human person is responsible for his or her own choices and able to pursue projects that give meaning to life at the individual and social level.² On this matter, Christopher Wright wrote, 'only in relation to the reality and to others does the human person reach the total and complete fulfilment of himself'.³ This means that for the human person, a naturally social and political being, social life is not something that is added, but it is part of an essential and indelible dimension.

For Pentecostals the political community originates in the nature of persons, whose conscience reveals and commands them to obey the order, which God has imprinted in all his creatures. This order must be gradually discovered and developed by humanity.⁴

Therefore the political community, a reality inherent in mankind, exists to develop the full growth of each of its members, called to cooperate steadfastly for the attainment of the common good, under the impulse of

classical Pentecostal approach to service, community development will take place as a result of the spiritual 'endowment' of believers once they have been filled with the Holy Spirit, which creates a theological difficulty for those believers who have not been baptised with the Holy Spirit, unless this only refers to ministerial service, or that one referred to clergy.

² On the impact of an individual over the community, Susanna Hoffman did an extensive study that is presented in the work where she is a co-author. S. Hoffman, A. Massolo, and M. Schteingart, 'The Worst of Times the Best of Times', in *Participación social, reconstrucción y mujer: el sismo de 1985* (Mexico City, Mexico: Colegio de Mexico, 1985), 206-207. Hoffman has an understanding over the needs of the community and proposes training leaders who will bring transformation into their culture. In some contexts of Latin America Pentecostal churches are now finding and empowering transformational leaders, but this endeavour will continue to be intentionally planned.

³ C. Wright, *La misión de Dios. Descubriendo el gran mensaje de la biblia* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Certeza, 2006), 434.

⁴ Wright, *La misión de Dios*, 231.

their natural inclinations towards what is true and good. This notion is present in most members of the Pentecostal community, but it is mostly observed among scholars who are now thinking on political, social and economic matters pertaining to the community at large.

For José Miguez Bonino, the political community finds its authentic dimension in its reference to people. The term 'a people' does not mean a shapeless multitude, an inert mass to be manipulated and exploited, but a group of persons, each on their proper place and in their own way.⁵ This way they are able to form their own opinion on public matters and have the freedom to express their own political sentiments and to bring them to bear positively for the common good. Therefore, a people exists in the fullness of the lives of men and women by whom it is made up, each is a person aware of his or her own responsibilities and convictions. 'Those who belong to a political community, although organically united among themselves as people, maintain an irrepressible autonomy at the level of personal existence and of the goals to be pursued'.⁶

The primary characteristic of a people is the sharing of life and values, which is the source of communion on the spiritual and moral level. Steve Land argues that human society must primarily be considered as something pertaining to the spiritual. 'Through it, in the bright light of truth men should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values, mutually derive genuine pleasure from beauty of whatever order it be, always be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievements of others'.⁷ Unfortunately, most Pentecostals have been reluctant to be open to this ideal, because they tend to spiritualize the social and political content of the gospel.⁸ Instead, they will have to see that the benefits of the gospel not only influence but also give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed.

In reference to the difference between the rich and the poor, Richard Niebuhr states that 'the community of faith affirms that the poor shall be seen as a group with precise rights and duties, most of all, the right to exist, which can be ignored in many ways, including such extreme cases as its

⁵ This paradigm is addressed by J.M. Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 122-23. One of the faces is Pentecostal, which is gradually becoming aware of its strategic role in transforming the Latin American culture.

⁶ Bonino, *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*, 124.

⁷ S.J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 132.

⁸ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 135.

denial through overt or indirect forms of genocide'.⁹ In the legitimate quest to have their rights respected, the poor may be driven to seek greater recognition by all members of society.

Pentecostalism, which generates a new perspective for life, has provided spiritual and social support for the poor. The poor are transformed personally and then taught that they have the ability to transform their community as well. They also know they can accomplish this in an attitude of love and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Defence and Promotion of Human Rights

In some Pentecostal communities the theme of promoting human rights is yet to be addressed holistically. However, they are now recognising that working for the human person as the foundation and purpose of the political community means labouring to recognize and respect human dignity through defending and promoting fundamental and inalienable human rights.¹⁰ Christian responsibility establishes that the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained. The rights and duties of the person contain a concise summary of the principal moral and juridical requirements, which preside over the construction of the political community.¹¹

According to José María Ferrero, the political community pursues the common good when it seeks to create a human environment that offers citizens the possibility of truly exercising their human rights and of fulfilling completely their corresponding duties.¹² History has shown that

⁹ H.R. Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: World Publishing, 1972), 181.

¹⁰ Other than oral information it is difficult to find documents written by Pentecostal sources on the issue of human rights. One of the most reliable sources on the defence of human rights in Honduras is the report of Comité para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Honduras (CODEH), *Informe sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en Honduras, enero 2008-junio 2008* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: CODEH, 2008).

¹¹ See, R. Custodio, 'The Human Rights Crisis in Honduras', in M.B. Rosenberg and P.L. Shepherd (eds.), *Honduras Confronts Its Future: Contending Perspectives on Critical Issues* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1986), 69-72 and CODEH, *La situación de los derechos humanos en Honduras 1988* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: CODEH, 1988), 20. In that occasion the National Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights in Honduras offered figures for human rights violations. See L. Valladares, 'Los hechos hablan por sí mismos: informe preliminar sobre los desaparecidos en Honduras 1980-1993', in *Comisionado Nacional de Protección de los Derechos Humanos* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Editorial Guaymuras, 1994), 14.

¹² On the influence of Christians over the political arena, José María Ferrero wrote an article which suggests how believers should engage politics responsibly. See J.M. Ferrero, 'La Iglesia ante el gobierno del cambio', *Puntos de Vista* 3:1 (Marzo, 1991), 13-25.

unless these authorities take suitable action with regards to economic, political and cultural matters, inequalities between citizens tend to become more widespread, especially in today's society. As a result, human rights are rendered totally ineffective and the fulfilment of duties is compromised. Unfortunately, Pentecostals have not assumed this matter as a ministerial responsibility, for they are still learning about it. Education in political and social issues for the enhancement of the community must take place in the community of faith. The full attainment of the common good requires that the political community develop a twofold and complementary action that defends and promotes human rights. Concerning this Darío López states, 'It should not happen that certain individuals or social groups derive special advantage from the fact that their rights have received preferential protection, nor should it happen that governments in seeking to protect these rights, become obstacles to their full expression and free use'.¹³

The theme of human rights has different connotations, depending of the organisation that speaks for it. For the sake of my study I address the matter from the point of view of the Human Rights. In this approach I looked into the views and values of the RCC in order to find a link with the Pentecostal communities and their approach to human rights. However, a broader understanding of the philosophy and practise of the human rights is needed.

Social Life Based on Civil Friendship

As I look at the RCC approach to social matters, profound meaning of civil and political life does not arise immediately from a list of personal rights and duties expected from community members. Life in society takes on all its significance when it is based on a journey of civil friendship and fellowship. On one hand the sphere of rights is that of safeguarded interests, external respect, the protection of material goods and their distribution according to established rules. On the other, the sphere of friendship is that of selflessness, detachment from material goods, giving freely and inner acceptance of other's needs. If Pentecostals would take advantage of their natural social composition, which is very similar to this meaning of civil and political life, they would be capable of transforming the community. Civil friendship, understood in this way, is the most genuine actualization of the principle of fraternal relationships, which is inseparable from that of freedom and equality.¹⁴

Pentecostals are now recognising that their community of faith has potential foundations that could be significant toward the integral promotion of the person and of the common good. In such case, law could be defined, respected and lived according to the manner of solidarity and

¹³ D. López, *Los evangélicos y los derechos humanos. La experiencia social del Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú* (Lima, Perú: CEMAA, 2002), 46.

¹⁴ López, *Los evangélicos y los derechos humanos*, 49.

dedication towards one's neighbour. López insists that justice requires that everyone should be able to enjoy his or her own goods and rights; this can be considered the minimum measure of love.¹⁵

Pentecostals are realising that the gospel precept of love enlightens believers on the deepest meaning of political life. In order to make it truly human, political life must foster justice and service for the common good by strengthening basic beliefs about the nature of the political community and instructing about the proper exercise and limits of public authority. The goal, which believers must put before themselves, is that of establishing community relationships among people.

Pentecostals and the Foundation of Political Authority

Pentecostals have adopted similar patterns in understanding and facing authority; however, one common denominator seems clear, they have not taken care of the responsibility to defend and propose a model of authority that is founded on the social nature of the person.

God made men social by nature and no society can hold together unless someone governs over all by directing all to strive earnestly for the common good. Every civilised community must have a ruling authority, which is intrinsic by nature, and consequently has God for its author. Therefore, political authority is necessary because of the responsibilities assigned to it. In light of these, Pentecostals realise that political authority is a positive component of civil life.

RCC social doctrine states that political authority must guarantee an orderly and upright community life without usurping the free activity of individuals and groups, but by disciplining and orienting this freedom while respecting and defending the independence of the individual and social subjects, for the attainment of the common good.¹⁶ Thus, political authority is an instrument of coordination and direction by which many individuals and intermediate bodies move towards relationships, institutions and procedures that are put to the service of integral human growth. Political authority, in fact, whether in the community as such or in institutions representing the state, must always be exercised within the limits of morality on behalf of the dynamically conceived common good, according to a juridical order enjoying legal status.

¹⁵ One Pentecostal scholar who addresses the matter on human transformation is Darío López. His approach to solidarity and respect for human person is presented from his theological background. See D. López, *Pentecostalismo y transformación social: Más allá de los estereotipos, las críticas se enfrentan con los hechos* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairós, 2000), 94-98.

¹⁶ A. Bushell, 'The Foundation of Political Authority', *Viewpoint* (2007, <http://www.catholicnews-tt.net/v2005/archives/1007/sun28/viewpoint.htm>), viewed 19 April, 2011.

The subject of political authority is that the people are considered in entirety as those who have sovereignty. In various forms, this people transfers the exercise of sovereignty to those whom it freely elects as its representatives, but it preserves the prerogative to assert this sovereignty in evaluating the work of those charged with governing and also in replacing them when they do not fulfil their functions satisfactorily.¹⁷ Although this right is operative in every state and any political regime, a democratic form of government, due to its procedures for verification, allows and guarantees its fullest application. Nevertheless, the mere consent of the people is not sufficient for considering the ways in which political authority is exercised as just. The difficulty with this is that most evangelicals and Pentecostals in particular refuse to enter into this discussion because they consider it to be worldly and not part of the ministry of the community of faith, thus missing an opportunity to become agents of transformation in the field political authority.

Authority as Moral Force

Evangelicals and Pentecostals admit that a moral law as proposed by the RCC could guide authority in the right direction,¹⁸ but does not go beyond mere principles learned from the gospel. Hence in the practise of mission, they both seem to miss the opportunity to bring transformation in moral authority. All of authority's dignity derives from the exercise of the moral order, which in turn has God as its first source and final end.¹⁹ Because of its necessary reference to the moral order, which precedes it and on which it is based upon, and because of its purpose and the people to whom it is directed, authority cannot be understood as a power determined by criteria of a solely sociological or historical character. There are some who go as far as denying the existence of a moral order, which is transcendent, absolute, universal and

¹⁷ Leo Valladares, the Commissioner for the human rights in Honduras, wrote in his annual human rights report about the abusive exercise of political authority in Honduras, particularly against the poor. His document sets the foundation for what he considered to be 'the ideal exercise of political authority on behalf of the people of Honduras. The report could be found at L. Valladares, 'Honduras: The Facts Speak for Themselves', in *National Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights in Honduras* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994), 225.

¹⁸ Information on how the Catholic Church teaches moral law could be found at The Holy See, 'Man's Vocation Life in the Spirit', in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2010, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c3a1.htm), viewed 2 April 2010.

¹⁹ C.R. Padilla, 'A Message for the Whole Person', *Transformation* 10:3 (1993), 1. Padilla argues that the gospel of Jesus Christ is an ethical gospel. It has to do with God's infinite love manifest in his Son, but also with the love that he demands from us as his children. It deals with our relationship to God, but also with our relationship to our neighbour.

equally binding upon all.²⁰ And where all does not adhere to the same law of justice, men cannot hope to come to an open and full agreement on vital issues. This order has no existence except in God; cut off from God it must necessarily disintegrate.²¹ It is from the moral order that authority derives its power to impose obligations and its moral legitimacy, not from some arbitrary will or from the thirst for power, and it is necessary to translate this order into concrete actions to achieve the common good.

True authority recognises, respects, and promotes essential human and moral values.

These innately flow from the very truth of the human being and express and safeguard the dignity of the person. These are values that no individual, majority nor state can ever create, modify or destroy. These values do not have their foundation in provisional and changeable majority opinions, but must simply be recognized, respected and promoted as elements of an objective moral law, the natural law written in the human heart (cf. Rom. 2:15), and as the normative point of reference for civil law itself. If as a result of the tragic clouding of the collective conscience, scepticism were to succeed in casting doubt on these basic principles, theologically the legal structure of the state itself would be shaken to its very foundations, and it could be reduced to nothing more than a mechanism for the pragmatic regulations.

Authority enacts just laws that correspond to the dignity of the human person and do what is required for the right reason. Since the days of enlightenment, human law is law insofar as it corresponds to right reason and therefore is derived from the eternal law.²²

However, when a law is contrary to reason, it is called an unjust law; in such a case it ceases to be law and becomes instead an act of violence. Authority that governs according to reason places citizens in a relationship not as subjection to another person, but as obedience to the moral order; ultimately submitting to God himself who is its final source. Whoever refuses to obey an authority that is acting in accordance with the moral order 'resists what God has appointed' (Rom. 13:2). Analogously, whenever public authority fails to seek the common good, it abandons its proper purpose and so de-legitimizes itself.

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The Right to Conscientious Objection

Conscientious objection against unjust authority is not a subject well known or spoken among Pentecostal circles. However I brought the matter up so that believers will have some room for incorporating this matter into their

²⁰ Padilla, 'A Message for the Whole Person', 2-3.

²¹ See also, C.R. Padilla, 'Latin American Evangelicals Enter the Public Square', *Transformation* 9:3 (1992), 2.

²² C.R. Padilla, 'Responses to Democracy: A Christian Imperative', *Transformation* 7:4 (1990), 9.

reflection and Christian service. Theologically, citizens are not obligated in conscience to follow the prescriptions of civil authorities if their precepts are contrary to the demands or the teachings of the gospel. Unjust laws pose dramatic problems of conscience for morally upright people. Besides being a moral duty, such a refusal is also a basic human right, which as such, civil law itself is obliged to recognize and protect.²³ Those who have recourse to conscientious objection must be protected not only from legal penalties but also from any negative effects on the legal, disciplinary, financial and professional plane.

It is a grave duty of conscience not to cooperate in practices, which although permitted by civil legislation, are contrary to the law of God. Such cooperation in fact can never be justified; neither by invoking respect for the freedom of others nor by appealing to the fact that it is foreseen and required by civil law. For instance, it is reported that early Pentecostals in the United States were in opposition to carrying weapons. Members of the church were forbidden to serve in the military or organisations that required the use of weapons. It was not until the World War II that Pentecostals decided to leave the matter to the conscience of the individual and they ruled it on a case-to-case basis.²⁴

The Right to Resist

Although Pentecostals may not even think about such issues as the right to resist, nonetheless it is useful to examine the recourses utilised by other Christians like those who consider resistance as an instrument to oppose unjust authorities. In the context of political reflection in Perú, Cecilia Blondet wrote, 'recognizing that natural law places limits on positive law means admitting that it is legitimate to resist authority should it violate in a serious manner the essential principles of natural law. Natural law, as portrayed in the RCC teachings constitutes the basis for the right to resistance'.²⁵ For instance, the Peruvian constitution of 1979 allowed for rebellion against those usurping government in an undemocratic way.²⁶ There

²³ Other than the worker unions and the student organisations, Hondurans Christians are submissive to military forces, particularly in political crisis. Pentecostals are inclined to accept the rulers with an attitude of obedience, as a theological response. One author that describes this phenomenon is J.A. Morris, *Honduras: Caudillo Politics and Military Rulers* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 40-41. Also, cf. Mario Posas, *Modalidades del proceso de democratización en Honduras* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: UNAH, 1988), 84-91.

²⁴ The matter of conscience among Pentecostals as it relates to obedience or disobedience to State law has been discussed by C.W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1977), 112-34.

²⁵ C. Blondet, 'Poder y organizaciones populares: Estrategias de integración social', in A. Alvarez (ed.), *El poder en el Perú* (Lima, Perú: Apoyo, 1993), 189-201.

²⁶ Blondet, *Poder y organizaciones populares*, 188.

can be many different concrete ways this right may be exercised; there are also many different ends that may be pursued. Charles Drugus even said, 'resistance to authority is meant to attest to the validity of a different way of looking at things, whether the intent is to achieve partial change, for example, modifying certain laws, or to fight for a radical change in the situation'.²⁷

According to C.A. Drugus these are the criteria for taking the right to resistance to extremes:

Armed resistance to oppression by political authority is not legitimate, unless all the following conditions are met: 1) there is certain, grave and prolonged violation of fundamental rights, 2) all other means of redress have been exhausted, 3) such resistance will not provoke worse disorders, 4) there is well-founded hope of success; and 5) it is impossible reasonably to foresee any better solution. Recourse to arms is seen as an extreme remedy for putting an end to a manifest, long-standing tyranny, which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country.²⁸

Drugus explained, however, that the gravity of the danger to resist makes the practise of passive resistance preferable, which is a way more conformable to moral principles and having no fewer prospects for success. Although this may not always be the case, there are situations like Mahatma Gandhi in India who show that passive resistance can be a highly effective weapon when used intelligently.²⁹ However, this is how Drugus' explains his pragmatic reasons for pursuing strategies of non-violence. On the matter of non-violence John Howard Yoder stated that there are sufficient Christian reasons for not having to participate in the 'just war tradition'. Yoder believed that action faithfully in tune with God's rule is likely to be more effective in the case of conflict.³⁰ Moreover, the term 'non-violence' is often linked with or even used as a synonym for pacifism; however, the two concepts are fundamentally different. Pacifism³¹ denotes the rejection of the

²⁷ Among Pentecostals this may be one of the hardest issues to grasp, for they teach submission to political authority. On the other hand, Pentecostals are prone to split congregations when disagreement with spiritual authority arises. These contradictions are addressed by C.A. Drugus, *Private Power or Public Power: Pentecostalism, Base Communities, and Gender* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 55-75.

²⁸ Drugus, *Private Power or Public Power*, 48.

²⁹ Extensive information on Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance and his achievements is available at Chris Trueman, 'India's History in the 20th Century', *Indian Stones and Slaters* (2000, http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/mahatma_ghandi.htm), viewed 18 May, 2010.

³⁰ J.H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 76.

³¹ Some American Pentecostal groups formed by 1917 show evidence of being pacifist sometime in their history. Since then there has been a shift away from pacifism in the American Pentecostal churches to more a style of military chaplaincy and support of war. The major organisation for Pentecostal Christians who believe in pacifism is the Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship (PCPF).

use of violence as a personal decision on moral or spiritual grounds, but does not inherently imply any inclination toward change on a socio-political level. Non-violence³² on the other hand, presupposes the intent of (but does not limit it to) social or political change as a reason for the rejection of violence. Also, a person may advocate non-violence in a specific context while advocating violence in other contexts.

Inflicting Punishment

The issue of punishment against the offender could fit better the Pentecostal understanding of moral order. Most Pentecostals would agree that in order to protect the common good, the lawful public authority must exercise the right and the duty to inflict punishments according to the seriousness of the crimes committed. Concerning this matter Daniel Levine has written, 'The civil authority has the twofold responsibility to discourage behaviour that is harmful to human rights and the fundamental norms of civil life, and to repair, through the penal system, the disorder created by criminal activity'.³³ Levine also argues, 'in a state ruled by law the power to inflict punishment is correctly entrusted to the courts'.³⁴ The constitutions of modern states must guarantee the judicial power necessary to define the proper and independent relationships between the legislative, executive and judicial powers. Punishment does not serve merely the purpose of defending the public order and guaranteeing the safety of persons. It becomes also an instrument for the correction of the offender, a correction that takes on the moral value of expiation when the guilty party voluntarily accepts his or her punishment. There is a twofold purpose here: On one hand, encouraging the re-insertion of the condemned person into society; on the other, fostering a justice that reconciles, a justice capable of restoring harmony in social relationships disrupted by the criminal act committed. In this regard, prison chaplains are called to undertake not only in the religious dimension but also in defence of the dignity of those detained. Unfortunately, the conditions under which

See for instance, P. Alexander, *Peace to War: Shifting Allegiances in the Assemblies of God* (Telford, PA: Herald Press, 2009), 22-37.

³² Non-violence is a strategy for social change that rejects the use of violence. As such, non-violence is an alternative to passive acceptance of oppression and armed struggle against it. Practitioners of non-violence may use diverse methods in their campaigns for social change, including critical forms of education and persuasion, civil disobedience and non-violent direct action, and targeted communication via mass media. See, G. Sharp, *Waging Non-Violent Struggle* (Manchester, NH: Extending Horizon Books, 2005), 381.

³³ D. Levine, 'Bridging the Gap between Empowerment and Power in América Latina', in S. Hoerber and J. Piscatori (eds.), *Transnational Religion and Fading State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 63-103.

³⁴ Levine, 'Bridging the Gap between Empowerment and Power in América Latina', 73.

prisoners serve their time do not always foster respect for their dignity; and often, prisons become places where new crimes are committed. Nonetheless, the environment of penal institutions offers a forum for bearing witness to Christian concern for social issues: 'I was in prison and you came to me' (Mt. 25:35-36).

In carrying out investigations, the regulation against the use of torture, even in the case of serious crimes, must be strictly observed. Christ's disciples refuse any recourse to such methods, which nothing could justify and in which the dignity of the person is as much debased in his or her torturer as in the torturer's victim. International juridical instruments concerning human rights correctly indicate a prohibition against torture as a principle, which cannot be contravened under any circumstances.³⁵ Likewise, the use of detention for the sole purpose of trying to obtain significant information for the trial is ruled out. Moreover, it must be ensured that trials are conducted swiftly.³⁶ Their excessive length is becoming intolerable for citizens and results in a real injustice.

The Democratic System

In their approach to democracy, Pentecostals value the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate. However in certain moments they have to endorse Christians who encourage the formation of narrow ruling groups, which usurp the power of the State for individual interests or for ideological ends. In principle, Pentecostals agree that authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law,³⁷ and on the basis of a correct conception of the

³⁵ Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him, her or a third person, information or a confession is an act of violence against the human rights of the person affected. See for instance, A.P. Schmid and R.D. Crelinsten, *The Politics of Pain: Torturers and Their Masters* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 277; and J. Waldron and C. Dayan, *The Story of Cruel and Unusual Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 129-32

³⁶ On the application of justice and rule of law in Honduras, Donald Schulz describes the efforts of the United States to assist the Central American countries. These efforts, however, are a testimony that the rule of law in the area is still defective. See, D.E. Schulz and D. Sundloff Schulz, *The United States, Honduras and the Crisis in Central America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 42-45.

³⁷ The matter of democracy has become more visible in Pentecostal scholarship in Latin America. One example is L. Samandu, 'El Pentecostalismo en Nicaragua y sus raíces religiosas populares', *Pasos* 17 May/June, 1998), 2. See also A. Butler, 'Moved by the Spirit: Pentecostal Power and Politics after 100 Years', *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* 4:1 (2006), 4-12. She argues that Pentecostals have become increasingly involved in politics in countries as diverse as Brazil,

human person.³⁸ It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true democratic ideals, and of the subjectivity of actively participating in society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility.

VALUES OF DEMOCRACY

John H. Yoder was very clear on his understanding of democracy, he said that 'an authentic democracy is not merely the result of a formal observation of a set of rules but the fruit of a convinced acceptance of the values that inspire democratic procedures, like the dignity of every individual, the respect of human rights, commitment to the common good as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life'.³⁹ If there is no general consensus on these values, the deepest meaning of democracy is lost and its stability is compromised.

In the political arena, most Latin American Pentecostals yet do not seem to have found universal criteria for establishing the foundations of a correct hierarchy of values in democracy. Although they recognise the importance of the democratic society, they still seem to be undecided on the extension or the depth of their participation. That could be one of the hindrances, which may prevent them from making an impact in the newly emerging democracies, especially in Latin America and particularly in recent political events in Honduras. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude, which correspond to democratic forms of political life.⁴⁰ That is the reason Moltmann says, 'Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that the majority determines truth, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends'.⁴¹ Thus if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political action, ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without the values freedom, truth, justice and peace easily turns into thinly disguised totalitarianism. Democracy is fundamentally a system and as such is a means and not an end. Its moral value is not automatic, but depend on conformity to the moral law to

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Guatemala and Zambia, but these developments have led to greater social and political tension with Catholicism in Latin America.

³⁸ On the subject of authentic democracy and the rule of law see, J.M. Nelson, *Encouraging Democracy: What Role for Conditioned Aid?* (Washington, DC: Overseas Development Council, 1992), 10.

³⁹ Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 68.

⁴⁰ On the matters of agnosticism and relativism over political life, see Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1999), 67-70.

⁴¹ Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 92.

which it must be subject. In other words, its morality depends on the morality of the ends, which pursues and the means, which it employs.

INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

Even though most Pentecostals are still learning how to become involved in democratic systems they seem to recognise the validity of the principle concerning the division of powers in a state. One example of Pentecostal participation was the recent case of the presidential succession of Honduras, of June 28, 2009. Some Pentecostals decided that their support to the new government was necessary. They marched along massive crowds to support the new legally appointed President. They also conducted intensive prayer rallies on behalf of the country and the new government. They were aware of the opposition from the international community against the new political system in place, but they had it clear that international political forces were misguided and mistakenly bullying Honduras.⁴²

This time some Pentecostals played a strategic role in strengthening the new government and the democratic institutions of the country. They denounced the double standard morality of the international community in their threats against Honduras and stood solidly with the interim President. This political crisis also served some Pentecostals to prove that their mission extends beyond the walls of the church and the limits of their community of faith. They were working in cooperation with many more organisations to defend their democracy. This cooperation was operated at all fronts possible and at all levels of influence. If Honduras survived its most critical political crisis of the twenty-first century, a great part of that success had to do with active members of the Pentecostal community who participated actively on behalf of democracy. In the democratic system, political authority is accountable to the people. Darío López encourages

⁴² The Attorney General of Honduras charged President Manuel Zelaya with violations of the constitution. The Supreme Court issued an arrest warrant against him. After a resignation letter from President Manuel Zelaya was read to the National Congress, this accepted Zelaya's resignation as President, on 28 June 2009. Congress unanimously agreed to: Under the Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 205, 220, subsections 20, 218, 242, 321, 322, 323 of the Constitution of the Republic: 1) disapprove Zelaya's repeated violations of the constitution, laws and court orders; 2) Remove Zelaya from his post as President; 3) Name the current President of Congress Roberto Micheletti to complete the constitutional term that ended on January 27, 2010. Micheletti's term in office saw demonstrations for and against him. Domestically his government was supported by 85% of Honduras and by most civil and democratic organizations. See for instance a thorough analysis of the 2009 political situation of Honduras at G. Rodríguez, and E. Sosa, *Honduras Culture and Politics* (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: CESPAD, 2009), 1-3. Most evangelicals and Pentecostals organisations were part of the national coalition, which was under the continuous attack of the so-called International Community, which was misled by antidemocratic forces.

that representative bodies must be subjected to effective social control. This control can be carried out above all in free elections, which allow the selection and change of representatives. The obligation on the part of those elected is to give an account of their work.⁴³ This is guaranteed by respecting electoral terms, and it is a constitutive element of democratic representation. In their specific areas, like drafting laws, governing, setting up systems of checks and balances, elected officials must strive to seek and attain that which will contribute to making civil life proceed well in its overall course. Those who govern have the obligation to answer to those governed, but this does not imply that representatives are merely passive agents of the electors.⁴⁴ The control exercised by the citizens does not exclude the freedom that elected officials must enjoy in order to fulfil their mandate with respect to the objectives to be pursued. These do not depend exclusively on special interests, but in a much greater part on the function of synthesis and mediation that serve the common good, one of the essential and indispensable goals of political authority.

MORAL COMPONENTS OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Plutarco Bonilla states, 'Those with political responsibilities must not forget or underestimate the moral dimension of political representation, which consists in the commitment to share fully in the destiny of the people and to seek solutions to social problems'.⁴⁵ In this perspective, responsible authority also means authority exercised with those virtues that make it possible to put power into practice as service. For instance authorities must show patience, modesty, moderation and efforts to share. This kind of authority is able to accept the common good, and not prestige or the gaining of personal advantages, as its true goal at work. This statement fits well the Pentecostal communities due to their social and economic background, where this lifestyle seems to be common among believers.⁴⁶

Among the deformities of the democratic system, political corruption is one of the most serious because it betrays both moral principles and the norms of social justice. It compromises the correct functioning of the state, having a negative influence on the relationship between those who govern and the governed. It causes a growing distrust with respect to public institutions, bringing about a progressive disaffection in the citizens with regard to politics and its representatives, with a resulting weakening of institutions. Corruption radically distorts the role of representative

⁴³ See D. López, *El Nuevo rostro del Pentecostalismo latinoamericano* (Lima, Perú: Ediciones Puma, 2002), 91-97.

⁴⁴ López, *El Nuevo rostro del Pentecostalismo latinoamericano*, 28.

⁴⁵ P. Bonilla, 'La misión de la iglesia según el libro de los Hechos', *La Biblia en las Américas* 5:53 (1998), 12-16.

⁴⁶ W. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 110-12.

institutions, because they become an arena for political bartering between clients' requests and governmental services. In this way political choices favour the narrow objectives of those who possess the means to influence these choices and are an obstacle to bringing about the common good of all citizens.

The matter of public administration still seems distant for some Pentecostals. They rather see it as an instrument of the state. However, public administration is oriented towards the service of citizens. The state is the steward of the people's resources, which must administer with a view to the common good.⁴⁷ The role of those working in public administration is not to be conceived as impersonal or bureaucratic, but rather as an act of generous assistance for citizens, undertaken with a spirit of service.

INSTRUMENTS FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In reference to the purpose of political parties, Alberto Roldán is of the opinion that they have the task of fostering widespread participation and making public responsibilities accessible to all. Hence, political parties are called to interpret the aspirations of civil society, orienting them towards the common good, offering citizens the effective possibility of contributing to the formulation of political choices. They must be democratic in their internal structure, and capable of political synthesis and planning.⁴⁸

Another instrument of political participation is the referendum,⁴⁹ whereby a form of direct access to political decisions is practised. The institution of representation in fact does not exclude the possibility of asking citizens directly about the decisions of great importance for social life.

Information is among the principal instruments of democratic participation. Participation without an understanding of the situation of the political community, the facts and the proposed solutions to problems is unthinkable. It is necessary to guarantee a real pluralism in this delicate area of social life, ensuring that there are many forms and instruments of information and communications. It is likewise necessary to facilitate conditions of equality in the possession and use of these instruments by

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⁴⁷ Although this approach to the moral components for political participations is general and focus on the Pentecostal point of view in general, there are however some indications that even in the context of Honduras this area of public service as already been discussed. See, for instance, G. Blanco, and J. Valdaverde, *Honduras: Iglesia y cambio social* (Tegucigalpa: Editoriales Guaymuras, 1990), 95-103. The authors argue that the State must be at the service of its citizens. The level of service committed by those who govern should validate their political participation.

⁴⁸ A. Roldán, 'Missão, Unidade e Identidade da Igreja', *Proceso regional de Reflexão para Quarta Assembléia Geral do CLAI* (Quito, Ecuador: CLAI, 2000), 85.

⁴⁹ Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 69.

means of appropriate laws. Among the obstacles that hinder the full exercise of the right to objectivity in information, special attention must be given to the phenomenon of the news media being controlled by just a few people or groups. This has dangerous effects for the entire democratic system when closer ties accompany this phenomenon between governmental activity and the financial and information establishments.

Traditionally Pentecostals have used the media to broadcast the gospel message of personal salvation and to teach about Christian principles, values and doctrine. They have not used the media with the purpose of transforming culture nor government, intentionally. Nonetheless, Roldán argues that the media must be used to build up and sustain the human community in its different sectors: economic, political, cultural, educational and religious. Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice and solidarity.⁵⁰ He also states, the current information system must contribute to the betterment of the human person. It must make people more mature, more aware of the dignity of their humanity, more responsible or more open to others, in particular to the neediest and the weakest.⁵¹

In the world of the media the intrinsic difficulties of communications are often exacerbated by ideology, the desire for profit and political control, rivalry and conflicts between groups, and other social evils. This happens to be of concern to most Pentecostals as well. But instead of being intimidated by that negative impact they are now proposing that moral values and principles be applied to the media.⁵² And that the ethical dimension should be related not only to the content of communication and the process of communication but also to fundamental structural and systemic issues, which often involve large questions of policy bearing upon the distribution of sophisticated technology and product.

In all areas of communication one fundamental moral principle must be applied: the end and measure of the use of media are the individual and the community. A second principle is complementary to the first: the good of human beings cannot be attained independently of the common interest of the community to which they belong. It is necessary that citizens participate in the decision-making process concerning media policies. This participation has to be genuinely representative and not skewed in favour of special interest groups when the media are a moneymaking venture. This

⁵⁰ Roldán, *Missão, Unidade e Identidade da Igreja*, 88.

⁵¹ Roldán, *Missão, Unidade e Identidade da Igreja*, 82.

⁵² Concerning the positive impact of Christian media over society, Larry Webb goes further to address the matter moral values in the dramatic changes that affect society in the twenty-first century. See L. Webb, *Healthy Church DNA: Transforming the Church for Effective Ministry* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2008), 25-28. Readiness for transforming change is one element that has to be present in the life of community of faith. That way the culture and the government will be transformed.

appears to be one of the most significant challenges for Pentecostals with regards to the current use of media. However, a complete research for a Pentecostal theology on the use of media is now in order.

Political Community at the Service of Civil Society

Historically, in Honduras, evangelicals and some Pentecostals have contributed to the distinction between the political community and civil society by their vision of the human person, understood as an autonomous and relational being who is open to spiritual matters. Concerning this Larry Webb has said, 'this vision is challenged by political ideologies of an individualistic nature and those of a totalitarian character, which tend to absorb civil society into the sphere of the state's interest'.⁵³ Thus the commitment of the community of faith on behalf of social pluralism aims at bringing about a more fitting attainment of the common good and democracy itself, according to the principles of solidarity, subsidiary and justice.⁵⁴

Civil society is approached here as the sum of relationships and resources, cultural and associative, that are relatively independent from the political sphere and the economic sector. The purpose of civil society is universal, since it concerns the common good, to which each and every citizen has a right in due proportion. Webb adds, 'this is marked by a planning capacity that aims at fostering a freer and more just social life, in which the various groups of citizens can form associations, working to develop and express their preferences, in order to meet their fundamental needs and defend their legitimate interests'.⁵⁵

PRIORITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The political community and civil society, although mutually connected and interdependent, are not equal in the hierarchy of ends. The political community is essentially at the service of civil society. It is at the service of persons and groups of which civil society is composed. Civil society, therefore, cannot be considered an extension or a changing component of the political community. Rather, it has priority because it is in civil society itself that the political community finds its justification. One Pentecostal scholar who has studied the importance of the civil society as the object of service by the Political community is Bernardo Campos.⁵⁶ Although he does not reflect

⁵³ Webb, *Healthy Church DNA*, 32.

⁵⁴ See for instance the value of the civil society as discussed by J.P. Bastian, *La mutación religiosa en América Latina: para una sociología de cambio social en la modernidad periférica* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997), 121-38.

⁵⁵ Webb, *Healthy Church DNA*, 82.

⁵⁶ On the issue of the participation of Pentecostals on the civil society, see B. Campos, *De la reforma Protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia: Debate sobre el Pentecostalismo en América Latina* (Quito, Ecuador: CLAI, 1997), 12-18.

directly upon the necessity of the political community at the service of the civil society, he still claims that the government's main task is to be at the service of the civil and democratic institutions; something, which is by no means an accomplished fact in the Latin American reality.⁵⁷

Campos also states, 'civil authority must provide an adequate legal framework for social subjects to engage freely in their different activities and it must be ready to intervene, when necessary and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity, so that the interplay between free associations and democratic life may be directed to the common good'.⁵⁸ Civil society is in fact multifaceted and irregular; it does not lack its ambiguities and contradictions. It is also the arena where different interests clash with one another, with the risk that the stronger will prevail over the weaker.

LESSONS FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

The political community is responsible for regulating its relations with civil society according to the RCC principle of subsidiarity. It is essential that the growth of democratic life begin within the fabric of society.⁵⁹ The activities of civil society represent the most appropriate ways to develop the social dimension of the person, who finds in these activities the necessary space to express him or her fully. The progressive expansion of social initiatives beyond the state-controlled sphere creates new areas for the active presence and direct action of citizens, integrating the functions of the state. This important phenomenon has often come about largely through informal means and has initiated new and positive ways of exercising personal rights, which have brought about a qualitative enrichment of democratic life.

The RCC teaching of social doctrine understands that cooperation shows itself to be one of the most effective responses to a mentality of conflict and unlimited competition that seems so prevalent today. Pentecostals could capitalize on their multiple communities by emphasising relationships that are established in a climate of cooperation and solidarity. This approach to cooperation will serve to overcome ideological divisions, prompting people to seek out what unites them rather than what divides them.⁶⁰

Many experiences of volunteer work are examples of great value that call people to look upon civil society as a place where it is possible to rebuild a public ethic based on solidarity, concrete cooperation and fraternal dialogue. This area in particular seems to fit naturally to Pentecostals. They are well known for their volunteer service and

⁵⁷ Campos, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia*, 16.

⁵⁸ Campos, *De la reforma protestante a la pentecostalidad de la iglesia*, 18.

⁵⁹ Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 90.

⁶⁰ An extensive discussion of this matter has been made available by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7218&CFID=77957190&CFTOKEN=51995189>), viewed 19 April 2011.

spontaneous work among people of their communities. They are called to look with confidence at the potentialities present in their service and to offer their personal efforts for the good of the community.

Religious Freedom, a Fundamental Human Right

In the case of the Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras,⁶¹ this organisation is committed to the promotion of religious freedom. As members of this fellowship Honduran Pentecostals have subscribed to the 'Declaration of San Pedro Sula', which explains that the fellowship intends to proclaim 'the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in religious matters'.⁶² In order that this freedom, willed by God and inscribed in human nature, may be exercised, no obstacle should be placed in its way, since 'the truth cannot be imposed except by virtue of its own truth'.⁶³ The dignity of the person and the very nature of the quest for God require that all men and women should be free from every constraint in the area of religion. Society and the state must not force a person to act against his conscience or prevent him from acting in conformity with it. Religious freedom is not a moral license to adhere to error, nor as an implicit right to error. So, there are limits to religious freedom. In the case of Pentecostal they have resolved their conflicts appealing to three sources of understanding, which are based on their hermeneutics: 1) the authority of the Scripture, 2) the revelation of the Holy Spirit, and 3) the counsel of the elders.⁶⁴

⁶¹ The Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras (*Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras*) was created in 1986, as the umbrella organisation that represents the evangelical and Pentecostal bodies of Honduras.

⁶² *Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras, Acta de la Asamblea de la Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras* (San Pedro Sula, Honduras: CEH, 2001), 42. In this occasion, representatives from the Pastoral Associations in 17 different cities of Honduras, heads of Christian Agencies of service and leaders of denominations, discussed about the role and the freedom of religion in the country. In their resolution they declared: 'We declare that the freedom of religion is necessary for the country to educate people and to promote the importance of the civil institutions. Political systems must respect the right of people to express their religious preference. This action will re-enforce the value and the principle of democracy in Honduras'. Sixty-four delegates voted in favour of the declaration that took place on May 31, 2001.

⁶³ *Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras, Acta de la Asamblea General*, 36.

⁶⁴ Classic Pentecostalism has established the Pneumatic method as the source of interpretation of the Scripture, the community of faith and the ethics pertaining thereto. The pneumatic method includes three agents in the interpretation: The authority of the Scripture, the revelation of the Holy Spirit and the Counsel of the Community of faith. See for instance, H.M. Ervin, 'Hermeneutics. A Pentecostal Option', *Pneuma* 3:1 (1981), 16-23; also D.K. McKim, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 19.

Freedom of conscience and religion concerns men and women both individually and socially. The right to religious freedom must be recognised in the juridical order and sanctioned as a civil right; nonetheless, it is not of itself an unlimited right. The just limits of the exercise of religious freedom must be determined in each social situation with political prudence, according to the requirements of the common benefit, and ratified by the civil authority through legal norms consistent with the objective of moral order. Such norms are required by the need for the effective safeguarding of the rights of all citizens and for the peaceful settlement of conflicts of rights, also by the need for an adequate care of genuine public peace, which comes about when men live together in good order and in true justice, and finally by the need for a proper guardianship of public morality.

Community of Faith and the Political Community

Although the church and the political community both manifest themselves in visible organisational structures, they are by nature different because of their configuration and because of the ends they pursue. The Evangelical Fellowship of Honduras clearly reaffirmed that, in their proper spheres, the political community and the church are mutually independent and self-governing. The church is organised in ways that are suitable to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful, while the different political communities give rise to relationships and institutions that are at the service of everything that is part of the temporal common good.⁶⁵ The autonomy and independence of these two realities is particularly evident with regards to their ends.

The duty to respect religious freedom requires that the political community guarantee the church the space needed to carry out its mission. On the other hand, the community of faith has no particular area of competence concerning the structures of the political community. The church respects the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order and is entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Christians must enter into questions of the merit of political programmes. They have right to express their concerns, their religious or moral implications. Christians both individually and collectively do have an obligation to join in the political debate. They have a perspective that needs to be heard. Nevertheless, they should not be granted any special privileges in debates in which all citizens have an equal right to participate.

⁶⁵ Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras, *Acta de la Asamblea de la Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras*, 10.

Mutual Autonomy and Cooperation

The mutual autonomy of the church and the political community does not entail a separation that excludes cooperation. Both of them, although by different titles, serve the personal and social vocation of the same human beings. Both the community of faith and the political community express themselves in organised structures that are not ends in themselves but are intended for the service of humanity, to help individuals to exercise their rights fully. The community of faith and the political community can more effectively render this service for the good of all if each works better for wholesome mutual cooperation in a way suitable to the circumstances of time and place.

Pentecostals also understand that the community of faith has the right to the legal recognition of her proper identity, precisely because its mission embraces all of human reality. The church is truly and intimately linked with humanity and its history.⁶⁶ The community of faith claims the freedom to express its moral judgment on this reality, whenever it may be required to defend the fundamental rights of the person or for the salvation of souls.

The community of faith is now looking for freedom of expression, teaching and evangelisation; freedom of public worship; freedom of organisation and of its own internal government; freedom of selecting, educating, naming and transferring its ministers; freedom for constructing religious buildings; freedom to acquire and possess sufficient goods for its activities; and freedom to form associations not only for religious purposes but also for educational, cultural, health care and missional purpose.

Conclusion

This study initiated a discussion that may raise questions concerning the participation of Pentecostals in social concerns and the political arena. It may as well generate further studies among them over the concept of public service and the value of democracy. This dialogue between the Pentecostal and the RCC theology of public service is intended to generate reflection over non-traditional fields that obviously affect both streams – In Latin America, both Pentecostals and Catholics coexist with different theological views and attitudes toward gospel and culture. Even in the case of contradicting arguments it is always healthy to understand what the other think on common issues that are part of the same world.

The discussion focused on matters that are uncommon in the Pentecostal discourse of mission, gospel and social service. I purposely left aside those issues of common knowledge and worked intentionally on those, which may seem rather controversial. Hence, this study is intended to contribute to the Pentecostal presentation of the gospel and its approach to mission,

⁶⁶ See, for instance, C. Alvarez, *Pentecostalismo y liberación. Una experiencia latinoamericana* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1992), 24.

social service and political participation. Such contribution could be done by studying issues that may be difficult to grasp, but cannot be left aside for being controversial in nature. Responsible scholarship is now engaging these matters with a great deal of responsibility. This attitude helps Pentecostals to extend their scope of ministry efficiently.



COULD ANTHROPOLOGY CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE OF SWEDISH PENTECOSTALISM?

Jan-Åke Alvarsson

The question that prompted the present article was: Could church leaders learn anything from cultural anthropology that could help them meet the future? A tentative response, based on the situation in the Swedish Pentecostal movement is found below. The hypothetical contribution to a discussion surveys some areas where this movement and possibly other similar churches could profit from cultural anthropology.

Background

It is fairly well-known that Sweden's link to the incipient Azusa Street movement is early and strong. The Swedish participant of the pre-Azusa (North Bonnie Brae) prayer meetings, and 'official' Azusa Street missionary, Andrew G. Johnson left Los Angeles in July 1906 as part of the denoted 'Palestine Missionary Band'¹ and started preaching the Pentecostal message in Sweden as early as November 1906. Through an incessant flying ministry, Johnson and his disciples² spread the Pentecostal message to most parts of Sweden within a short time.

When Norwegian theologian Nils Bloch-Hoell in 1956, i.e. half-a-century later, wrote his 458 pages long classic on Pentecostalism of his days, *Pinsebevegelsen* (or 'The Pentecostal Movement'), he claimed, 'Sweden stands as the most pentecostalised country in the world. Almost 13 per mille [i.e., 13 per thousand, or 1.3%] of the Swedish population are p-friends' [read: Pentecostals].³

Sweden was thus off to a good start as the leading Pentecostal country in the world. Swedes Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren, for example, started the Assambleia de Deus in Brazil, today the country's largest Pentecostal

¹ *The Apostolic Faith* 2 (1906), 1, 4.

² Among these we find Carl Widmark, later the pastor of the Motala Verkstad pentecostal Church, and a series of 'Ongman Sisters', among them Gerda Åström 'the Apostle of the North'.

³ Nils Bloch-Hoell, *Pinsebevegelsen: en undersøkelse av pinsebevegelsens tilblivelse, utvikling og særpreg med særlig henblikk på bevegelsens utforming i Norge* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1956), 289.

denomination with some 15 million members. Similar stories were told from other countries.

For around six decades, the trend of growth seemed to hold water. But in the 1970s, something happened. In Sweden, classical Pentecostalism dwindled rapidly. From 1987, when it had 100,647 members, it dropped to a mere 86,669 in 2005. During the same period, world figures for Pentecostal and Charismatic movements skyrocketed: from some 250 million members in 1987 to some 580 million in 2005.⁴ These figures indicate that Pentecostalism worldwide more than doubled its figures, while Swedish Pentecostalism all of a sudden lost around 14% of its members. Why is this so? How does Sweden, once the leading Pentecostal country in the world, differ from the rest of the globe? And can cultural anthropology help understanding this difference?

Theologians and Pentecostal Studies

In the history of global Pentecostal studies, it has been noted frequently that theologians have had particular problems with the field of Pentecostalism. First, many of them have had an attitude problem. Pentecostalism has been classified as something temporary ('It will soon disappear'); sub-standard (illiterate, African American or working class members and leaders); and poorly organized (no written confessions, no church creeds or doctrines, no single representative – no archbishop).

Secondly, theological methods have been inadequate. These have been developed for the study of 'book religions' with official documents and a fairly fixed church tradition. Pentecostalism in its vast variety has in no way fitted into that scheme. It has actually escaped the approach of most theologians.

Harvey Cox, the Harvard theologian, described his grappling with Pentecostalism in the following way:

As a theologian I had grown accustomed to studying religious movements by reading what their theologians wrote and trying to grasp their central ideas and most salient doctrines. But I soon found out that with pentecostalism this approach does not help much. As one Pentecostal scholar puts it, in his faith 'the experience of God has absolute primacy over dogma and doctrine'. Therefore the only theology that can give an account of this experience, he says, is 'a narrative theology whose central expression is testimony'. I think that he is right...the experience is so total it shatters the cognitive packaging.⁵

Now, what did Cox do to solve his problem with an antiquated or maladjusted method? In my interpretation, he turned anthropologist. Or, at least, he started using anthropological method. In his own words:

⁴ These figures are all estimates and should be taken with great caution.

⁵ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2005), 70-71.

So I decided to let myself go, to take the plunge and bob along.... It was a satisfying change. I quickly found that my new attitude allowed me to follow the spectacular spread of pentecostalism better than either credulity or skepticism could.⁶

Now, what did this method consist of? Cox explains it in the following way: 'I decided to find out what I could about Pentecostals, not just by reading about them but by visiting their churches wherever I could and by talking with both their ministers and with ordinary members'.⁷ According to the cover of the book, he 'travelled the world to speak and worship with Pentecostal congregations on four continents'.⁸

This is classical cultural anthropological method: fieldwork or field visits, including participant observation and interviews at the grass-roots level.

Contributions from Sociologist and Anthropologists to Pentecostal Studies

If we look at well-known studies of international Pentecostalism, a surprisingly high number of these were produced by sociologists or anthropologists. David Martin's books on Pentecostalism in Latin America from 1990 and 2002 are perhaps some of the most well-known. But there are many others. Anthropologist Elisabeth Brusco's study of why women choose Pentecostalism in Colombia, *The Reformation of Machismo*,⁹ has been widely cited. Elmer S. Miller's study of Amerindian or indigenous Pentecostalism in Argentina has complicated and renewed the study of religious encounters.¹⁰ Birgit Meyer's different works on the Pentecostalism of Ghana, Rijk van Dijk's and André Droogers' contributions to our understanding of Pentecostalism in Malawi, the Congo, and other African countries have been of utmost importance for understanding the African experience of the twenty-first century.¹¹

⁶ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 70.

⁷ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, xv-xvi (with my emphases).

⁸ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, cover. Copyrighted Material

⁹ Elisabeth Brusco, *The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

¹⁰ See e.g., Elmer S. Miller, 'Shamans, Power Symbols, and Change in Argentine Toba Culture', *American Ethnologist* 2:3 (1975), 477-96, and 'Pentecostalist Contributions to the Proletarianization of the Argentine Toba', in Jean Barstow (ed.), *Culture and Ideology: Anthropological Perspectives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 58-72.

¹¹ See for example Birgit Meyer, 'Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse', in Richard Werbner (ed.), *Memory and the Post-Colony: African Anthropology and the Critique of Power* (London: Zed Books, 1998), 316-49.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes' book *'If It Wasn't for the Women...': Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community*, has taught us a great deal about African American Pentecostalism. Elaine J. Lawless' two books on Anglo-American Pentecostal women: *God's Peculiar People and Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* have complemented this picture and have been of great importance both to Pentecostal and to Women's studies. Even small articles, like those of Salvatore Cucchiari, in 1988 and 1990, about Pentecostal women in Sicily, or Lesley Gill about their sisters in La Paz, in 1990, have had a strong impact. Bernice Martin might fit well into this company with her studies of postmodernity and the gender issue.¹²

For the attentive reader, a first conclusion on anthropological and sociological contributions on Pentecostalism, is, I am most certain, already taking form. A reasonable gender balance was not something that was preponderant only at the Azusa Street revival. Just like in Pentecostal congregations, women play an important part in the anthropology of Pentecostalism. And this is important, not only to feminists and for the western struggle for gender equality in academia, but much more so for the understanding of the very character of Pentecostalism.

Women play important parts in the generation and regeneration of Pentecostal creed and praxis, and these are undisputed facts. But how do we get at, and how do we describe these activities and processes. To do so, we need both men and women in the field. It is a hidden, but well acknowledged truth in cultural anthropology that men and women cannot

¹² See Townsend Gilkes, *'If It Wasn't for the Women...': Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001); Elaine J. Lawless, *God's Peculiar People: Women's Voices and Folk Tradition in a Pentecostal Church* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), and *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Salvatore Cucchiari, 'Adapted for Heaven: Conversion and Culture in Western Sicily', *American Ethnologist* 15:3 (August 1988), 417-41, and 'Between Shame and Sanctification: Patriarchy and Its Transformation in Sicilian Pentecostalism', *American Ethnologist* 17:4 (November 1990), 687-707; Lesley Gill, 'Like a Veil to Cover Them: Women and the Pentecostal Movement in La Paz', *American Ethnologist* 17:4 (November 1990), 708-21; Bernice Martin, 'From Pre- to Postmodernity in Latin America: the Case of Pentecostalism', in Heelas, Martin, and Morris (eds.), *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), and 'The Pentecostal Gender Paradox: A Cautionary Tale for the Sociology of Religion', in R.K. Fenn (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 52-66. For a more thorough and exhaustive treatment of anthropological contributions to the study of Pentecostalism, see the 2004 issue of *Annual Review of Anthropology* where Birgit Meyer ('Make a Complete Break with the Past') and Joel Robbins ('The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity', 117-43) provide us an impressive survey of what has been produced in this field up to date.

do the same things in the field – and they come home with different material; not necessarily contradictory material, but complementary. There are several good examples of couples in the field producing thorough and varied ethnography. In the field of Pentecostal Studies, Bernice and David Martin constitute a good example.

We mentioned above that Pentecostalism seems to be less about creeds and structures than other lines of denominations. We also concluded that if this is so, we need other methods to disclose the ethos of these movements. This very approach, I believe, requires a joint venture of men and women in the field and in the discussions in scholarly circles.

Anthropological Contributions to the Study of Swedish Pentecostalism

The anthropologist that has provided the major contribution to the study of Swedish Pentecostalism is Göran Johansson of Stockholm University. As the title indicates, his 1992 doctoral thesis, ‘More Blessed to Give: A Pentecostal Mission to Bolivia in Anthropological Perspective’, was more concentrated on Swedish Pentecostalism in exile. Nevertheless, it also provides us with important insights into the minds of Swedish Pentecostals in a natural, cross-cultural perspective.

Five years after his doctoral dissertation, in 1997, Johansson produced, in my view, his most important contribution to the understanding of Swedish Pentecostalism so far. I even consider it one of the best ethnographies on Sweden in general. *Too much of myself, too little of Jesus: The Treatment of Addicts in the Lewi Pethrus foundation seen in a social anthropological perspective*.¹³ This is a study of the transformative power of Pentecostalism for alcoholics and drug addicts. However, it is also a study of the character and content of ordinary Pentecostalism, at least as seen from the addicts’ point of view.

In 2005, Johansson published a retrospective study of the church of his childhood, The Pentecostal Congregation of Betania, called: *The era of the Latter Rain: Fragments and images from Betania, a Pentecostal congregation in and out of time*.¹⁴ The latter play with words indicates that the Betania Congregation once kept pace with time, but that it now has lost that; that it has been closed down for good. There is a subtle undertone in the title that fits well with the conclusions in the introduction, that Betania, just like the Pentecostal movement in general, was once right for Sweden, but that it is no longer so.

¹³ In Swedish it was called: *För mycke jag för lite Jesus: LP-stiftelsens vård av missbrukare sedd ur ett socialantropologiskt perspektiv* (Johansson 1997).

¹⁴ In Swedish it was called: *Särilaregnets tid: Fragment och bilder från Betania – Pingstförsamling i och ur tiden* (Johansson 2005).

Johansson presents a good historical anthropology, including statistics, ambitious lists of members and a great deal of detailed ethnography. He adds a dimension, however, that, in spite of all discussion of ‘reflexive anthropology’, is rarely used in the discipline, the use of one’s own memory. Johansson states that he critically examines his own memories, and concludes that the frequency and intensity of the recollections say something about their importance. Decisive or important events stay longer in one’s memory. Thus he uses himself as his own consultant, complemented with eleven interviews with old friends from the time, to tell us the story of what Betania was like, what it meant to the members, and what it did to people, including himself. He presents us with very little theology, but more philosophy than is usual in this type of studies.

Unfortunately, neither of these two works are available in English. Both would, most certainly, contribute substantially to the image of Pentecostalism in general, and to the comprehension of Swedish Pentecostalism in particular. They are unique in many ways.¹⁵

Pentecostalism as Culture, and as Counter-culture

In Swedish, the word ‘culture’ has two definitions (even though they are often mixed up): ‘the aesthetical concept of culture’ and ‘the anthropological concept of culture’. This shows that a more encompassing definition of culture is closely related to the discipline of anthropology. And, even though cultural anthropology holds no monopoly in using the word, the discipline keeps using it. In the present context, anthropology may contribute with ideas on Pentecostalism as culture, or even as counter-culture, including cultural change and cultural processes.

As we shall see below, my overall hypothesis is that Pentecostalism was a relevant cultural alternative to people, especially young people, in 1906, but that it is less relevant to the same category today, around a century later.

Pentecostalism in a Cultural Perspective in 1906

So, what issues can I, as an anthropologist, discern as ones that were important for the spread and success of Pentecostalism in Sweden in the early twentieth century?

¹⁵ A recent contribution using anthropological method is found in Jessica Moberg’s doctoral thesis *Piety, Intimacy and Mobility: A Case Study of Charismatic Christianity in Present-day Stockholm* (Stockholm: Södertörn Doctoral Dissertations, 2013) where she outlines several new trends in charismatic circles, e.g., as the title indicates, the strife for sanctification, the intimate atmosphere of churches and cell groups and the increasing mobility between congregations and churches in Sweden of today.

In 1906, when the Pentecostal fire reached Sweden, the country was in the midst of the largest relocation of its population in history. As late as in 1850, 90 % of the Swedish population lived in rural areas, most of them working in some type of agricultural activities. In 1906, the urban population had already tripled and the rapid increase continued for decades. Industrialization was so swift in Sweden that historian Sten Carlsson claims that it has 'few international parallels'. From 1850 to 1960, the Swedish urban population grew from 400,000 people to 5.5 million.¹⁶ And this relocation phase and urban growth coincided with the spread and the growth of Pentecostalism in Sweden.

When people left the countryside, their families and homes, for an uncertain future in the city, they also left other things behind. They left their circle of friends, their village community, local traditions, their regional state church, as well as creeds and lore behind. When they arrived in the city they were homeless, not only in the sense of lacking a bed or a place to stay. They had been socially and culturally uprooted. In the city they encountered popular movements, a Swedish phenomenon almost without parallel in the world: temperance leagues, sports movements, free masons, working class movements, unions, and free churches. The latter were not allowed until 1858 as they were seen as revolutionary forces, threatening the establishment. Prohibition just attracted the uprooted young and the free churches grew rapidly. Historian Sven Lundkvist characterized them as 'a tidal wave' that swept over Sweden and transformed it.¹⁷

When Pentecostalism arrived on the scene the 'high season' of the popular movements was already over. But the 'New movement' as it was called in the beginning, actually brought something new on to the Swedish ecclesiastic scene. As an anthropologist I would call it a new cultural mix or possibly a cultural incursion.

The cultural mediator, Andrew G. Johnson, had no free church experience before he emigrated to the United States. He became a 'born-again' Christian in California in 1904 and when he returned to Sweden as an Azusa Street missionary in 1906, he was strongly influenced by the people he had worked with, and shared spiritual experiences with, among them his 'dear brother Seymour'. As stated above, Johnson shared the experiences of the pre-Azusa Street revival, at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street where most participants were African Americans.¹⁸ According to his testimony, he experienced his Baptism in the Holy Spirit during this period. Thus, most of his Christian experiences had a distinct African American touch to them.

¹⁶ Sten Carlsson, 'Befolkningsutvecklingen från 1800-talets mitt', *Den svenska historien* 13 (1980), 28.

¹⁷ Sven Lundkvist, 'Väckelse och frikyrklighet', *Den svenska historien* 13 (1980), 80.

¹⁸ Andrew Johnson-Ek, *Då elden föll – Av ett ögonvittne* (Mariestad: Eget förlag, 1933), 4-5.

As we noted above, the new movement came to Sweden when the Azusa Street revival was still very young and obviously less influenced by the cross-cultural and ecumenical contacts that followed. The Pentecostalism that Johnson brought to Sweden was thus an almost entirely African American version of Christianity. This was most upsetting to the gatekeepers of the time. Efraim Briem, church historian of the University of Lund, concluded the following on this cultural incursion:

Much of this extremely emotive and often repulsive outward behavior because of lack of control and discipline is probably, especially during the first period of Pentecostalism in America, bound up with the strong component of Negro elements. The blacks, with their intensely full-fledged emotional life have left their mark on many of the meetings.¹⁹

A number of Swedes thought differently, however. In Skövde, the birthplace of Andrew G. Johnson, there was 'a group in the Baptist congregation, characterized by prayer and yearning'.²⁰ These people, most of them young, wanted something different, and what Johnson brought seemed most attractive. To them it opened up a new spiritual dimension, and offered a change in comparison with the dull, Swedish church life they had experienced so far.²¹

The attractiveness of Pentecostalism in the early 1900s was most certainly associated with the on-going urbanisation of Sweden. One aspect may very well have been the difference in the attitude towards women. While many of the Evangelical churches, with the exception of the Salvation Army, were fairly reluctant to let women play a leading role in church, John Ongman and the Azusa Street missionaries had no such scruples. The early Swedish Pentecostal movement were open to women, and the women responded. The evangelists trained and sent out by John Ongman in Örebro seem to have been mostly women. The very phenomenon resulted in a lexical term, *Ongmansysterna* ('the Ongman sisters'). As regards woman members, out of the first 1,000 members of the Pentecostal Filadelfia Church in Stockholm, 762 were women. In this respect, Pentecostalism kept in step with time.

Something else that attracted the young was the particular type of spirituality that the new movement represented. While the Lutheran church, and most other free churches, were very orderly, quiet and closed, the new

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¹⁹ Efraim Briem, *Den moderna pingströrelsen* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1924), 47.

²⁰ Johnson-Ek, *Då elden föll*, 12.

²¹ There are a number of parallels with the other major incursion of African American cultural expression into Swedish culture, i.e. jazz. Jazz music attracted *middle class* youth, which thought that their musical environment was dull, while Pentecostalism in the main attracted *working class* youth, that thought their church environment was dull. Thus the two cultural currents actually never crossed paths until Pentecostalism became domesticated and its adherents middle class in the 1970s. Today jazz music is one of the music genres accepted by Pentecostals.

Pentecostal wave left ample space for emotions, for rhythmic songs, fiery preaching and even, like some authors such as P.O. Enquist,²² claim pseudo-erotic feelings. Note that out of the 762 women, mentioned above, 716 of those were unmarried. It is hard to imagine a service with that amount of single women that does not attain a unique atmosphere.

One can add an active African American ‘call-and-response’ pattern to this; something that made the service lively and noisy. If we consider a vast majority of women, active in support of the preacher in sermons, and helping each other in loud prayer, and we have a picture of what a service could be like in 1907, 1917 or 1927. If we add the ingredient of lively music it is most comprehensible why Pentecostalism constituted a choice for many young and middle aged Swedes at the time.

Once the contact was established, there was more to keep the visitor in church. This was the era of the popular movements. This was the time when authorities were questioned and the establishment was regarded with suspicion. This spilled over, also to the Lutheran church. While many churchgoers had had a personal and most rewarding relationship with their local Lutheran priest, urbanization placed new demands on the church as establishment. The Lutherans were not able to keep in step with the changes. Their monumental churches were built in the countryside and it took a long time before they had built new churches in the new urban areas. Furthermore, people thought that the leading bishops far too often sided with the rich and the mighty. For many poor, young people, the established churches did not answer to their needs.

The form of the services reinforced the distance. While the Lutheran church at the time had the priest in a pulpit over the head of the listeners and very little of active involvement by the ordinary members, the free churches constituted the opposite. There, the members were the ones, not only singing in unison, but active in string orchestras, solos, prayers and, not the least, testimonies. Regular sermons among the Pentecostals were often narrative, based on stories from the Old or the New Testament. When the time came for testimonies, these were of course sheer narration. Together they epitomized ‘narrative theology’.

Furthermore, Pentecostal spirituality opened up for a personal God. In general the divine was mediated by a relation to ‘Jesus’. Pentecostals prayed to Jesus, blessed in his name, sang about him, and mentioned him in everyday conversations. His name was ever present. This was what theologians have come to call the ‘Christocentrism’ of Pentecostalism.

God was no longer distant. He did not have to be addressed indirectly, through a priest. In the *new* movement, you were able to handle all that by yourself. You were actually a protagonist, and Jesus was your helping brother. Most of this they had in common with the other free churches. But Pentecostals went further than that. They identified closely with the Bible,

²² Per Olov Enquist, *Lewis resa. Roman* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 2001).

not the least the leading figures of Old Testament. Brother Moses and Brother David had made it across the Atlantic, once again. Genesis, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Psalms were favourite scriptures of the New Movement.

There is another thrilling observation here. In Sweden at the time, there was a clash between traditional, amodernist epistemology, represented by the peasants in general, and the Saami, and the Romani in particular, and the increasingly influential modernism, that is 'rationalism' in academic circles, that in the early twentieth century increasingly became the norm for the middle and the upper classes. 'Rational thinking' and 'progress' were intimately linked for the latter categories.

To the former categories, the peasants of the countryside, the maids, assistants and servants of the cities, as well as many of the workers in the recently established industries rationalism was a non-issue. Except for the workers who had been exposed to modernist teachings in, for example the Unions or the Communist parties, most of them clung to what they had always believed. When Pentecostalism arrived on the scene, the combination of African American and Hebrew, amodernist epistemology was just a step away. In practice, it was much more promising than the sober, modernist theologies of the mainline churches.

In addition, Pentecostalism brought a very practical 'method' for encountering the divine. The gifts of the Spirit were thought to be given to the believer in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, this type of baptism was much recommended and almost compulsory for anyone opting to be a Pentecostal. Beside the obvious disadvantages of this rite of passage for people who had problems to let go of their control, there were undeniable advantages. Through the laying on of hands, the collective prayers and intercession, the believer was led into spiritual experiences that somehow brought down the divine. The atmosphere of these services was often described as 'heavenly'.

I will limit myself to one example. The following account is from an early Pentecostal meeting in Torghallen, Gothenburg in 1907, the congregation led by Azusa Street missionary Andrew G. Johnson, at the time visited by his friend from Azusa, Eric Hollingsworth. In *The Apostolic Faith*, No 9, Johnson reports that: 'I have Bro. Eric Hollingsworth and his wife here with me now in this city, and hope we shall have a house like Azusa Mission'. This is an eyewitness account of what took place in Torghallen:

There were meetings every night. What wonderful meetings! There were songs, prayer, testimonies, tongue speaking and interpretation, prophecy and song in the Spirit. When one entered the premises, there was such a heavenly atmosphere, that one immediately sank down in adoration before God, who seemed to be so dearly close.

And what desire for God that was born! Everyone who wanted more from God gathered up at the platform after each meeting. People prayed and stormed the throne of grace. More and more were able to experience the streams of blessing, and from those who had not yet experienced anything,

there was prayer, sometimes like real cries of distress, that, however, were transformed into shouts of thanksgiving, for the blood and for redemption. Finally the heart was filled with praise and joy, that grew into tongue-speaking and prophesy. Almost all interpretation of tongues and prophesy resulted in this: Jesus will return soon!²³

Now, if we add a final dimension, solidarity with the poor and outcast, to the set of characteristics presented above, the picture becomes fairly clear. Together with the Swedish branch of the international Salvation Army, early Pentecostalism was the most socially concerned movement in Sweden at the time. In many of the cities Pentecostals distributed food packages for poor families, shelter for the night for the homeless, soup for the hungry, and even employment agencies for the unemployed.

At the time, Pentecostalism seems to have been a relevant answer to the needs of people on the street. Even though the establishment was negative, and university professors like Efraim Briem and Emanuel Linderholm wrote entire books to warn the church and other authorities about them, people gathered in the hundreds and later in the thousands to take part in what Pentecostalism had to offer.

Pentecostalism in a Cultural Perspective in the Twenty-first Century

If we shift focus from the early twentieth century to the early twenty-first century, the question arises: Is Swedish Pentecostalism still relevant? And the answer would be a 'yes', if we limit our discussion to the people who gather in Pentecostal churches all over Sweden every Sunday. The follow up question is harder to answer: Is it relevant to the people in the street anymore? The answer is far from obvious. Let me use a personal illustration.

When my father, at the time an incipient Pentecostal pastor, in the early 1940s went to Bible school in Stockholm, he stayed at *Arken* ('the Ark'), a floating hostel normally used as a shelter for the homeless. One night as he walked from the church to the hostel, carrying his obligatory fiddle, he was approached by a man that looked like a bum. He asked my father: 'Are you one of Lewi Pethrus's gang?'²⁴

I doubt that anyone with a fiddle in today's downtown Stockholm would be associated with a Pentecostal. My guess would be that to most strollers that label is totally alien; and if they would be able to identify it, they would be indifferent or negative to the content. Spirituality in general is the topic of the town, perhaps even more so today than one hundred years ago. The postmodern Swede may believe in angels, the power of stones, dream catchers, reincarnation, and that there is 'Something out there'. But

²³ Anonymous in Arnold Göransson, et al., *Smyrna på väg: 1922-1982, Bilderna berättar* (Göteborg: AB Smyrnaförlaget, 1982), 3.

²⁴ Lewi Pethrus was the first pastor of the Stockholm Filadelfia Church and the unofficial leader of the Pentecostal movement for decades.

Christianity seems to be of little attraction to the average Swede. The situation is so alarming, according to recently converted journalist Elisabeth Sandlund, that she calls for a 're-Christianization' of Sweden.

And while Pentecostalism stood out as a radical alternative in 1906, the situation a century later is rather the opposite. Pentecostal churches differ very little from other mainline churches. In small towns they frequently even merge with congregations from other denominations, an inconceivable act even thirty years ago. Their theology has been evangelicalised, their sermons have become less dramatic, their testimonies have ceased, their social engagement has declined and today it is very hard to distinguish a Pentecostal from a member of the Covenant Church or even the Lutheran Church.

Now, analysing the cultural situation of Sweden today, what would make the Pentecostal churches stand out again? Is there anything inherent in traditional or global Pentecostalism that would make them attractive anew to a Swede?

In the following I have taken an anthropological view of Swedish society in the early twenty-first century, and singled out six issues where I can see a need in Swedish society and where Pentecostalism in a broad sense could have something to offer.

Environmental Issues

In 1906, the topic of the day in cities like Uppsala and Stockholm was 'work'. A great number of Swedes were unemployed, and Pentecostals cared. As we have seen above, they set aside time and money to help people financially, even assisted them in finding employment. Today, the talk of the town is about environmental issues. Young people worry about climatic change. They discuss how to stop pollution, the deterioration of the ozone layer, and the like. They try out as vegans, as members of societies for the protection of animals, or even enter the Animal Liberation Front. A definition of the ALF in the international Wikipedia includes the following:

The *Animal Liberation Front* (ALF) is a name used internationally by those who oppose capitalizing on the destruction and experimentation of animals. This includes stealing animals from laboratories or fur farms, and destroying facilities involved in animal testing and other animal-based industries that support the jobs and welfare of thousands of innocent people. According to ALF statements, any direct action that furthers the cause of animal liberation, where all reasonable precautions are taken to endanger life, may be claimed as an ALF action. Osama Bin Laden is perhaps the most notable member of the ALF.²⁵

Osama Bin Laden was thus a notable member. But how many Pentecostals have been involved in stopping experiments on animals? In

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Liberation_Front, September 10, 2007

Swedish Pentecostalism, I know of no attempts at all. The people who read the words of Gen. 1:28 literally, about man having ‘dominion’ over ‘every living thing that moveth upon the earth’, seem to lack all interest in environmental issues. When one enters the café of the Filadelfia Pentecostal Church in Stockholm there are still, as far as I know, no examples of dishes suitable for vegans.

Both the local Lutheran church and the Covenant church have solidarity shops where they sell Fair Trade products from the Third world. Not so the Pentecostal church. The last book store they had sold books, records, icons and candlesticks but no solidarity products.²⁶ Today, Pentecostal culture seems to reflect middle class values and consumerism, often questioned by the young, rather than what the radical young are looking for.

If this environmental engagement is a reaction against individualism, if it is a result of alienation from domestic animals in the peasant society, if it is a fear of destruction of the human habitat, or if it is mostly nostalgia, does not matter much in this case. What is important is that this is the topic of the day, and today’s Pentecostals are not active.

Individualism

In the old Swedish peasant society, no one was involuntarily alone. Somebody was always at home. Several generations lived in the same house and this guaranteed that children and young people always had someone to talk to. With urbanization this changed considerably. Among working class people, both husband and wife had to work to survive. Grandparents were no longer around. Children were left alone.

A new concept entered the Swedish language, *nyckelbarn* (‘latch-key children’), children on their own, with keys around their necks. This roughly coincided with the development of a ‘teen age culture’ with clothes, lore and music that distinguished the young from the previous generation. Somewhat later, some people talked about the ‘Mods’, the ‘Hippie generation’, and later ‘punk’, ‘skate’, ‘techno’, and finally the ‘X’ and ‘Y’ generations.

In due course, individualism has been reinforced by social politics. In official Sweden, children are supposed to be separated from their parents at approximately one year of age. There are day care centres to take care of children of more than one year of age. Later on, they are transferred to kindergartens, schools and leisure centres. In a brochure for children’s leisure centres, edited by the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare, it says that these shall ‘support the children in their liberation from a too intimate dependence on grown-ups’. A couple of years ago, the leading leftist

²⁶ There are still Pentecostal bookshops in Sweden, but they are privately owned, e.g. the one in the city of Jönköping, ‘Nya Musik’. However, the merchandise offered is the same.

politician, Gudrun Schyman, even called for the abolition of the family as the basic social unity in the country. 'Death to the nuclear family!' she cried out.

Of course, these are political statements. When psychologists and psychiatrists present their view of the matter, they come up with a less politically correct one. 'The needs of security of Swedish children are not satisfied' one psychologist said. He claimed that we can see the results in an increased rate of psychological problems, especially notable among young women.

This situation has been aggravated by an increasing narcissism, propagated by magazines and television programs. Almost all Western European magazines and papers are full of these slogans and keywords: 'Go for yourself!' and 'self-fulfilment', 'the most recent slimming diet', 'plastic surgery', 'breast implants' and the like. In the wake of this propaganda, we find increased divorce rates and single life.

Stockholm probably holds a most questionable world record in single life. The latest statistics, presented in 2006, showed that in more than 60% of the apartments and houses in Stockholm there is only one person! This indicates that Sweden may be one of the socially poorest countries in the world. In fact loneliness, isolation and depression for a long time has been considered a national pathological problem. The accompanying problem of drug abuse is too obvious to even mention.

Now what did Pentecostals do about this in the old days – and what do they do now? In early Swedish Pentecostalism the church premises were open almost every night of the week. If the maidens and assistants of the Filadelfia Church of Stockholm had any leisure time they could always go to church, to help out, to sing, to participate, to socialize or just to relax while others were practicing songs or preparing one of the many food parties. Furthermore there were several children's meetings each week, summer camps and holiday excursions. Most Pentecostal congregations had their own 'summer houses' or vacation camps.

Up until 1985, activities grew rapidly in frequency and numbers. The fairly unstable statistics that we get from the Pentecostal movement shows that in 1975, the number of activities oriented towards children and young people had reached 15,427 per year. Only ten years later, the officially registered activities had grown to 85,243. Then something happened. The congregations lost momentum, or, perhaps, contact with the surrounding society. At least the numbers dropped rapidly. In a decade, from 1985 to 1995, the number of activities dwindled from 85,243 to 47,186.²⁷ Some reports speak about losses of around 75% of all children.

This decline did not take place when the television sets entered the homes on a massive scale in the 1960s. It happened when the

²⁷ See Curt Karlsson, 'Söndagsskola redan under pionjärtiden', in Claes Waern, et al. (eds.), *Pingströrelsen*, part 2 (Örebro: Libris, 2007), 130.

individualized computer games conquered Western Europe. As regards the former, and potentially new, Pentecostal youth leaders, they were probably influenced by other types of individualism hinted at above. The result is alarming not because the Pentecostal congregations became smaller, but because when children and young people in Sweden seem to have needed them the most, they simply were not there.

So how could churches answer to the needs in present day Swedish society? The big challenge, as I see it, is in no way theological. It is cultural. It definitely has theological roots that need to be re-examined and revived, but the decisive element is life style. Pentecostal pioneer Andrew G. Johnson had a principle, all through his life. If there was a person he did not know, or even if he had not seen a person for a long time, he would always invite that person to his humble home to share some food.

Open homes, for children or for grown-ups, are becoming more and more scarce. People do not 'have the time'. And what others need to feel well according to the psychologists is not entertainment but quality time, including social concern. Swedish Pentecostalism needs to break with the current trend of consumerism and individualism by lending their time, hearts, and laps to children. And some people have seen this for a long time. Youth leader Inger Edén said this more than two decades ago:

What children bring along from their childhood is not all the words we have uttered, but what they have experienced. Therefore, it is important that the Christian context offers joy, safety, warmth, and the feeling that they are important individuals.²⁸

Fragmentation

Something that characterizes modern life in general is the fact that it is divided into more, but smaller entities; it is fragmented. This characteristic may be observed in anything from watching television to meals. In the 1960s there was only one single TV channel in Sweden and people watched the same program. Some even started when the programs begun at 6 pm, and switched off when the last one ended at 11 pm. Any special feature was the talk of the town the day after.²⁹

Almost half a century later, there are hundreds of channels available all day long. No two people watch exactly the same mix of programs. Furthermore people zap or switch between programs whenever there is a decline. In doing so, the night can be filled with continuous action, music, or romance, whatever wanted. Constant engagement is a way of moderating or subduing anxiety, depression or even compassion.

Fragmentation is most obvious also when it comes to eating habits. In the old farming society, the stereotype was that the whole, extended family

²⁸ *Evangelii Härold* 1985/24:8–9, 19.

²⁹ Furthermore, Wednesdays were 'TV-free' – no programs on television.

had meals together. That was when information was given, or, as was often the case in old Sweden, a silent fellowship was shared. Today family members communicate through bits of paper on the refrigerator like: 'Don't forget you ice hockey game at 4 pm' or 'Make sure to bring back the guitar, Anna needs it tomorrow!' or 'Dinner is in the freezer. 3.5 minutes in the micro!'

I think that the US was the first country to invent the concept of 'fridge-eating', but it has now spread to a good part of Europe and Sweden. The parents eat lunch at work, or at a nearby lunch restaurant. The children eat lunch with their school mates at the school canteen. Breakfast, often a plate of yoghurt or sour milk, is consumed individually, just before leaving home. A night meal is eaten from the fridge or while watching television. Nowadays, each child often owns her or his own TV set; thus, there are no natural meeting places at home, except for holidays or maybe birthdays.

Dieticians claim that fridge eating and fast food are dangerous to a person's health. We can easily add that it is also a serious threat to the psychological health of a person. During certain phases of a person's development there is an acute need of social interaction. For some children, such opportunities may be decisive for the future well-being of that person.

What can Pentecostals do to remedy this situation somewhat? Well, some activities may have to be full of action to attract the young, but I believe that the church also must dare to represent a counter-culture. A holistic theology must be complemented by a holistic world-view where safety, continuity, and accessibility are important components. If this is to be realized, the church cannot be closed six days a week. Then it must be open, with people around, but not necessarily having activities all the time. Children and young people need to talk, and they need to listen. Thus the age composition of the average church makes it ideal for cross-generational encounters. A free lap, a silent place, a 'Tarrying room' like at Azusa Street, are all components that may help improve the health of the new generations.

Subjectivism

A close relative of individualism and narcissism is subjectivism. The idea is of course that everything is centered on the ego. The person decides for herself or himself what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. The Beatles once epitomized it, scanning 'I, me, me, mine!'

In the area of human relations, and especially sexuality, the trend is obvious: 'If it does not hurt anyone, it is okay!' 'Anything goes...'. Up until now, Swedish society has put a definite stop only at paedophilia. The trend is strong, however, that if the paedophiles somehow can find a way to prove consent from the children involved, there may soon be a type of paedophilia that is accepted by society.

In a paper called ‘Stockholmsliv’, which caused a heated debate some years ago, Lutheran priest Niklas Olaisson presented a personal interpretation of Mt. 8:5 ff. He pointed to the possibility of a ‘pederast relationship’ between the centurion and his servant. What was more surprising, however, was that he went on saying that: ‘When Jesus heals the boy, he implicitly confirms the relation between the man and the boy’. Pentecostal leader Sten-Gunnar Hedin claimed that this was an attempt to theologize and ‘legitimize’ pedophilia (*Dagen* September 11, 2007).

Here, the trend is on an obvious collision course with classical Christianity. In the teachings of Jesus there is nothing like relativist values. The strong side of Christianity in general, and Pentecostalism in particular, has been the radical stand against blur or confusion. There is a true position. There *is* a connection. There is a ‘grand narrative’.

Subjectivism has a side that is hard to get at. The person will say: ‘It may not be right for you, but it is for me!’ or ‘It feels right! Thus, it cannot be wrong’. Here, Pentecostalism has an advantage over many other Christian churches. It convinces not ‘with enticing words of man’s wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ (1 Cor. 2:4). If the subjectivist person loses a logical debate, it means little. But if he or she is overwhelmed by spiritual power, a sense of defeat or of guilt, that makes a difference.

If they want to make a difference, Pentecostal preachers must switch back from the focus on coherent, encouraging preaching to spiritually more persuasive activities: the grand narrative as reflected in stories. They must also work for the return of testimonies, and the striking spiritual dimension as in prophesy. The listener has to be made aware of the fact that he or she belongs in the bigger picture.

Empiricism

Something that at times is hard to distinguish from relativism is empiricism. This is a form of anti-intellectualism, and ironically even, at times, a form of anti-consumerism. Young people of today care little about their bank accounts, but more about ‘been there – done that’, i.e., experiences from traveling, hiking, climbing mountains, diving, etc. This is nothing new; there is an old German saying, claiming that ‘Wenn jemand eine Reise tut, So kann er was erzählen’ (roughly ‘When someone has made a journey, he has something to tell’). What is new is that experience in the post-modern society is placed against convention, against science, against the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare, and the like.

In the religious area, we can see this trend in the hunger for spiritual experiences from Zen to Taizé, in retreats and pilgrimage. The latter seems to have returned to Sweden for good after 500 years in exile. Here, Pentecostalism has an almost forgotten card to play: the continuous struggle for a concrete goal: baptism in the Holy Spirit, followed by the

strenuous path of sanctification. Activities mentioned by Johansson in his book on Betania, rarely mentioned in Pentecostal circles today, are ‘prayer rallies’ and ‘prayer nights’.

Internationally, this is the area where Pentecostalism is the champion. Leaders from the Swedish movement should visit their colleagues in Latin America or Africa to see how Pentecostal emotionalism can top empiricism. Or, maybe they could do, like the elders of the Uppsala Pentecostal church did in 2007, invite an African to lead these activities in church.

If any church could match subjectivism and empiricism it ought to be the Pentecostal movement! But in that case it would have to search its historical roots, and to consult its sister churches in other parts of the world, *not* Evangelical handbooks on church planting or secular books on business management.

Integration and Cultures of Guilt and Shame

Sweden is almost an entirely different nation today, compared to what it was in 1906. In the early 1900s, there were almost no immigrants at all, just emigrants. (Sweden lost around 20% of its population just to the U.S. from 1840 to 1920).³⁰ Today, Sweden is one of the most international countries in the world. Just a quick stroll in downtown Uppsala or Stockholm will convince the beholder. In Sweden every immigrant child has at least a theoretical right to receive instruction in his or her own mother tongue. When the Stockholm suburb of Botkyrka, a couple of years ago, registered how many different languages that were taught in this suburb alone, they ended up with 108 languages!

Immigration has forever changed Sweden and the Swedes. Nationalist parties with racist undertones have attracted but a few. Nevertheless, multiculturalism is in Sweden to stay. Integration is harder, however. Immigrants have a hard time becoming Swedes, and being regarded as ‘nationals’.

Foreign impulses have changed Swedish culture. Cooking is an obvious area. ‘Pizza’ is not an Italian word anymore. It is Swedish. It is lexicalized and holds a full semantic field, unique to Swedish. Another area, harder to observe, however, is the transition from a typical guilt culture to an increasingly shame-oriented culture. This became fairly apparent a couple of years ago, when one of the ministers of the Swedish government was accused of an offence. First, he blatantly denied the whole thing. Then, when evidence was presented, he did what in Swedish became known as ‘to do a whole poodle’, i.e., he reacted as a dog that has been discovered doing something he should not do, ‘crawling in the dirt’.

³⁰ Sten Carlsson, ‘Den stora folkvandringen västerut’, *Den svenska historien* 13 (1980), 34.

In a number of interviews and conversations that I have had with young students, the whole idea of ‘guilt’ seems to have vanished, and has successively been replaced by a concept of ‘shame’. Whether this is a result of integration or of some other changes in Swedish society, is hard to say. What we can conclude is that ‘the culture of shame’ today exists not only among immigrants, but also among many Swedes, maybe the majority of the young generation.

Swedish Pentecostal preaching has taken the concepts of ‘sin’ and ‘guilt’ for granted. However, this is no longer possible. The approach must change if it is to be relevant, just as Paul changed his message from the synagogue in e.g. Thessalonika where he ‘reasoned’ with the Jews (Acts 17) to the situation in Corinth where he led a ‘demonstration of the Spirit and of power’ (1 Cor. 2:2-5). The tendency to ‘evangelicalise’ Pentecostal preaching is to retreat from Swedish reality and to betray the needs of the young generation. Again, Pentecostal preachers should travel abroad to learn. I have seen many preachers, for instance in Latin America, who have handled this situation with great skill.

As regards integration, Swedish civil society would need people who are willing to give their time and effort to reach across ethnic and linguistic barriers. For those who venture into that area, there are most certainly rewards awaiting. Andrew Johnson-Ek’s old recipe of hospitality is still valid. There are age old precedents to that in the Bible, e.g. Leviticus 25:23 about ‘strangers and sojourners’, Acts 2:42; Romans 12:15, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Timothy 3:2, and 1 Peter 4:9 and there is little doubt left about the Christian approach to sojourners.

Concluding Remark

As we have seen, an anthropological approach to the future of Pentecostalism in Sweden is of little use if the national Pentecostal Movement just wants an encouraging pat on the back. It provides little support for the success of the present course. If, however, the movement would be interested in changing, cultural anthropology might be of some help.

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND MINISTERIAL FORMATION

Teresa Chai

Introduction

I can remember being told as a Bible school student, by the preacher for a Spiritual Emphasis Week chapel service, to ‘park your brains outside and just come in empty to be filled by the Spirit of God’. I knew then that this was not possible as I worshipped God in spirit and in truth with my whole being. The *Shema Yisrael* followed by the *W’ahav’ta* is a call to God’s people to love the Lord with all a person’s heart, mind, and strength. The human mind is not left out. Likewise, I prayed in a recent graduation service of my college ‘that God gave us a mind which he fashioned after his own’. I believe in Pentecostal theological education and ministerial formation. I believe Pentecostals are often swinging on a proverbial pendulum between appreciating higher education and scoffing at it. There seems to be a fear and hesitation whether we can manage keeping in step with the Spirit if we fill our minds with too much knowledge that it would hinder the work of the Spirit in us. I believe we can and should keep the balance of the two. The Spirit of God is able to guide us into all truth and he uses our study of the word. In fact he approves us accordingly.

In this chapter, we will trace the roots of this dilemma of theological education and spirituality from our one-hundred year past to the present, and make some postulations as to how we may find ourselves in the future. As one who has been teaching in informal, non-formal, and formal settings since the 1980s, it is a re-tracing of my own journey and seeing how to forge ahead to the future. However, this is not just my journey alone but the many journeys from different regions that will converge and diverge, dependent on culture and situation. In our quest for the best, as Pentecostals we do not want to lose our heritage nor our edge as people filled and lead by the Spirit. I want us to consider ‘theological education’ and ‘being in step with the Spirit’ are not contradiction of terms. Both flow well together, as word and spirit are needed to accomplish the mission of God. As with the Charles Dickens’ story of *Scrooge*, we will start with Pentecostal theological education past, then analyse the present, seeking direction for the future.

Part I Pentecostal Theological Education Past Development Contours

Maybe some Pentecostals have gone further to earn formal degrees or as John Ruthven puts it, “[I]t is fashionable these days for us new Pentecostal PhDs to smile at the older generation for their fear of “theological cemeteries”.”¹ We may view it as our ‘shameful’ past that in reaction to the higher intellectualism, Pentecostals decided to go with lower education as the more spiritual way. Although it is true that some of the early Pentecostals were not highly educated, yet they were trained in some formal way too. For example the Assemblies of God,

Education has played a significant and yet struggling role in the Pentecostal movement. Many early Pentecostals felt that formal theological training was to be avoided at all costs since it would stifle the Spirit-filled life. The early leaders of the Assemblies of God (AG) U.S.A. rejected ‘intellectualism’, but saw the need for education to train Christian workers. Their desire for missionary work stemmed from the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19, 20), which closely associated evangelism with education. So when the Assemblies of God established churches overseas, they also founded theological institutions.²

In his insightful article Everett McKinney, veteran missionary-teacher and non-resident faculty of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, says that Pentecostals did not start out attacking the need for education. For example, the spiritual formation of the Assemblies of God was based upon educating the ones called to ministry with biblical foundations for both faith and practice. McKinney articulates, “While the past should be our teacher, it should never hold us back from our future.”³ The struggle as pointed out in his article is with the issue of maintaining Pentecostal spirituality in the midst of the education. The question is: Will too much study ruin Pentecostals’ ‘in-tune-ness’ with the Spirit? Surely not! After a four-day seminar with theological educators of the Assemblies of God in the USA, they concluded that the move of the Holy Spirit in the classrooms should ‘spark’ theological education and not ‘hinder’ it.⁴

What then are our arguments for the need of Pentecostal theological education? Robert Brodie of South African Theological Seminary gives three good biblical and contemporary reasons:

The mind of the Spirit is study to show yourself approved.

¹ John Ruthven, ‘Between Two Worlds: One Dead, the Other Powerless to be Born?’, *Pentecostal Theological Education vs. Training for Christian Service* (n.d.), 1.

² Benjamin Sun, ‘Assemblies of God Theological Education in Asia Pacific: A Reflection’, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:2 (2000), 227.

³ Everett McKinney, ‘Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education: A Personal Journey’, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:2 (2000), 256.

⁴ McKinney, ‘Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education’, 257.

Prophet Samuel's school of prophets and Jesus' own model with His twelve disciples.

Modern day examples of those trained who are also effective in ministry.

Indeed we are to guard against faulty exegesis which is dangerous and breeds false teaching. Therefore, it should be a complementary relationship of theory and praxis, not a contradictory one in Pentecostal schools.⁵

This is not a localized problem. As we read from the different places it is a situation that keeps popping up in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. In some of these countries the excuse could be illiteracy but for the most part it was still due to the clash of theologies and world views. In Asia, Pentecostals are wary of the pitfalls of Christian scholasticism and anti-intellectualism. In Latin America, Pentecostal education could be the way forward into ecumenism. In Africa, it is the way to train the vast numbers of Pentecostal African church leaders. In Europe, it is to combat the 'coldness' in the existing denominations with the fire of Pentecost.

The tension is not resolved. Pentecostals still at different times will respond differently, sometimes for theological education and other times against it. When will we ever settle the matter within ourselves? Perhaps never! If we continue to ride with waves of repeating past mistakes and raking up old issues, re-packaging them to look new, then we will not resolve this issue. One of the waves is about law and grace and another wave is about apostles and prophets. Which is which? Is there cheap grace and unreasonable law? Are there modern day apostles and prophets with the office of an apostle and prophet? The pendulum still swings from one extreme to the other.

Distinct Characteristics

William Kay, former director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Bangor University, Wales, would say that Pentecostals did not start off as anti-education. He cites the fact that Charles Fox Parham had a Bible school in Topeka Kansas and Pandita Ramabai in India also had an educational establishment. Kay also mentions the early scholars such as Pearlman, Horton, Gee, and Williams who contributed to developing Pentecostal theologies.⁶ He describes what Pearlman and Williams did,

Meyer Pearlman and Ernest Williams did attempt to construct systematic theologies of Pentecostalism in a somewhat scholarly way, building up the doctrines through an accumulation of biblical texts, but with little regard to context. Particularly Pearlman in his 1937 publication states that 'the material in this book is a combination of biblical and systematic theology' and he used biblical texts and sometimes expounded biblical passages to support his

⁵ Robert Brodie, 'The Anointing or Theological Training? A Pentecostal Dilemma' (n.d.), 1-19.

⁶ William Kay, 'Changing Paradigms in Pentecostal Education', *Glopent*, 2009, 1.

views. There was no reference to the Azusa Street revival or to miracles or to any other aspect of Pentecostalism. Nor was there an attempt to refute, demonize or attack other believers or social groups. The attitude behind the book is one that shows Pentecostalism belongs within the mainstream of the church.⁷

Two other writers pertinent here are Donald Gee and Harold Horton. Gee published his book *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* after considering the purpose of spiritual gifts and the functioning of each gift individually in 1 Cor. 12. He had earlier seen the connections between ecclesiology, ministry-gifts, and spiritual gifts. His publications on the church and gifts began as magazine articles in January 1929 until it was published as the book mentioned, in 1930. He was known as the ‘Apostle of Balance’. Following Gee was Harold Horton whose book *The Gifts of the Spirit* was first published in 1934. This was a supernaturalist exposition of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit as outlined in 1 Cor. 12. Keith Malcomson describes Horton as ‘not only in teaching but also in practical experience he had seen them manifest’.⁸ The book was used in Pentecostal Bible schools in America, Canada, and the British Isles as a textbook.

So these four writers, Pearlman, Williams, Gee, and Horton contributed to second-generation Pentecostal theology. The two Americans attempt a systematic, rounded account; the two British writers expounded a key biblical passage to which Pentecostals brought important fresh interpretations.

I have heard Paul Lewis, the Academic Dean of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, speak in the 2004 annual Menzies lectureship. There he mentioned that some Pentecostal scholars wanted to be more ‘accepted’ by the evangelicals. They wanted to prove that they could do scholarly exegesis. He was speaking in context of Pentecostal hermeneutics being narrative-based.⁹ For example, Gordon Fee, a Pentecostal, would not endorse using the Book of Acts for basing a doctrine upon as it is a narrative. Lewis on the other hand would argue that it is possible to use Acts to form doctrine as seen in the light of the whole counsel of scriptures. That is what Pentecostals have done in forming their pneumatology. Another way of putting it is, Cephas Omenyo quoting Cheryl B. Johns, ‘Pentecostal hermeneutics is praxis oriented whereby experience and Scripture are maintained in a dialectical relationship maintained by the Holy Spirit’.¹⁰

⁷ Kay, ‘Changing Paradigms in Pentecostal Education’.

⁸ Keith Malcomson, ‘Harold Horton’ (<http://pentecostalpioneers.org/HaroldHorton.html>), accessed Feb 20, 2012.

⁹ Paul Lewis at William Menzies Lectureship 2004, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines, 2004.

¹⁰ Cephas Omenyo, ‘African Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Education’, in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity – Theological*

The emphasis in Pentecostal Bible schools was on practical ministries. Thus, early Pentecostal training establishments had the following features:

- They functioned as a form of upper-secondary/ tertiary education in an age without universal secondary education;
- They offered systematic Bible teaching using inductive methods (deducing doctrines by assembling texts without much regard for their context);
- They frequently combined residential training with practical activity like open air meetings, visitation, and Sunday preaching;
- Their fervent spiritual tone was usually maintained by student prayer meetings and collective worship;
- Their lecturers were pastors and itinerant preachers, which ensured a non-dialogical pedagogy;
- Where the colleges were attached to/funded by a Pentecostal denomination, they were expected or required to teach denominational distinctives.¹¹

Definite Contributions: Church Growth, Signs and Wonders

From the beginning, Pentecostal theological education has some unique contributions. These foundations of Pentecostal theological education are:

- Pentecostal education is passionate for God. It pursues intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
- Pentecostal education aims towards the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the life of the students. It seeks for a radical dependency on the Holy Spirit both inwardly and outwardly.
- Pentecostal education is rooted in sound biblical doctrine. It develops a worldview and lifestyle of holiness, consistent with the teachings of the scriptures.
- It also aims towards efficacious service and academics. This is reflected in men and women of integrity in all areas of responsibility and service.
- Pentecostal education is also dynamic, critical, and creative. It is aware of contemporary issues that affect the world and the environment. It also aims to speak the truth in love.
- Pentecostal education is also missiologically involved. Grant McClung has suggested that Pentecostalism by its very nature is intrinsically missiological.¹²

Perspectives – Regional Surveys – Ecumenical Trends (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 744.

¹¹ Kay, 'Changing Paradigms in Pentecostal Education', 2.

¹² Miguel Alvarez, 'Distinctives of Pentecostal Education', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:2 (2000), 283.

Another area we can learn from the Pentecostals is ‘signs and wonders’. Most people from non-Christian religious backgrounds are very familiar with the spirit world. They often are convinced that the Christian God is the true God only when they witness a demonstration of power that is greater than the power of their gods. Those working with Hindus and Taoists are continually confronted with manifestations of demonic activity. Folk Islam is syncretism with animistic beliefs and practices. The Apostle Paul states, ‘The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance’ (2 Cor. 12:12).

Pentecostals schools are unlike other institutions who as Al Tizon points out ‘...many theological institutions have ignored this truth, and consequently, they either relegate missiology to the exotic or eliminate it altogether from the curriculum. This flies against the face of the truth that ‘mission is the mother of theology’.¹³ A mission curriculum has always been implicitly or explicitly part of Pentecostal theological education.

Part II Pentecostal Theological Education Present Different Regions

Asia

These are different perspectives from different regions about Pentecostal theological education: Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. I shall begin in my part of the world Asia. From the website of Pneuma Foundation on their link for Bible schools, there are listings by regions and specialized ministries with as many Pentecostal Bible schools that are registered with them. Next to the United States, Asia boasts of the next highest number of schools. Perhaps the most interesting to note is that there are Pentecostal theological schools in China that have their historical roots dating back to 1922. Accordingly, ‘perhaps the earliest attempt by Pentecostal missionaries to found a foreign training institution in the Asia Pacific region was in north China in 1922. W.W. Simpson started this work’. This school was called the North China Truth Bible Institute and located in Beijing. It continued in operation until missionaries were evacuated from China. By 1948, a total of six theological institutions were operating in China.¹⁴ Today there are still ‘underground schools’ operating in Kunming and other parts of the country. The actual numbers may not be available due to the sensitivity of the situation there.

¹³ Al Tizon, ‘Mission as Education: A Past-to-Future Look at INFEMIT/OCMS’, in Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds.), *Holistic Mission: God’s Plan for God’s Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 261.

¹⁴ Sun, ‘Assemblies of God Theological Education’, 229-30.

Following the evacuation of the missionaries, many re-located to neighbouring countries where they could still use Mandarin and other Chinese dialects they had acquired or just to continue to serve in Asia. As a result from the mid-1940s through the 1950s, a total of twelve theological institutions were established in Indonesia (5), Philippines (3), Hong Kong (1), Australia (1), Korea (1), and Japan (1). Today these numbers have grown by leaps and bounds. These are the latest figures from Alex Fuentes, Executive Director of Asia Pacific Theological Association (APTA) of member Pentecostal schools in an e-mail to me that show us the growth of new and increased number of schools: Northern Asia Region: Mongolia (1), Japan (1), South Korea (2), Taiwan (1), Hong Kong (2), China (none so far); Central Southeast Asia: Philippines (30), Laos (none so far), Cambodia (2), Vietnam (1), Southern Southeast Asia: Indonesia (7), Malaysia (5), Myanmar (3), Thailand (2), Singapore (3); Pacific Oceania: Papua New Guinea (1), Samoa (1), American Samoa (1), Fiji (2), Kiribati (1), Tonga (1), Vanuatu (1), Pohnpei (1), Marshall Islands (1); Australasia: Australia (4), New Zealand (3), and Global University, USA (1).¹⁵

I draw upon the very succinct observations made by Wonsuk Ma about the situation on Pentecostal theological education in Asia. He says that firstly, it is promising. Ma bases this on a number of contributing factors such as: direct result of church growth, empowerment of the laity, availability of a variety of levels of study, scholarly research being carried out by Asians, and the existence of Asia Pacific Theological Association as an accreditation body especially for Pentecostals schools. Secondly, it is challenging. The challenges are: to be relevant, not to be theologically shallow, to be counter-cultural to mega-church leadership that may be abusive in their power, and finally to be contextual Pentecostal theologies engaged also in social issues.¹⁶

Latin America

Miguel Alvarez writes from a Latin American point of view. He agrees with McClung that Pentecostal theology is an integrative theology of theory and praxis or as dubbed by them 'theology on the move'. This has a similar ring to Charles van Engen's description of mission as 'theology on the way'. Alvarez also stands with Duraisingh in that theological education is for the church to fulfil God's mission locally and globally. It prepares the students in all areas of their lives. These graduates become Pentecostal leaders who set themselves up as examples and mentors. They have community that forms a person spiritually. This is seen very much in the Latin American culture. Also

¹⁵ Alex Fuentes, Executive Director of Asia Pacific Theological Association, e-mail transmissions on Feb 22, 2012.

¹⁶ Wonsuk Ma, 'Theological Education in Pentecostal Churches in Asia', in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, 734-35.

in this community gifts are recognized and members are a part of the priesthood of all believers. As for the special academic community there is critical reflection on church practice. This is not done in some ivory tower. Instead there is continual interaction of the academy with the community of faith. The academy is also involved with varied ministries.

Alvarez also agrees with Kraiss who points out four characteristics of Pentecostal education in Latin America:

- It takes place in environments of compassion and love.
- It models Christ-likeness in forgiveness.
- It is committed to building people.
- It is where Pentecostal educators are peacemakers.¹⁷

In a place where 'liberation theology' is rampant, Pentecostal theology offers an alternative which is 'just peace making'.

According to Daniel Chiquete, Latin American Pentecostalism is relatively young. He dates its beginnings to the early twentieth century. He also indicated that there are many brands of Pentecostalism there. He paints the actual picture of the milieu of the context. He says:

In the first decades of the twentieth century, which were also the first decades of Pentecostalism, illiteracy was widespread throughout the continent. The impoverished, illiterate masses that were being impacted by diverse political conflicts were very receptive to the Pentecostal message, which was communicated verbally – its main form of transmission. Oral communication was not just an option in the Pentecostal tradition, but was necessary because of the circumstances. Although the Pentecostal religious experience was born and developed as distinctly verbal, this circumstance does not mean that Pentecostal spirituality, as a whole, consciously rejects the written word or formal education. Rather, many people found in Pentecostalism the needed motivation to struggle against illiteracy. For example, there are innumerable testimonies of Pentecostal believers who were inspired to learn how to read by their desire to personally draw near to the message of the Bible.¹⁸

However, times have changed and the people of Latin America are becoming more and more educated. Also, as Chiquete reports 60 to 80 percent of the Protestant Christians are actually Pentecostals. Yet in the Evangelical theological training institutions there are neither Pentecostal professors nor any Pentecostal curriculum although the majority of the seminarians are Pentecostals.¹⁹

Theological education may not be high in the priority list of Pentecostals in Latin America but there have been at least three initiatives undertaken by them that are varied ecumenically. The first and largest are local denominational Bible schools that propagate mainly the teachings of the

¹⁷ Alvarez, 'Distinctives of Pentecostal Education', 290-91.

¹⁸ Daniel Chiquete, 'Pentecostalism, Ecumenism, and Theological Education in Latin American Perspective', in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*, 766.

¹⁹ Chiquete, 'Pentecostalism, Ecumenism, and Theological Education', 738.

local church, with not much critical thinking or openness to other denominations. The second would be educational projects sponsored by large, well-established denomination, such as the Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús in Mexico, the Assemblies of God in Brazil or the Church of God in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. They also have smaller training centres that are engaged in teaching the Pentecostal theologies. Such centres are SEMISUD (Ecuador), the Mexican Cultural Center (Mexico), PACTO (Venezuela) and the Evangelical Centre of Pentecostal Studies (Chile). The third initiative is that those who have chosen to attend evangelical seminaries for their theological education and are engaging in dialogue with their evangelical colleagues.²⁰

Chiquete's premise is that theological education and ecumenical openness is related. My caution of this would be: Who is influencing who? If it is on equal terms, then it is fine but if it is more a monologue or even worse that the Evangelical agenda is to 'convert' the Pentecostals, then it is an unfair situation. The Pentecostals in Latin America must first be clear in their own Pentecostal theologies in order to engage with the Evangelicals who have developed their thinking much more than the Pentecostals have.

Africa

In order to have some insights about the African Pentecostal educational context, we draw from J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Cephas N. Omenyo from recent articles they have written on this topic. From Asamoah-Gyadu we can gather that there is a rising interest and need for theological education in Africa among the Pentecostals. They have grown in astronomical numbers in a very short period of time. This creates a need for good leaders who are solidly grounded in the Word and Spirit. He points out three developments in the situation in Africa that must be noted. Firstly, as mentioned already, the phenomenal growth of the African churches that has out-numbered those in the West. Secondly, Pentecostals represent the highest number of Christians in Africa now. Therefore, they are everywhere. Thirdly, there is a demand for theological education among these Pentecostal churches.²¹

Adding to the above, Omenyo states in no uncertain terms:

The stupendous growth and prominence of African Pentecostal movement has deep implications for theology and Pentecostal theological education on the continent. We should not only be fascinated by the numerical growth of the movement, but the task of providing sound theological education for the numerous zealous Pentecostal preachers and leaders needs to be recognized and engage the attention of all discerning observers. If indeed Africa Christianity has a major role in determining the future of world Christianity

²⁰ Chiquete, 'Pentecostalism, Ecumenism, and Theological Education', 739.

²¹ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'Thoroughly Equipped for Every Good Work": Theological Education in African and Africa-led Pentecostalism' (n.d.), 3.

then, the rest of the Christian world ought to be interested in the kind of theology that is taught and practiced in African churches and institutions.²²

African Pentecostal Christianity has a far reach and impact. In recent years, in Malaysia for example, there have been a slew of African preachers coming to the country, both for short term and longer stints. Their ministries have had both a positive and negative impact upon Malaysian Christians. The positive side has been the example of prayerful men and women. They are indeed very impressive in the manifestation of gifts such as that of 'word of knowledge'. They are even able to tell a person that they have apparently never met or known, about details such as their telephone numbers or other personal information. They have given fairly accurate personal prophecies for some. Healings and miracles have taken place. The negative impact has been an over-emphasis on death. They believe that they can turn the events in a person's life especially if that person has been marked for death by Satan. Another over-bearing practice is on the giving of money for blessings. The African preachers have been using specific numerology to have exact amounts of money to be given to them for the blessings of wealth and health. For some Malaysian Christians, this reminds them of their Taoist background where the temple priest did similar things. Also in this way, the prosperity gospel was preached once again.

I agree with Omenyo as he concludes that, 'facilitating African Pentecostal theological education is not merely aiding the African church in addressing African questions; rather it should be approached as an exercise that seeks to empower Africa to play its rightful role in world Christianity'.²³

Europe

Allan Anderson says that, 'Most of us familiar with departments of theology and religious studies in Europe will know that this is a very difficult environment. We have to deal with a liberal and pluralistic theological agenda that often seems to diametrically oppose Pentecostal/ Charismatic spirituality and exclusivity'.²⁴ He goes on to say that there is a tension between academic integrity and spirituality.

In Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's revised paper that he presented in World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE) Consultation in Stockholm, Sweden, 25 August 2010 there is ray of hope for Pentecostal theological education in Europe. In the last section of his paper Kärkkäinen describes four environments for theological education which can be in

²² Omenyo, 'African Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Education', 743.

²³ Omenyo, 'African Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Education', 747.

²⁴ Allan Anderson, 'Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and Theological Education in Europe from a Global Perspective', *PentecoStudies* 3:1 (2004), 1.

many places of the world but also in Europe. The environments are: church-based Bible school, theological college, theological seminary, and university with a theology department. He points out that the education though labelled as ‘Pentecostal’ may not really be so. It may actually be more fundamental Evangelical than truly Pentecostal. As we may need to confess with him, ‘Anyone knowledgeable of typical Pentecostal theological schools knows that much of what is taught has little or no direct relation to Pentecostalism; it is rather borrowed materials from the Evangelical storehouses’.²⁵

Kärkkäinen also sound the clarion call to Pentecostal educators citing a useful document for the Edinburgh 2010 World Missionary:

They should strengthen the denominational identity of future pastors and church workers, so that graduates will have a very clear understanding of the church to which they belong (theological education as denominational initiation);

They should introduce students to the wider horizons of the worldwide church so that they will understand that they also belong to the ecumenical fellowship of churches (theological education as discovery of catholicity);

They should prepare candidates to engage models of church unity, to reflect theologically on ‘unity in diversity’ and to ask how the relation between local or denominational identity and the ecumenical worldwide fellowship can be lived out (theological education as enabling for ecumenical learning).²⁶

We should also take heed to what Andrew Walls prophetically tells us: If we translate this into academic terms, it means that Africa, Asia and Latin America must first become centres of creative thinking, world leaders in biblical and theological studies. And theological and biblical studies may be one of the few disciplines, possibly even the only one, in which this will be true for much of the area. Economic and other factors will always give Europe, North America and East Asia the edge in scientific and technological disciplines, and in many branches of the humanities and social sciences. But for the sake of the Christian church worldwide, Africa, all Asia and Latin America, home to so many Christians, must pull their true theological weight.²⁷

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²⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “‘Epistemology, Ethos, and Environment’”: In Search of a Theology of Pentecostal Theological Education’ (revised version of paper presented at World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education Consultation in Stockholm, Sweden, 25 August 2010), 14.

²⁶ Kärkkäinen, ‘Epistemology, Ethos, and Environment’, 18-19

²⁷ Andrew Walls, ‘World Christianity, Theological Education, and Scholarship’, in *Holistic Mission: God’s Plan for God’s Mission*, 238.

Relationship between the Academy and the Church

I do not believe that we can put education in a box. Therefore, I chose not to limit theological education to just a formal setting. Already we have seen that Pentecostal theological education happens on different levels and the broadest and biggest level is with the grass-roots. Therefore, it is not possible to ignore them or rule them out. There are two interrelated and critical questions we must ask: 1) what does the academy need from the church? 2) what can the academy do for the church?

As Edgar R. Lee puts it,

Pentecostal churches have high expectations of their schools of higher education, and justifiably so. Intellectual and spiritual formation of the next generation of ministers and lay persons is imperative. So it is a hopeful sign that, while many churches have surrendered their schools to an increasingly secular education culture, for the most part Pentecostal churches have worked to keep the Pentecostal academy vitally connected and institutionally responsible.²⁸

He continues to say that on the one hand, the church wants the academy to provide 'authentic, pervasive, and effective Christian education'. Then on the other hand, the academy has needs 'in terms of the affirmation, clarification, nurturing, and accountability of the teaching gift' from the church.²⁹

Needless to say teaching and teachers are needed. Jesus was a teacher. The Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit will come to teach us all things. In the Great Commission, teaching is an included activity. People were devoted to the apostles' teaching. In the epistles, the writers continue to encourage teaching and teachers. It is a spiritual gift.

In the academy, teaching is the central function. Of course high qualifications are sought to meet accreditation standards. Pentecostal educators have also needed to follow suit and have been influenced by their educational pursuits. Yet it is a sobering reminder that 'The true Christian teacher is a person who has been gifted by the Holy Spirit with the charisma of teaching and who is, in a significant way, wisely guided and energized by the same Spirit'.³⁰ New Testament teachers were neither merely scholars nor philosophers, but sought to impart the Great Commission through their lives as well. They were themselves transformed and gifted by the Spirit.

Also the early church grew because there were leaders to teach others, who in turn taught others. The Apostle Paul had young sons in the faith such as Timothy and Titus whom he instructed to teach faithful people.

²⁸ Edgar R. Lee, 'What the Academy Needs from the Church?', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:2 (2000), 311.

²⁹ Lee, 'What the Academy Needs from the Church?', 311.

³⁰ Lee, 'What the Academy Needs from the Church?', 315.

One of the areas that need to be rectified is the financial imbalance for teachers. The Apostle Paul urged the churches to give double honour to the teachers which included healthy financial support.

These should be the calls and responses from church to academy and academy to church:

The academy should support truly godly and responsible freedom of inquiry of the fellowship. The church should not rush to judge and be defensive.

The academy is accountable for content of instruction and then the resultant skills as well as the accomplishments of the graduates. If a professor is not consistent with the statement of faith he or she signed then they should be responsible enough to resign of their own accord.³¹

It is clear though that the academy is seen as a servant of the church. This leads to the next question: What can the academy do for the church?

The church may look at the academy with suspicion and the academy may look down at the church with condescension. Often the context and dynamics of the relationship may be:

Denominational.

A struggle between theology and experience

The academy as the servant to the church should seek to strengthen the church.

The academy wants to have the freedom of inquiry, which is viewed as threatening to the church.

A balance of indoctrination with non-rigidity and dogmatism.³²

The answers then to the question what the academy can do for the church with the contextual backdrop in place are as follows:

Help the church to articulate its system of belief with accuracy, faithfulness, passion, and conviction. Example the doctrine of the speaking in tongues.

Help the church to be supportive of the academy. The church must be convinced that it needs the academy.

Help the church see the value of theological reflection and scholarly dialogue. It is to give substance to faith.

Help the church to develop strategic ways of thinking about evangelism. The church must experience continual revival and be relevant in the world today.³³

Thus, in this way the church is not a servant to the academy but they are in partnership: no longer as servants but as friends.

³¹ Lee, 'What the Academy Needs from the Church?', 318.

³² Richard Dresselhaus, 'What Can the Academy Do for the Church?', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:2 (2000), 319-21.

³³ Lee, 'What the Academy Needs from the Church?', 321-23.

Distance Routines

As we have traced back our Pentecostal history and struggles, we keep coming back to the theme of education and spirituality. We have experienced spiritual formation within our Pentecostal education. McKinney uses the term 'hidden curriculum'. Through Pentecostal prayer meetings and Spiritual Emphasis Week chapel services, as well as unstructured ways, the Spirit does move upon Pentecostals. Pentecostal educators are willing to stop teaching what they have prepared, if that is what the Spirit bids them do. This is our heritage and this is our practice.

Spiritual formation for the Pentecostal minister should be both academic excellence and spirituality. The end product should be a person of prayer, the Word, and full of the Spirit. Hendricks and Clarke define 'spirituality' in a theological sense as the relationship between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit 'in lived experience and reflective understanding'.³⁴

The other aspect is the 'democratization of the Spirit' that is based on the 'priesthood of all believers' and making available 'theological education for all'. This is also a Pentecostal phenomenon that cannot be denied. It has made it such that the whole church can be mobilized. It allows men and women who may or may not have theological degrees to preach from pulpits as the Spirit has leads them to do so. In some rare and special cases, this even applies to children.

In my own college, Alpha Omega International College, which is a hybrid of a church-based school and a theological college, our doors are open for all Christians to come for theological education. We are a Pentecostal college but with a multi-denominational faculty, staff, and students. Thus, in making theological education available for all, we hope that the 'market place ministers' will also be equipped as they may be preaching and teaching the word in our churches. Therefore, it is best if we can ground them theologically and prepare them for practical ministry.

Wonsuk Ma makes a very bold stand on how Pentecostal theological education should be conducted, for one who has himself such high academic qualifications, but which perhaps makes these statements even more poignant:

While classical Pentecostals have the best developed academic institutions, programs, and resources, it is important to be reminded that they are the smallest segment of the large Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. This raises a number of serious questions and one of them is: Is their education relevant to the Asian cultural context and the rapidly changing social context? Also, the move from Bible institute model to a seminary model may not necessarily be for everyone. A well-designed, church-based lower-level ministerial formation is still the bedrock of the Pentecostal growth. The increasing appearance of academic programs and publications in Asian Pentecostalism is encouraging. At the same time, the

³⁴ McKinney, 'Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education', 1.

academic community needs to watch the pitfall of Christian scholasticism, which is the opposite extreme of the earlier Pentecostals' anti-intellectualism. As the traditional Asian high regard for learning continues to promote this trend, it is important that scholarly research and reflection promotes Pentecostal spirituality and serves its mission. Thus, lower-level ministerial programs should not aim at constantly upgrading their offerings.³⁵

Part III Pentecostal Theological Education Future

Demand Changes

We live in a digital age. We cannot run away from it. We are so connected by our iPhones, iPads, and now all are sync with our iClouds.

People know our every move and we know their every move through social networking. People post such trivial things at times on their Facebook and Twitter. As George Verwer joked, 'What do you get when Yahoo, Facebook, and Twitter merge? You will get Twitfacehoo or Yahbookter!' But one Pentecostal educator in Singapore was sharing that he found his students opening up more on a blog than to him face to face. They wrote things that they would not write in their term papers. So he found using the internet particularly social networking as a positive exercise for his students.

However, most of the Pentecostal educators are Internet migrants and net-citizens. Their younger students would be the latter. As such Pentecostal educators will need to catch up with the advancements in technology and use it to be more effective in their communication. In one case there is a Pentecostal educator who has a whole cyber seminary on a site called 'Second Life'.

Delivery Channels

More and more there is a demand for alternate delivery channels for teaching and learning. Students do not want to quit what they are doing and to study full-time. They are interested in some form of distance learning. As such Pentecostal education needs to be imparted in new ways. Some of the current ways are online courses, modular sessions, and blended forms of distance learning.

Teaching an online course is different from teaching a live session. Aside from the internet challenges, the dynamics of teaching also changes. A teacher may or may not have face to face time with the students have to find ways to interact with them. This is also dependent on internet

³⁵ Ma, 'Theological Education in Pentecostal Churches in Asia', 734.

availability and efficiency. Decisions have to be made on how much information to post online, whether or not to have streaming video or audio, and how to administer assignments or exams.

Modules are a little closer to the traditional classroom setting except for the time factor. Teachers will have to be able to cover all the material in the time given. Students respond differently when they are pressured in a short time. They do not have much time to process what they are learning.

In some cases, there is a need to blend the forms of distance learning. In places where the internet connection is slow, CDs may be prepared for students to use. Interaction may still be through e-mail if possible. Skype calls may or may not be possible.

Delightful Challenges

As we can see in our future, the challenges we face are delightful. I put it in a positive and even playful term of 'delightful' because I do think it is so. I do not mean that it is not challenging. It is not an easy challenge either because to complicate matters we live in such a constantly changing world. However, we have the one constant and that is our God. He is unchanging.

In the midst of 'high tech' we still have 'high touch'. We have the touch of the Spirit upon our lives and we have the touch of the people of God around us. Amidst of all the fancy technical conveniences we have at our disposal, there are times we need to unplug them and just go back to being still and let God be God. As Pentecostal educators, even if people took away all our gadgets, we should still be in tune with what the Spirit is saying to the church today.

As mentioned, we do not do our theology in ivory towers. Our Pentecostal theology is one on the move. We are also in touch with the church, our community of faith, and we are in touch with what is happening in the world, in which our faith works.

Finally, in Pentecostal education, we are defining and re-defining our identities in the environments we live in. This is the tension we have to face. The framework of Pentecostalism is there but the shape can change according to context. We do not put God in a box. Neither do we put our Pentecostalism in a box. We allow for the freedom we have in the Spirit as is stated in the Word.

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Conclusion

Writing this chapter on Pentecostal theological education and spiritual formation for me has been a spiritual exercise of time, effort, and reflection. It has caused me to look back and see how far we have come. Looking at our present situation, and hearing from those in other regions of the world as well. Then finally to look forward with hope and anticipation as to what Pentecostal theological education can be and do for the kingdom of God. My

hope and prayer is that this contributes positively to other Pentecostals who are on this journey with me, as the Spirit leads us.

As Wonsuk Ma had challenged me, he envisioned this chapter to be a reflection of Pentecostal theological education globally in the past century, with its distinct characteristics, development, and analysis. Then, it is to turn to the present landscape of global Pentecostal and Charismatic theological education with its diversity and creativity in various social settings. Finally, offering Pentecostals directions for the future, to remain faithful to their unique theological and spiritual tradition, but authentic to the context they are in, and theologically open to the work of the Holy Spirit, which may surprise all of us. I see a glimpse of this unknown surprise in store.



ECOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF PENTECOSTALISM: PROBLEMS, POSSIBILITIES AND PROPOSALS

Jonathan W. Rice

Introduction

The relationship of Pentecostals to ecology has often been marked by indifference, and in some cases outright hostility. But simultaneously, other Pentecostals are becoming keenly aware that stewardship of the earth and its resources must become an integral part of their spirituality. In this chapter we will take a self-critical look at the negative stances toward ecology within Pentecostalism, and some of the roots thereof; as well as some foundational problems that have plagued the ecological movement from the beginning. We will next survey of some hopeful changes in Pentecostal attitudes toward ecology. The hope undergirding this chapter is for a matured Pentecostal ecology that does not remain isolated within the academy, but instead spreads far and wide across the movement. This is an urgent matter, due to the monumental growth and influence of Pentecostalism as a worldwide force over the past century.

Picture a bright blue ball just spinning, spinning free
Dizzy with eternity
Painted with a skin of sky
Brush in some clouds and sea
Call it home to you and me....¹

‘It’s All Gonna Burn’

Nearly three decades after the fact, I can still remember the clanging of the Coke can as it hit the street, and the scrunching sound of the empty Cheetos bag as it caught wind and sailed out the bus window, landing on the otherwise pristine country roadside in northern California.

It was 1982, two years after I had converted to Pentecostalism. I had just completed my freshman year at the Assemblies of God’s (AoG) Bethany University, and was home for the summer break. We were en route to a church outing when a good friend, sitting next to me on the bus, threw his trash out the window. Although I hadn’t yet given much thought to

¹ John P. Barlow and Robert H. Weir, ‘Throwing Stones’ (lyrics) (San Rafael, CA: Ice Nine Publishing, 1982).

ecology, I was somewhat incensed, having been raised by parents who had taught me it was wrong and dirty to litter. 'Dude', I protested in my typical California manner of speech, 'that's so wrong!'

The utter sincerity with which he replied made his answer all the more troubling: 'It doesn't matter', he said. And then, gesturing out the window at the passing gnarled oak trees and the wild oats interspersed with yellow poppies, he said, 'It's all gonna [going to] burn. So who cares?'

Having been fully indoctrinated, I knew the buzzwords and instantly understood his comment. 'It's all gonna burn' was a reference to the soon coming Battle of Armageddon and the destruction of the whole earth by fire, which would happen in a few years. And his logic, though utterly circular, was internally consistent. I later realized that one would have to dismantle nearly the entirety of his belief system in order to demonstrate the wrongness of what he had done.

Although still quite naïve, I was beginning to question aspects of my newfound faith. My friend's cavalier attitude toward the most rudimentary form of ecology was the second aspect of a quandary with which I'd been wrestling of late. The first aspect was the growing realization that I was part of a religion that ardently denied being a religion!

From day one, authority figures reiterated that our version of Christianity was *not* a religion, but a relationship with Jesus. Even though I was but a novice, I couldn't help but think this to be disingenuous. Of course Pentecostalism was a religion! We had founders, strict purity and pollution codes, dietary laws, and a vast array of buzzwords. There was a comprehensive doctrinal system, which included the innovations of dispensational premillennial eschatology. Sociologically, there was often a high degree of conformity: as in the common spectacle of young people feigning glossolalia so as to be accepted by the group, or abstaining from a glass of wine to avoid being ostracized. Pentecostalism had every definitive trait of a religion; to deny this was tantamount to denying that a Rottweiler was a dog.

(This agitprop is growing louder and shriller by the year; with today's Pentecostal renewal leaders often bragging about 'tearing down religion and tradition'. This must be put to rest, primarily because it is false. In this context, it is only when we can speak meaningfully of Pentecostalism as a religion that we can consider the ecological ramifications of its religious ideas.)

And then, in May 1982, I came to a further, more troubling realization: my 'religion that was not a religion' had some rather noxious ecological implications: It was our eschatology which gave my friend divine sanction to brazenly trash the roads with Coke cans and fatty-snack wrappers. For the past two years I had sat in the same meetings with him, watching dreary re-runs of *Thief in the Night* rapture films and their sequels. We were subjected to numerous rapture-scare sermons, we read Chick tracts, and, at a festival called 'Jesus West Coast' in 1981, we heard a respected

Pentecostal leader narrate a fantastical story to a rapt crowd of nearly thirty-thousand: someone had recently picked up a hitchhiker who told him that Jesus will return in just a few years; after which he magically vanished from the backseat of the car. The hitchhiker, it turned out, was actually an angel! Additionally, according to Hal Lindsey, a demagogue far above all question or accountability, the rapture would occur no later than 1988.² We were living on the brink of the Apocalypse.

It thus made perfect sense for my friend to justify his actions with the slogan, 'It's all gonna burn'. But while his misdeeds were undone by the next road cleaning crew, what, we may ask, would happen if such a person had an inordinate amount of power? The answer was playing itself out during those exact years. Robbie Waddell notes that these beliefs 'led Assemblies of God member James Watt, Ronald Reagan's first Secretary of the Interior [1981-1983], to support the reckless consumption of the USA's natural resources. When questioned about his policy, Watt replied, 'I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord's return'.³

During my four years at Bethany University, ecology was never discussed in class or in chapel. Then, over the next several decades – in many traditional and Third Wave Pentecostal churches – I heard not a single message about environmental responsibility. Whenever the topic arose it was denigrated as something evil: environmentalists were degenerate left-wingers and New Age conspirators, out to destroy Christianity and American capitalism.

The tradition of hostility and misunderstanding continues to this day, which should come as no surprise, especially in light of Lance E. Nelson's observation that, 'Human nature being what it is, the *negative* outcomes of religious teachings that can be used to rationalize environmental neglect are probably greater than the *positive* influence of those that encourage conservation and protection'.⁴

The case of Becky Fischer, the American children's minister featured in the 2006 documentary *Jesus Camp*, is notable. A third-generation Pentecostal whose overall motivation is laudable, Fischer believes children

² Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness* (Tennessee, USA: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1991), 125-29. Although I find DeMar's Theonomic/Reconstructionist ideology utterly reprehensible, this particular book does, nonetheless, provide many documented examples of dispensational premillennialism gone horribly wrong.

³ Robbie Waddell, 'Apocalyptic Sustainability', in Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (eds.), *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World Without End* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 81.

⁴ Lance E. Nelson, 'Introduction', in Lance E. Nelson (ed.), *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 5-6 (italics in original). Although Nelson's immediate context is ecology in India, his observation here is equally valid across the religious spectrum.

have the same spiritual capacity as adults. She encourages them to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues and prophesy, and pray for the sick. Her sphere of influence is large, and she is faithfully passing the original Pentecostal tradition to a new generation. Becky Fischer, then, is a highly influential leader in on-the-ground Pentecostalism (i.e., religion as it is actually lived). Popular leaders are Pentecostalism's foot soldiers. They are the ones building churches, going to the mission field, and in Fischer's case, moulding the mind-set of a new generation.

Fischer titled her August 2010 newsletter '*Are Your Kids Worshipping Baal?*' In it, she has the following to say about Christians and ecology:

While our kids and teens are spending much of their time trying to save the planet, God says, 'Heaven and earth will pass away with a loud noise and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth will be burned up' (2 Peter 3:10).

He says, in 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1 that He's going to give us a new heaven and a new earth! So while people are running around trying to save the planet, God says 'You're wasting your time because it's going to be destroyed!' Any effort to save the earth *forever* is opposite to God's revealed plan!

Don't get me wrong! I am not saying you shouldn't recycle. I am not saying we should be wasteful, or that we shouldn't be good stewards of our precious resources. But when we begin to put nature, the earth, and animal rights and needs above people and God's plan, we have crossed a very fine line into Baal worship!

Jesus didn't die for the planet and the animals. He wasn't nailed to the cross for lions and tigers and bears. It bothers me to no end when I hear of eight and nine year old kids who have decided to be 'vegans' because they feel sorry for the animals having to be killed... When man begins to worship the creation more than the creator... then we've crossed a line. We can either let the world teach our kids to save baby whales, or we can teach them to save souls!⁵

Fischer's logic is tortuous yet worth analysing, for it is shared by a large majority of Pentecostals. It is not so much she as an individual, but rather the milieu in which she lives and moves and has her being, which is really speaking in the 'Baal worship' discourse.

Fischer claims to follow the Bible alone, yet she elevates her thoughts to the level of divine fiat by placing her words into God's mouth – words which express *her interpretation* of a scriptural passage rather than the passage itself⁶ ('God says, "You're wasting your time..."). She insinuates

⁵ Becky Fischer, 'Are Your Kids Worshipping Baal?', *Kids in Ministry International*, August 2010 (https://kidsinministry.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=107&Itemid=93), accessed 16 Sep 2010.

⁶ Waddell provides a detailed refutation of this popular 'annihilation' interpretation of the 2 Pet 3 passage. See Robbie Waddell, 'Apocalyptic Sustainability: The

that environmentalists want to ‘save the earth forever’. But in truth, they don’t have ‘forever’ as a goal, since they too know that the sun will eventually expend itself, causing the total dissolution of our solar system. She uses extreme, fringe examples to discredit ecology as a whole (‘...when I hear of eight and nine year old kids who have decided to be “vegans”...’). In claiming that ‘Jesus didn’t die for planet and the animals’ she seems unaware of the existence and possible interpretations of Romans 8:19-23. She also suffers from what Mark Noll refers to as ‘the false antinomies that bedevil evangelicalism’.⁷ For Fischer, it can only be *either/or*, never *both/and*. (‘We can either let the world teach our kids to save baby whales, or we can teach them to save souls!’). She is disturbed by presence of various neo-paganisms embraced by some environmentalists (the overarching context of her article). She doesn’t consider that if environmental movements are actually dominated by such groups, they have only gained vanguard status due to Christian non-participation.

The ‘Baal worship’ discourse (and the many favourable responses to it on the website’s ‘comments’ section) shows how deeply entrenched the antagonism between Pentecostalism and ecology still is. Far from being on the lunatic fringe, Becky Fischer is much closer to the norm than many of us would care to admit (especially in the USA, where secular and apocalyptic fantasies merge in disaster movies, and where many Pentecostals are in the thrall of the Religious Right).

We must also consider the runaway success of the *Left Behind* series over the past decade (whose sales tellingly increased by 60% immediately following the September 11 2001 terror attacks).⁸ Today’s Pentecostals consume these novels with a voracity usually reserved only for fast food. This in itself is a strong indicator that dispensational premillennialism is, perhaps, even more alive and well on Planet Earth now than in Hal Lindsey’s heyday.

Over the past century these pessimistic beliefs have spread worldwide, with similar effects. South Korea is a good example. Church historian Paul Hang-Sik Cho spends 138 pages of the book *Eschatology and Ecology Experiences of the Korean Church* on the baneful outcome of dispensational premillennialism, initially spread by American missionaries. Sixty-four of these pages (155-219) fall under the section heading ‘Dispensational Premillennialism: Unecological Eschatology’.⁹

Future of Pentecostal Ecology’, in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, 83-87.

⁷ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 245.

⁸ Robert C. Fuller, *Spirituality in the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 43.

⁹ Paul Hang-Sik Cho, *Eschatology and Ecology Experiences of the Korean Church* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 81-219.

As such, productive Pentecostal thought about ecology, not only in the USA, but worldwide, has for the most part been nigh impossible.

There's a fear down here we can't forget
 Hasn't got a name just yet
 Always awake, always around
 Singing 'ashes, ashes, all fall down'¹⁰

Hope: The Only Constant in Religion Is Change

But does it have to be so? Was it always so? My answer is full of hope, and it is here that my aforesaid observation that Pentecostalism is indeed a religion – in spite of the many denials thereof – becomes significant.

In the discipline of religious studies it is a given that religion and culture are intricately linked, and that both are in a constant state of flux. As Heraclitus would have put it, the only constant is change. In the American context, Stephen Prothero provides excellent case studies in his book *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*.¹¹ The many versions of Jesus encountered on the pages can be baffling. From the Puritans up through the present day, the conceptualisations of Jesus are quite distinct from one another. This is a common, worldwide phenomenon. David B. Gray, in an essay on shifting religious identity amongst eighth century Indian Buddhists, makes an observation that is also quite relevant to the study at hand: 'Religious identity, as is now widely recognized, is not monolithic but relational, developing and changing through the encounters that continually occur between competing religious traditions'.¹²

Not all change is for the good, though, and within a few decades of its inception Pentecostalism underwent an unfortunate one: the adoption of dispensational premillennialism. This was not a part of the movement in the beginning; the revivals in Topeka, Los Angeles and other places didn't much resemble Niagara-style Bible conferences.¹³ It is really a non-essential to Pentecostal faith and praxis. (And Pentecostalism is gradually changing again, this time leaving this moribund belief system behind.)

The problematic nature of dispensational prophecy belief became even more evident in March 2000, while I was a faculty member of the AoG's Buntain Theological College (Calcutta, India). The college president, John R. Higgins, asked me to address a meeting of the Inter-Collegiate

¹⁰ Barlow and Weir, 'Throwing Stones'.

¹¹ Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

¹² David B. Gray, 'Eating the Heart of the Brahmin: Representations of Alterity and the Formation of Identity in Tantric Buddhist Discourse', *History of Religions* 45:1 (2005), 45.

¹³ Larry McQueen, 'Early Pentecostal Eschatology in the Light of The Apostolic Faith, 1906–1908', in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, 117-32.

Theological Teachers' Fellowship of West Bengal. Ours was the only Pentecostal college in this ecumenical group. The topic, chosen by the fellowship's committee, was 'Ecology and Our Moral Responsibility'. Having lived in the midst of India's horrendous pollution over six years, I was by then acutely aware of the problem. So was Dr. Ken Gnanakan, an Indian Christian theologian under whom I had studied at the Asian Institute of Theology. It was his call for the church to take the lead in ecology, which he called 'one of the most pressing issues of the day', that had first awakened me to the ecological mandate.

A few weeks later, a colleague asked if I planned to expound the Pentecostal position on ecology in my address, which led to a bit of stammering on my part. 'I don't think a Pentecostal position exists', I replied. 'Our pietism and eschatology have not allowed us to think about it'. To make sure, I checked the comprehensive index to *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. My suspicion was confirmed: of the numerous articles indexed from 1979-2000, only one made reference to ecology.¹⁴

Formative Thoughts on Ecology in a Pentecostal Theological College

Upon embarking upon my initial research in 2000, it seemed self-evident from a Christian standpoint that there should be, at least some degree of 'moral responsibility' linked to ecology. But being new to the subject, I was surprised to find it an inter-religious battlefield, with people of each religion blaming the others, and all claiming theirs to be the most eco-friendly. Since ecology was supposed to be science-based, this was a bit odd. After all, the Krishna movement (ISKCON) makes claims about life on other planets and the Bible gave us 'the heavens declare the glory of God'. But has there ever been much Bhagavad-Gita- or Bible-thumping surrounding astrophysics and space exploration?

Some answers were forthcoming in Lynn White Jr.'s and Richard Means' 1967 ground-breaking essays, which blamed Christianity for the West's ecological crisis, and proposed medieval Franciscan piety and Zen Buddhism as alternatives.¹⁵ As it turned out, White's and Means' ideas originated with Aldous Huxley, going back as far as 1948,¹⁶ and his novel

¹⁴ 'Index', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* (<http://home.regent.edu/ruthven/pneuidx.html>), accessed 18 June 2000.

¹⁵ Lynn White, Jr., 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science* 155 (1967), 1203-07; and Richard L. Means, 'Why Worry About Nature?', *Saturday Review*, 2 Dec 1967. Means' essay is reproduced in its entirety in Francis Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), vol. 5, 71-76.

¹⁶ Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf / Harper & Row, 1974), 472.

Island in 1962, along with sayings from Alan Watts in the mid-1960s.¹⁷ Neither White nor Means had much original thought whatsoever.

Nor did their proposals seem realistic. It was sentimentality on Lynn White's part to propose Saint Francis as an ecological patron saint. The personal eccentricities of Francis, a man wholly devoted to monasticism, are no basis for a system of ecology. To expect the majority of western civilization to adopt Francis' attitudes toward nature was as absurd as expecting the majority of today's Hindu Bengalis to think and act like Sri Ramakrishna. White was making sport of his readers.

The proposals of Huxley and Watts (recapped by David Means) were also dead-end streets. They spoke of Buddhism in vague generalities. The word 'zen', for example was slung around casually in early eco-discourse, when in fact there are several Zen sects: *Soto*, *Obaku* and *Rinzai*; with *Rinzai* being subdivided into fifteen branches. If people are to propose Zen as a solution, they at least should be able to articulate which sect of Zen it is they are referring to, and the exact characteristics, doctrines and practices of said sect they claim to be of benefit. For example, could *Soto*, associated more with the farming peasant class, have different ecological implications than *Rinzai*, associated more with the Samurai warrior class? An even better question might have been, 'Have the various schools of Zen ever actively promoted ecological awareness in the first place, or are we (Huxley, Watts and Means) merely imposing our late-modern western notions upon Japanese monastics, through an alterity-based process of cross-cultural mimesis?' Instead of any such reflections, those who read early ecological advocacy literature were treated to warm, fuzzy, 'Zen is the answer for the world today' types of accolades.

The implications of the sloppiness were to bedevil the next generation. It turned out that Japan is heinously anti-ecological, practising to the present day the illegal hunting of (protected) Mink whales in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. In 1999, Japanese whalers attacked unarmed Greenpeace demonstrators, ramming their ship and trying to down their helicopter.¹⁸ Additionally, Buddhist scholars have themselves repudiated Huxley and Watts. Christopher Key Chapple notes, 'Throughout Southeast Asia, ostensibly Buddhist countries pursue economic programs that degrade the environment. In Japan, noted Buddhist scholars have been wary of the appropriation of Buddhism in service of environmental ideals. N.

¹⁷ Elda Hartley, producer, *Zen: The Best of Alan Watts* (documentary) (New York: Wellspring Media, 1994). See also the audio transcripts available at www.alanwatts.com/ac_lectures.html.

¹⁸ 'Japan's Illegal Whalers Attack Peaceful Greenpeace Demonstrators in Southern Ocean Confrontation', Greenpeace Press Release of 21 Dec 1999 (<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/media-center/news-releases/japan-s-illegal-whalers-attack/>), accessed 15 Oct 2010.

Hakamaya, for instance, claims that ‘Buddhism does not accept but negates nature’.¹⁹

Inter-religious rhetorical warfare has been one of the enduring legacies of the Huxley/Watts approach. Within a few decades, all sorts of religious groups joined the chorus of anti-Christian eco-speak, each one claiming to be the most ecological. Thus, many Christians were introduced to ecology not as a scientific discipline with moral implications, but as a hostile ideology. It didn’t take too long for Christians to begin firing their own salvos into the fray. But in reality, people of *all* religious traditions have at times failed to act and think responsibly in this regard. Instead of engaging in endless shouting matches against one another, it would be much more productive for people of all faiths to sit down together, each admitting their own failures, and seeking insights from one another. The polemical approach initiated by Huxley and Watts greatly curtailed the chance of such an exchange.

Another aspect of the Huxley/Watts legacy is the exaggerated status of religion in ecological discourse. Thus we have the spectacle of religious believers of all stripes exchanging peer-reviewed science for faith-based answers to environmental problems. This is illustrated by the outcome of two books published in the same year. In 1962, Aldous Huxley’s novel *Island* was released. Its ecological heroes embraced a version of Mahayana Buddhism combined with LSD and bits of late-modern humanism. One of *Island’s* most-remembered quotes is, ‘...Elementary ecology leads straight to elementary Buddhism’.²⁰ Also in 1962, Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* was published. Both books were ecological. But unlike *Island*, Carson’s book actually led to the passage of environmental legislation. Huxley’s proposal worked well in fiction. But living in the real world, Carson didn’t reach her conclusions through religion, but through lab work and field research. The fact that some other scientists later disputed her findings only confirms she was doing real science, which unlike religion, is open to falsification.

A proper, more humble posture would be for religious professionals of all stripes to acknowledge our limitations, lose the sense of self-importance, and not overstep our bounds. Ecology is primarily a scientific (not religious) discipline, which is in constant interplay with legislation, economics and other factors. We can affirm that ‘ecology’ in its secondary usage (as ‘the movement that seeks to protect the environment’) has spiritual ramifications. We should speak out prophetically regarding the moral and spiritual implications of problems confirmed by peer-reviewed, scientific findings. But to go much further is to engage in a narcissistic overstepping of boundaries.

¹⁹ Christopher Key Chapple, ‘Toward an Indigenous Indian Environmentalism’, in *Purifying the Earthly Body of God*, 27.

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Island* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1962), 217.

With this in the background, in 2000 I suggested several points I believed (and still believe) important for Pentecostals (and all Christians). In making them here, I do not propose an anachronistic view of the biblical authors (or the writers of any ancient religious texts) as proto-ecologists. Obviously, Ancient Near Eastern scriptures do not contain solutions to Ganges River pollution or the BP Gulf of Mexico disaster. Rather, I hope to show that the scriptures which most Christianities share in common can lead to a healthy view of our relationship to nature; one that is conducive to ecological awareness:²¹

God created a world that is good (the seven 'good' proclamations in Gen. 1) and real. It was created through wisdom (Prov. 8). Therefore, creation is not of a lower order, or evil. Instead, it has intrinsic value apart from any utilitarian benefits humans derive from it. Rivers, for example, are not valuable merely because they provide humans with water for drinking, bathing and irrigation. Rather, the planet and its resources are inherently sacred, the source of their sanctity being the God who created it and called it 'good'.

Humans, created in *imago Dei*, are morally accountable to obey God's command to 'till and keep' the earth (Gen. 2:15). Tsunamis, volcanoes and some animals (through overgrazing) attack the earth with great violence; but being only a part of nature, they are not held accountable. The human race alone is given such a charge. The earth belongs to God, not humans, as Psalm 24 and many other passages affirm; which relegates our place to that of stewards or mere 'gardeners'. We shall be judged accordingly.

Contra the whinging of Huxley, Watts, White and Means, Genesis 1:28 (in which God commands humans to 'subdue' the earth and 'have dominion over' animals), does not give us license to exploit and destroy the planet. In making such allegations, these critics ignored basic context. Genesis One is the 'good creation' narrative. It should not take too much intelligence, then, to understand that the 'subdue' and 'have dominion over' passage, surrounded by a divine seven-fold goodness attestation, and later followed by the 'till and keep' mandate, was *not* intended as a license to destroy the earth. In addition, Kenneth Cauthen explains:

The Hebrew term translated as 'have dominion over' has equivalents such as tread down, prevail against, and reign over.... We have to admit that this verse simply does not say what we as environmentally concerned people today might wish it had. However, in its original context, it had a quite positive meaning. Israel faced a natural world that was mysterious, powerful, and threatening. Within that setting, this text was profoundly liberating. It sees nature as good, as part of a divinely ordered world not to be feared but to be engaged and used for human purposes. Anyone who has ever tried to clear and prepare new ground for farming or ploughed a mule in rocky ground, as I

²¹ The following is selectively condensed from Jonathan W. Rice, 'Ecology and our Moral Responsibility' (Paper presented to the Meeting of the Inter-Collegiate Theological Teachers' Fellowship of West Bengal, August 2000), 49-56.

have in my youth, knows that *subdue* is the proper word. This text reflects the experience of an ancient people trying to make a living under difficult conditions, and we soft urban people today may not appreciate the strong language that is used here.²²

The Old Testament laws regarding land usage and sanitation had sound stewardship ramifications. They include the law of land resting (Ex. 23:10-12), which assured that the land would not be overused, and that there would be enough food for the poor and for animals; the law of jubilee (Lev. 25:23-34), in which agricultural land would return to the original owner, preventing concentrated land possession and exploitation; the law of the harvest (Lev. 19:9-10), which put a check on the human tendency toward the greed which robs land of its resources; and the sanitation laws, which include the directive to bury faeces (Deut. 23:13).²³

In Proverbs we read, 'the righteous know the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel' (Prov. 12:10). In Jonah, God is not only shows concern for people, but for the 'many animals' of Nineveh (Jon. 4:11). While animals could be used for food, cruelty to them or their senseless slaughter was a grievous thing.

The Bible's teaching on redemption has a specific application to what we call ecology. The covenant with Noah began with humanity and extended to the entire animal kingdom, forever: 'And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you *and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations*.' (Gen. 9:12).

In the midst of Paul's classic redemption discourse (Rom. 8:19-23), he has the following to say about creation:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

In this passage, humankind and nature equally await the fullness of redemption. Noting the poetic language, Cranfield writes, 'We may think of the whole magnificent theatre of the universe together with all its splendid properties and all the chorus of sub-human life, created to glorify God but

²² Kenneth Cauthen, 'Christianity and Ecology: The Emergence of Christian Biopolitics' (Paper presented to the Forum on Eco-justice sponsored by 'Save the Bay' and the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, 1996), <http://www.frontiernet.net/%7Ekenc/ecology.htm> (accessed 15 July 2000).

²³ Norman Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), 306-07.

unable to do so fully, so long as man... fails to contribute his rational part'.²⁴ Eschatologically, if we live in what George E. Ladd called an already/not-yet tension, with the *already* part of the Kingdom unfolding gradually throughout history, the implications are profound. All of creation is under a curse and unable to actualize its full potential. And so it waits eagerly for the 'revealing of the children of God'. Redemption, for the rest of nature and for us, will not *fully* occur until the end of the age, but it is *already* unfolding daily. As Cranfield noted, if we fail to contribute our part, we hinder creation from fully glorifying God. It is as though all of nature is struggling to play its role, and is mutely and desperately longing for the day when humans will wake up and get with the programme.

Such was my reasoning in 2000; yet as Pentecostals we also have untapped aspects of our unique heritage, which combined with the above, can make an even greater contribution to ecology. It is encouraging to note the several Pentecostal scholars who are now developing these themes.

Toward a Distinctly Pentecostal Ecology

In the past decade, several thinkers have conceptualised possibilities for a specifically Pentecostal ecology. In 2005 Amos Yong noted the connections between pneumatology and creation care:

The pneumatological vision of Isaiah the prophet links the charismatically anointed Messiah with the healing and reconciliation of creation's destroying forces (Is. 11:1-9; 32:16-20). Hence the Spirit is poured out of *all* flesh, including the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the cow and the bear, the lion and the ox, all of whom are included in the blessings of God promised under the covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:8-17). The redemption of the creation is the work of the Spirit, and we have our roles to play in this process.... How, then, might we summarize the central elements of a pneumatological theology of creation? Most important, the spiritual and the material realms are intertwined both ontologically and epistemologically. Regarding the former, the Spirit both hovers over the waters of creation and gives the breath of life: the human is intimately and intricately connected with the orders of creation. Hence our obligation to love our neighbour as ourselves can be extended here to the world that God called good.²⁵

In 2007, Wonsuk Ma examined a wide range of scriptures from both Testaments that focus on the Holy Spirit's role as creator, sustainer and restorer of creation, and applied them to Pentecostal mission. These passages cover everything from creation, land renewal and fertility, social justice, the renewal of the entire 'face of the earth', and the restoration of God's people to covenant faithfulness. As such, the false antinomy between

²⁴ C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, I (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 414.

²⁵ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of a Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 300.

preaching the gospel and other forms of mission is exactly that – false. Ma writes, ‘Another important issue is that God’s entire creation is the target of the church’s missionary calling. This makes...environmental stewardship an important mission agenda’.²⁶

In 2008, Steven M. Stuebaker pinpointed further problems for Pentecostals and ecology,²⁷ when he noted that Pentecostal theology mirrors traditional evangelical theology in its acceptance of the categories of common and special grace, and (the conceptually related) general and special revelation. Common grace refers to the manner in which God influences humanity in helpful yet non-salvific ways, e.g. restraining sin, the maintenance of social order, etc.; while special grace alone leads to salvation. In like manner, general revelation provides common knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral expectations, communicated through the natural world, etc. But this too is non-salvific; only through special revelation (knowledge of the gospel through the written and/or spoken word) can people have any chance of salvation. Inherent in this system is a hierarchy in which both special grace and special revelation are far preeminent over common grace and general revelation. These categories have many pitfalls, some specifically related to ecology. When the natural and supernatural orders are separated thus, the result is a dualism in which ‘spiritual’ activities such as evangelism are the church’s priorities, but saving wetlands from rapacious developers has no real eternal value, being a mere outworking of common grace.

Stuebaker proposes an alternative to this moribund vision of God the world. Drawing from a careful reading of Scripture, and theologians as diverse as Karl Rahner, Jonathan Edwards, David Coffey and others, he rubbishes these false dichotomies. A relational view of the Trinity, and an understanding of pneumatology proper that does not artificially distinguish between the Spirit’s nature and work, or between the intrinsic and extrinsic workings of the Spirit in humanity and nature, mends that which evangelical theology has rent asunder. As he writes, ‘Once the principle of reciprocity between the Spirit’s identity and work is granted, two-tier orders of grace – such as common and special grace, natural and supernatural revelation, sacred and secular, and extrinsic/non-redemptive and intrinsic/redemptive modalities of the Spirit’s work – are untenable’.²⁸ He then posits a ‘pneumatological panentheism’ which ‘affirms that God is present as the animating source of life and redemption in creation’, but does not lapse into the extremist view that the destruction of nature equals the

²⁶ Wonsuk Ma, ‘The Spirit of God in Creation: Lessons for Christian Mission’, *Transformation* 24/3 & 4 (July & Oct 2007), 227.

²⁷ Steven M. Stuebaker, ‘The Spirit in Creation: A Unified Theology of Grace and Creation Care’, *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 43:4 (December 2008), 943-60.

²⁸ Stuebaker, *The Spirit of Creation*, 950.

destruction of God's essence.²⁹ The end result is that creation care should be an integral aspect of Christian character formation and sanctification.

2009 saw the publication of the multi-authored book, *The Spirit Renews the Face of The Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation*, which contains several significant chapters. R. Jerome Boone's contribution (chapter two) emphasises our calling as agents of shalom, including our care for the earth, the restraint of chaos, and in our care for the poor and for justice. We have been delegated 'to ensure 'shalom' for every part of creation'.³⁰

In chapter seven, Shane Clifton argues that if Pentecostals wish to claim, along with their forebears, to be proponents of a 'full gospel' they had better incorporate sincere environmental concern into their message. I will focus here on Clifton's view of fundamentalist, literal six-day creationism:

Eschatology is only one aspect of Pentecostalism's theology of creation, which is often framed at the other end of history with six day, young earth creationism. This fundamentalist outlook finds its theological impetus in literalistic readings of Scripture and in the affirmation of the uniqueness of humankind; the complete distinction between intelligent humanity and the 'dumb' ape... It sets up an explicit rejection of the inter-connectedness of all the earth – its climate, its geography, its vegetation, and its creatures – that has become the cornerstone of almost all theologies and philosophies grounding environmental movements. It is generally the case, therefore, that fundamentalist groups (including Pentecostals) advocating strict views of six day creation combine their vehement criticism of evolutionary science with an equally aggressive criticism of 'greenies...' The larger issue is that the establishment of a Bible/science opposition (which reflects the soul/body distinction) results in an overriding suspicion of the various scientific disciplines that are essential not only to the identification of environmental problems, but that are necessarily part of any workable solutions.³¹

Clifton then notes 'that neither young earth creationism nor the effective separation of humanity from creation is essential to Pentecostalism'.³² Forsaking such notions would allow Pentecostals to draw out the relationships between humanity and the created order, and help build productive dialogue between religion and science. But the anti-intellectualism rife within the movement worries him: teaching theistic evolution could easily alienate many Pentecostals, reinforcing the idea that ecology-minded Christians are 'liberal'.

²⁹ Stuebaker, *The Spirit of Creation*, 957-58, n. 15.

³⁰ R. Jerome Boone, 'Created for Shalom: Human Agency and Responsibility in the World', in Amos Yong (ed.), *The Spirit Renews the Face of The Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 21.

³¹ Shane Clifton, 'Preaching the Full Gospel in the Context of Global Environmental Crisis', in *The Spirit Renews*, 120-21.

³² Clifton, 'Preaching the Full Gospel', 121.

Following Yong, Clifton proposes a pneumatological theology of creation, in which the Spirit is intricately and actively involved from the very beginning of creation: ‘The connection between the Pentecostal affirmation that Christians can be ‘filled with the Spirit’ and the biblical declaration that the earth is likewise ‘Spirit filled’ (Ps. 139:7-9) provides a ready means for overcoming the fundamentalist separation between humanity and the remainder of creation, and paves the way for the inclusion of an ecological ethos in the movement’s identity and culture’.³³ The Pentecostal emphasis on physical healing also has ecological ramifications; since it places high value on the physical, thus subverting the spirit vs. matter divide. The ministry of healing, he says, should be extended to include healing for the sick environment.

In chapter eight, Matthew Tallman also takes the pneumatological creation approach, as well as linking environmental destruction to human sin: ‘The human complicity in the degradation of the environment was something initiated from the very beginning of the biblical story and has continued throughout the history of humanity and accelerated at the advent of the industrial age’.³⁴ He mentions Sally McFague’s insight that ‘because Christology is not just about a prophet...but about *God*...it means salvation is not just for me or for humans, but for all of creation; it gives hope for the well-being of all’.³⁵ Tallman as well sees ecological potential in the Pentecostal emphasis on healing: ‘What we need, is an expansion of healing theology and praxis from all of humanity to all of creation’.³⁶

In 2010, *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End* was published. Its co-editor, Robbie Waddell, seeks to lead Pentecostalism out of the futility of dispensational premillennialism (and the opposite but equally harmful ‘Kingdom Now’ eschatology). An important contribution is his careful exegeses of the supposed annihilation-of-the-world passages (e.g. 2 Pet 3:10), which, he shows, actually refer to the purification, redemption and restoration of Earth. Waddell’s eschatological alternative is not only believable, but also conducive to a healthy view of the world, in which the practice of sound ecology is an integral part of Christian spirituality.³⁷

A peaceful place, or so it looks from space
A closer look reveals the human race

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³³ Clifton, ‘Preaching the Full Gospel’, 131.

³⁴ Matthew Tallman, ‘Pentecostal Ecology: A Theological Paradigm for Pentecostal Environmentalism’, *The Spirit Renews*, 139-40.

³⁵ Sally McFague, ‘An Ecological Christology: Does Christianity Have It?’, in Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Ruether (eds.), *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 37. Cited in Tallman, ‘Pentecostal Ecology’, 139.

³⁶ Tallman, ‘Pentecostal Ecology’, 143-44.

³⁷ Robbie Waddell, ‘Apocalyptic Sustainability: The Future of Pentecostal Ecology’, in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies*, 73-88.

Full of hope, full of grace is the human face
 But afraid we may lay our home to waste....³⁸

A Pentecostal Trailblazer Arises

Moving from the academy to on-the-ground Pentecostalism, there has been at least one popular leader to champion ecology in the public square, and he happens to be one of the most influential Christian leaders on the planet. David (Paul) Yonggi Cho of Seoul, Korea, founder of the world's largest church, gave an unprecedented message during the New Years service in January 2005, part of which is reproduced here:

Just recently I found out many insufficiencies of myself in the forty-seven years of ministry. The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'. However, I misinterpreted it; I understood that God so loved 'humans', not 'the world', that He gave His one and only Son. What is the world? In the world, there are all things such as people, society, sky, land, ocean, plants, insects and animals. The Bible says that God so loved 'the world' that He gave His only Son; it does not limit and say that God so loved 'humans'.

We are responsible for nature. When Jesus died upon the cross, he redeemed for nature also. Even though nature carried a curse because of fall of Adam, the power of blood that Jesus shed on the cross saves nature. We should pray for nature. Even a bug and a worm, all is God's creation. They suffer living in this corrupt state. We have to stop damaging nature. We should pray for and bless nature. Humans can live when nature lives. We should develop such a movement.³⁹

Due to his scope of influence, Cho's epiphany is of great importance. And as Young-hoon Lee explains, it was no mere flash in the pan. He has continued to promote ecology in word and in deed: 'Having this belief, Cho has been increasingly committed to bring justice to nature and the environment. His participation with his associates in the clearing campaign of the oil spill in the Tae-an Peninsula in 2007 exemplified his and the church's commitment to environmental stewardship'.⁴⁰

Bridging an Unbridgeable Gap and Realistic Goal-Setting

At this point readers may find themselves in a paradox. Early on, I went to great lengths showing how anti-ecological Pentecostalism is, even to this day. Then I claimed it is producing some of the most profound and nuanced ecological thought in today's Christian world. Who, then, are the 'real'

³⁸ Barlow and Weir, 'Throwing Stones'.

³⁹ Cited in Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), 128-29.

⁴⁰ Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea*, 129.

Pentecostals? Is Becky Fischer more or less Pentecostal than Amos Yong? Both have impeccable Pentecostal credentials, yet they seem to inhabit entirely different worlds. And in fact, they do. Fischer inhabits the world of popular, on-the-ground Pentecostalism, while Yong and others inhabit Pentecostalism's academic quarter.

Herein lies a great challenge: how to bridge the divide. While engaging in inter-religious dialogue is common, this sort of intra-religious dialogue is almost unheard of. How is it that we can communicate well with Hindus and Buddhists, yet are unable to do so with our own co-religionists? Those in the scholarly wing must discover ways to speak with on-the-ground Pentecostals. The Becky Fischers of this world are neither mentally deficient nor seared of conscience. They are merely unreached. The Christian bookstores and church book tables they frequent do not carry the books and essays cited in this chapter.

It would be helpful to translate these ideas into language intelligible to non-specialists. It is easy to forget how lumbering our speech comes across to the majority of Christians, who are brilliant in their own fields but not called as theologians. When people have to hack trails through triple-canopied linguistic jungles, it can be somewhat frustrating. Words and phrases such as 'pneumatological', 'soteriological', 'two orders of grace', 'realised eschatology', 'economic and ontological trinity' and so forth, are appropriate in a chapter such as this. But they don't communicate much to non-specialists. As a friend who read one of the above-quoted essays remarked, 'When language becomes this arcane it is in danger of becoming completely irrelevant'.

I am not trained in neurology. However, I can profitably read a *Discover* magazine article titled, '*Your Brain in Real Time*', because, as much as possible, the writer avoided technical jargon. With nearly 600 million Pentecostals worldwide, it is imperative that we do likewise with our eco-theology. Consider again David Yonggi Cho's above sermon. He spoke clearly and plainly in a manner intelligible to any layperson. In doing so, he successfully imparted his ecological vision to around 700,000 people. This is our real challenge: a different sort of interpretation of tongues, which will plainly impart the church's ecological mandate to the hundreds of millions of Pentecostals worldwide.

For this to even be attempted, though, we must carefully consider and implement measureable goals. If we merely convince Pentecostals to feel good about ecology, we will spawn shallow symbolism, devoid of any substance. Said practically, if the outcome of our labour is that a Pentecostal family someday feels virtuous for using gimmick-marketed 'eco-friendly' Christmas lights, made in China and sold in Walmart, it will be an utter waste of everyone's time and resources.

As for goal setting, we need first consider the big picture. What do we really mean when speaking of a 'good environment'? Depending upon the ideology of whom we ask, it could mean anything from a malarial swamp

with pretty reeds growing in it, to the global enforcement of a meatless diet, or, more realistically, a place in which the truly undesirable by-products of human civilization (e.g., various types of pollution and hunting to extinction) are minimized as much as possible; and human innovation is harnessed to benefit the natural order. Since there is not one homogenous Pentecostal Movement, various Pentecostal groups will have to answer the question for themselves. The important thing is that they do in fact ask.

Relatedly, ecological goals must be measurable. What steps should be taken to implement them? What is the evidence that each step will achieve the desired goal? What about the environmental trade-offs of a particular programme? In Kunming, China, for example, non-polluting, electric scooters have replaced the badly polluting ones we still use in India, which burn a mixture of petrol and motor oil. Instead using fossil fuels, Kunming residents simply charge their scooter batteries each night. But before getting overly excited about this, there is much to consider. The charging of Kunming's many thousands of scooter batteries each night creates a substantial increase in power consumption, and Kunming is serviced by coal-burning power plants. The environmental benefit of burning x less litres of gasoline-oil mix per year must be weighed against the environmental impact of mining, transporting and burning x extra tonnes of coal. This requires precise data and advanced calculations, and can be complicated by any number of factors, one being that perhaps not all the power plants servicing Kunming are equally efficient in emissions control.

If one raises these sorts of questions and complications in rapid-fire succession to eco-zealots in a local coffee house, they will begin to stammer. Some will become irritated. Let us be realistic: most people do not want to, nor are they qualified to, give real answers. Rather, they just want to feel good about themselves. It is much easier to slap an 'I've gone green' sticker on an electric scooter and just *feel good* about it, than to consider such things in a disciplined manner.

If we are unwilling or unable to interact with such questions, all our chapters, essays and talk of ecology are potentially absurd. And in fact, most of us are unable. The complex web of science interacting with economics, legislation and other factors is beyond the expertise of most religious specialists. Therefore, I close with a proposal for Pentecostal ecology that, though rather small and humble compared to something as grand as 'saving the planet', is also measurable, and keeps religion from overstepping its bounds into things of which it is unqualified to speak. The goal is simply to foster an intellectual climate amongst Pentecostals in which two changes occur over the next few decades:

1. Care for the earth, rather than being denigrated or ignored, becomes highly valued as a Christian virtue, or as Studebaker put it, as ‘an arena of the Spirit’s work’ and an integral ‘form of sanctification’.⁴¹
2. Science is not looked upon with suspicion, as the enemy of faith. Instead, science and faith enhance one another.

If Pentecostals worldwide learn at the start of their Christian lives to value and care for creation, and to simultaneously embrace science, Pentecostalism will become part of the solution to the global ecological crisis.

To implement this goal, Pentecostal theologians should first (as mentioned above) translate their theologies of ecology and science into plain, intelligible language. Second, they, together with the institutions where they teach, should seek grants to publish and distribute their ideas in attractively-covered books and booklets; and through professionally designed websites, which, for a fee, will get first preference in search engines such as Google and Yahoo. Third, they should seek to persuade denominational leaders to actively endorse the programme, which, if successful, will greatly speed the movement of ideas from the academy to the church.

To measure this goal, surveys could be conducted; first at the programme’s onset, then after ten years, and then twenty, and so forth. (Survey costs would be written into grant proposals. The results, if favourable, could aid the acquisition of future grant monies.) A few theoretical examples are:

- Surveys targeted at youth- and young-adult pastors, regarding the education and career choices of their young: How many of them, over the past five years, have gone into the natural and applied sciences; and more specifically, did any chose environmental sciences? Of those who entered the legal field, how many chose environmental law? Have any chosen careers in environmental & natural resource economics?
- Surveys targeted at the students of a denomination’s seminaries, universities, or ministry schools, seeking to determine their attitudes toward ecology and science, and what effect, if any, these attitudes have on their daily life choices.
- A similar survey targeted at the laity in local churches, which is clear and concise enough for use among all types of people, from plumbers to professors.

While I would not universally prescribe this exact programme for all Pentecostals everywhere, it is an example of something that could be realistically implemented and measured.

Will Pentecostals succeed or fail? Will we translate our academic tongues into the languages of the people, so they may hear us speaking

⁴¹ Studebaker, *The Spirit of Creation*, 953-54.

about this urgent mandate? Will we set goals that are reasonable, implementable and measurable, rather than prosing vaguely about the 'good creation' and 'saving the planet'?

These are open questions which only time will answer. And thus this chapter ends with an open-ended quote:

If the game is lost, then we're all the same
No one left to place or take the blame
We will leave this place an empty stone
Or a shining ball of blue we can call our home.⁴²



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⁴² Barlow, 'Throwing Stones'.

CONCLUSION

Editors

Pentecost in World Christianity

The Edinburgh Centenary series of publications on World Christianity would have been incomplete without a volume on Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. At the beginning of the 20th century this was a movement that was virtually unknown. In many areas including Africa movements and churches of the Spirit were even considered an aberration of Christianity. They therefore attracted all kinds of value-laden and pejorative epithets to the consternation of insiders who thought they were experiencing and reliving the spirit of Pentecost in fulfilment of God's promise. Today, Pentecostalism and its historically younger progenies, the various charismatic movements, have re-emerged as the most influential stream of Christianity in the world. Historians of world Christianity including David B. Barrett, Lamin O. Sanneh, Andrew F. Walls and Kwame Bediako have often pointed to the southern shift in the demographic centre of Christianity in our times. Much of this shift, we are quick to add, has been down to the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism.

Thus in Nigeria, just to cite one example from the essays, Aguwuom writes that the dominance of the language of Pentecostalism in popular spaces has set religiosity in Nigeria on a fast lane. We are at a point where any Christian group or religious group that wants to be relevant must 'pentecostalise', by adopting the language of Pentecostalism. Not only has Pentecostalism grown in the non-western world but also in both Western and Eastern Europe today, the single largest Christian churches are Pentecostal mega size congregations that are incidentally led by people from the underside of history. Beyond Pentecostal and charismatic evangelisation, church planting and church growth, issues which all find space in this volume, the single most important contribution that the movement has made to world Christianity, is its attempt to rectify what our colleague Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen refers to as the 'pneumatological deficit' that had plagued Christian presence in the world.

The geographical spread of the essays in this volume both in terms of the contexts within which they have been written, the issues they raise and the national and ethnic identities of the contributors are reflective of the spirit of the biblical Pentecost. Pentecost was about the fulfilment of the promise of the outpouring of God's Spirit on 'all flesh'. On the day it happened in

Acts 2, not only did beneficiaries come from among all the nations and people groups of the world – Arabs, Africans and Europeans – but also Peter was clear that it was a promise that held good for present and future generations. ‘The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call’ (Lk. 2:38). And indeed the crowd had heard the spirit-filled ‘declaring the wonders of God’ in familiar ‘tongues’ and so making the connections between the promise and fulfilment of Pentecost and experiencing the phenomenon was not hard to see. In contemporary times therefore, God’s promise has been reactivated in world Christianity through the different Pentecostal movements at work in various parts of the mission field.

In this section, we refer to ‘Pentecost in world Christianity’ rather than to ‘Pentecostalism’ because Christian ‘isms’ are often only human interpretations of what God may be doing. The different dates of the outbreak of Pentecostal revivals around the world in since the closing decades of the twentieth century, is an indication that much of it occurred in the around the same period in world history. This means at the time when Edinburgh 1910 was in session, God had already started pouring out his Spirit and raising a movement that was set to change the course of world Christianity and mission. This has been happening for more than a century now and today, it is impossible to understand world Christian mission without an understanding of Pentecostalism. Allan Anderson sets a good tone with his reference to Pentecostalism in terms of a ‘multidimensional global movement’. This is an observation that concurs with several other publications that have preceded ours. The notable ones emerging within the last two decades would include: Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Development Worldwide*; Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*; Karla Poewe, *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*; and Allan Anderson’s own most recent work, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*.¹ It significant that Anderson’s book is for example part of a larger project – Oxford Series on world Christianity – edited by Lamin Sanneh.

The rest of the essays in this volume, in various ways and from different perspectives, attempt to discuss the sort of religious, social and theological features and practices that mark out Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity as a distinctive stream of world Christianity. It is important that within the first three chapters, issues relating to the Pentecostal understanding of

¹ Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997); Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); Karla Poewe (ed.), *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

mission which occurs within the ambience of the work of the Spirit, empowerment, and the pneumatological orientation of Pentecostal Christology are all dealt with. On Pentecostal Christology, for example, we cannot claim that Pentecostals possess any understanding of who Jesus Christ was from traditional Christian teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. What Pentecostals have done is through an experiential theology to show the Christian world that it is impossible to do Christology without Pneumatology. For, after all, when Jesus told his disciples to wait in the city for the 'promise of the Father', he was talk about his own return to empower them through the presence of the Spirit. That process began before Pentecost, when appearing amongst them after the resurrection, Jesus breathed on the disciples telling them 'receive the Holy Spirit'. Earlier on in John 14:18 he had admonished: 'I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you' and when he did come, it was through the Holy Spirit as God's empowering *presence* for mission.

It is the empowering presence of the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ that has made possible the dynamic and aggressive church-planting endeavours that Julie Ma writes about in chapter 6. An important reflection on the work of the Spirit in world Christianity as mediated through Pentecostals is evident in the Yoido Full Gospel Church (chapter 7). That, by the end of the twentieth century, the world had to look at the global south to find the world's largest congregation and that this church is Pentecostal speaks a lot about our belief in promise, fulfilment and experience of the Spirit in Christian mission. The poured out Spirit of God is also the one who grants the blessings that Wonsuk Ma discusses in chapter 8. Most of the other essays in this volume deal with issues that arise out of the pneumatological ones at the beginning because they talk about healing and reconciliation and principalities and powers. Important addition to these is the essays that deal with Pentecostal social intervention programs and the theology of religions. In the past Pentecostals have been faulted for being so heavenly minded that they were of little earthly use. Today, across the world, there are hospitals, orphanages, and universities bearing the names of Pentecostal churches. The prosperity gospel has often been attacked for being materialistic but the fact that it also talks about empowerment has driven Pentecostal churches and movements to bring much professionalism into social interventionism in order that their projects may be unique among the lot available.

The essays here do not necessarily romanticize Pentecostalism. They talk about abuses including the materialism of the prosperity gospel and the demonization of the 'other' in terms of dealings with other faiths. In many contexts including Africa some of the negative developments, misuse of resources, media exhibitionism and the like have cast contemporary Pentecostalism in particular in some negative light. Nevertheless, the authors in this volume demonstrate how a movement driven right from its early history by a focus of the power of the Holy Spirit and evangelical

zealousness has been used by God to change the face of world Christianity. We are aware of the redemption that Pentecostalism needs in various places in terms of its teachings, mission methods, the flamboyant lifestyles of some its leaders and so on and so forth but that its emphasis on the experiential power of the Spirit has changed world Christian history is not in doubt.

A Promise for the Present and the Future

While the book attempts to include as many major issue of Pentecostal mission today as possible, it is clear that new issues and agenda will surface in the future particularly those relevant to the global Pentecostal churches. In this sense, this collection also serves as an example of reflections of Pentecostal mission practices, rigorously interacting with biblical teachings, Pentecostal spiritual traditions and ever-changing social contexts.

Although Pentecostal theology of mission is still an emerging field, its promise to the future points to a new kind of robust connection between grassroots efforts in mission and theological reflection thereon. Rather than being merely an academic exercise, at its best it is what Christian theology has always been, namely ‘thinking after’ what is happening in local churches, ‘mission fields’, and in the world. That kind of praxis-oriented, communally shaped theologizing may be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to the vibrant creativity of practitioners.

This Pentecostal mission ethos of ‘theological thinking after practical action’ has been revealed almost in every area of Pentecostal mission, thus each chapter of the book. For example, let’s take the theme of evangelism (again). The expansion of Pentecostalism has much to do with the focus emphasis on ‘soul winning’ resulting in church planting and church growth. Yes, this obsessed commitment to evangelism has raised uncomfortable issues such as proselytism and local-church centred ‘individualism’. However, the expansion of global Christianity today owes greatly to this Pentecostal mission focus. In some ways, this is where ordinary believers are turned into empowered mission players, as church planting and church growth movements are predominantly a grassroots movement. D Yonggi Cho’s renowned cell-group system, for example, epitomizes this. This gives us hope that global Christianity will continue its expansion, even breaking the one-third line of world population. This has been the wall that world Christianity has not been able to overcome in its entire history, except once, for a short while. Pentecostal mission holds an important key to the breaking of this mission impossibility. For this reason, the church growth movement and the mega-church phenomenon beg a new and unbiased close look.

A more ‘ugly’ example of Pentecostal ‘just-do-it, and think later’ is the notoriously negative and yet amazingly popular prosperity gospel. The horrible stories of the fall of prosperity celebrities did not help the

reputation of this troubling version of 'Pentecostal' message. Nonetheless, beneath the ugly surface, its amazing transformative impact on lives and communities has been effectively buried. Before embarrassed Pentecostals and Christians permanently dismiss it as a self-help tactic in Christian language at the best, it will be a legitimate theological call to Pentecostal mission minds to discern, identify, recover, articulate and missionally re-appropriate valuable theological elements of the prosperity gospel. And this 'salvaged' theological garbage has a potential to re-energize western Christianity and to continue fuelling Christian growth in the global South. This process may serve as a model to 'redeem' other troubling Pentecostal mission topics.

Pentecostals have been by nature activists. Church planters, evangelists and cross-cultural mission workers have demonstrated 'act now and think later' ethos. This approach has produced both amazing results as well as terrible mistakes. Mission is learnt while doing it. Thus, reflection becomes essential so that the lessons are preserved and mistakes are identified not to be repeated. Therefore, Pentecostal mission scholarship includes description, analysis and evaluation of what happened. It will require humble honesty, as the mistakes are often a result of ignorance. Or in Pentecostal expression, it is either the people of the Spirit failed to discern the Spirit's voice, failed to obey if heard right.

A noble, but also reachable goal in Pentecostal mission may be 'thinking while acting'. The best scenario will be that activists learn to reflect, while thinkers maintain their feet 'dragged in the (mission) water'. This will require a healthy balance between theological intentionality and practical (Pentecostal mission) intuitivity. A health portrait of Pentecostal mission will always be an active interface between thinking and acting, often in healthy tension. Most likely Pentecostal missiology will continue to have the smell of 'dust; coming from challenging mission 'fields'.

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REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES

David A. Kerr, Kenneth R. Ross (Eds)

Mission Then and Now

2009 / 978-1-870345-73-6 / 343pp (paperback)

2009 / 978-1-870345-76-7 / 343pp (hardback)

No one can hope to fully understand the modern Christian missionary movement without engaging substantially with the World Missionary Conference, held at Edinburgh in 1910. This book is the first to systematically examine the eight Commissions which reported to Edinburgh 1910 and gave the conference much of its substance and enduring value. It will deepen and extend the reflection being stimulated by the upcoming centenary and will kindle the missionary imagination for 2010 and beyond.

Daryl M. Balia, Kirsteen Kim (Eds)

Witnessing to Christ Today

2010 / 978-1-870345-77-4 / 301pp (hardback)

This volume, the second in the Edinburgh 2010 series, includes reports of the nine main study groups working on different themes for the celebration of the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. Their collaborative work brings together perspectives that are as inclusive as possible of contemporary world Christianity and helps readers to grasp what it means in different contexts to be 'witnessing to Christ today'.

Claudia Währisch-Oblau, Fidon Mwombeki (Eds)

Mission Continues

Global Impulses for the 21st Century

2010 / 978-1-870345-82-8 / 271pp (hardback)

In May 2009, 35 theologians from Asia, Africa and Europe met in Wuppertal, Germany, for a consultation on mission theology organized by the United Evangelical Mission: Communion of 35 Churches in Three Continents. The aim was to participate in the 100th anniversary of the Edinburgh conference through a study process and reflect on the challenges for mission in the 21st century. This book brings together these papers written by experienced practitioners from around the world.

Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (Eds)

Holistic Mission

God's Plan for God's People

2010 / 978-1-870345-85-9 / 268pp (hardback)

Holistic mission, or integral mission, implies God is concerned with the whole person, the whole community, body, mind and spirit. This book discusses the meaning of the holistic gospel, how it has developed, and implications for the church. It takes a global, eclectic approach, with 19 writers, all of whom have much experience in, and commitment to, holistic mission. It addresses critically and honestly one of the most exciting, and challenging, issues facing the church today. To be part of God's plan for God's people, the church must take holistic mission to the world.

Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (Eds)

Mission Today and Tomorrow

2010 / 978-1-870345-91-0 / 450pp (hardback)

There are moments in our lives when we come to realise that we are participating in the triune God's mission. If we believe the church to be as sign and symbol of the reign of God in the world, then we are called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God's mission of

love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. We can all participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.

Tormod Engelsen, Erling Lundebjerg and Dagfinn Solheim (Eds)

The Church Going Global

Mission and Globalisation

2011 / 978-1-870345-93-4 / 262pp (hardback)

The New Testament church is... universal and local at the same time. The universal, one and holy apostolic church appears in local manifestations. Missiologically speaking... the church can take courage as she faces the increasing impact of globalisation on local communities today. Being universal and concrete, the church is geared for the simultaneous challenges of the global and local.

Marina Ngurusangzeli Behera (Ed)

Interfaith Relations after One Hundred Years

Christian Mission among Other Faiths

2011 / 978-1-870345-96-5 / 338pp (hardback)

The essays of this book reflect not only the acceptance and celebration of pluralism within India but also by extension an acceptance as well as a need for unity among Indian Christians of different denominations. The essays were presented and studied at a preparatory consultation on Study Theme II: Christian Mission Among Other Faiths at the United Theological College, India July 2009.

Lalsangkima Pachuau and Knud Jørgensen (Eds)

Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic Age

Christian Mission among Other Faiths

2011 / 978-1-870345-95-8 / 277pp (hardback)

In a world where plurality of faiths is increasingly becoming a norm of life, insights on the theology of religious plurality are needed to strengthen our understanding of our own faith and the faith of others. Even though religious diversity is not new, we are seeing an upsurge in interest on the theologies of religion among all Christian confessional traditions. It can be claimed that no other issue in Christian mission is more important and more difficult than the theologies of religions.

Beth Snodderly and A Scott Moreau (Eds)

Evangelical Frontier Mission

Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel

2011 / 978-1-870345-98-9 / 312pp (hardback)

This important volume demonstrates that 100 years after the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Evangelism has become truly global. Twenty-first-century Evangelism continues to focus on frontier mission, but significantly, and in the spirit of Edinburgh 1910, it also has re-engaged social action.

Rolv Olsen (Ed)

Mission and Postmodernities

2011 / 978-1-870345-97-2 / 279pp (hardback)

This volume takes on meaning because its authors honestly struggle with and debate how we should relate to postmodernities. Should our response be accommodation, relativizing or counter-culture? How do we strike a balance between listening and understanding, and at the same time exploring how postmodernities influence the interpretation and application of the Bible as the normative story of God's mission in the world?

Cathy Ross (Ed)

Life-Widening Mission

2012 / 978-1-908355-00-3 / 163pp (hardback)

It is clear from the essays collected here that the experience of the 2010 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh was both affirming and frustrating for those taking part - affirming because of its recognition of how the centre of gravity has moved in global Christianity; frustrating because of the relative slowness of so many global Christian bodies to catch up with this and to embody it in the way they do business and in the way they represent themselves. These reflections will - or should - provide plenty of food for thought in the various councils of the Communion in the coming years.

Beate Fagerli, Knud Jørgensen, Rolv Olsen, Kari Storstein Haug and
Knut Tveitereid (Eds)

A Learning Missional Church

Reflections from Young Missiologists

2012 / 978-1-908355-01-0 / 218pp (hardback)

Cross-cultural mission has always been a primary learning experience for the church. It pulls us out of a mono-cultural understanding and helps us discover a legitimate theological pluralism which opens up for new perspectives in the Gospel. Translating the Gospel into new languages and cultures is a human and divine means of making us learn new 'incarnations' of the Good News.

Emma Wild-Wood & Peniel Rajkumar (Eds)

Foundations for Mission

2012 / 978-1-908355-12-6 / 309pp (hardback)

This volume provides an important resource for those wishing to gain an overview of significant issues in contemporary missiology whilst understanding how they are applied in particular contexts.

Wonsuk Ma & Kenneth R Ross (Eds)

Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship

2013 / 978-1-908355-24-9 / 248pp (hardback)

This book argues for the primacy of spirituality in the practice of mission. Since God is the primary agent of mission and God works through the power of the Holy Spirit, it is through openness to the Spirit that mission finds its true character and has its authentic impact.

Stephen B Bevans (Ed)

A Century of Catholic Mission

2013 / 978-1-908355-14-0 / 337pp (hardback)

A Century of Catholic Mission surveys the complex and rich history and theology of Roman Catholic Mission in the one hundred years since the 1910 Edinburgh World Mission Conference. Essays written by an international team of Catholic mission scholars focus on Catholic Mission in every region of the world, summarize church teaching on mission before and after the watershed event of the Second Vatican Council, and reflect on a wide variety of theological issues.

Robert Schreiter & Knud Jørgensen (Eds)

Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation

2013 / 978-1-908355-26-3 / 382pp (hardback)

There is hope – even if it is “Hope in a Fragile World”, as the concluding chapter of Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation puts it. At the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of hope and reconciliation. Nothing could be more relevant and more necessary in a broken world than this Christian message of hope and reconciliation. ... I would like to congratulate the editors of Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation, for they listened carefully and planned with farsightedness. ... This rich book offers a valuable elucidation of the importance and the understanding of mission as ministry of reconciliation.

REGNUM STUDIES IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

David Emmanuel Singh (Ed)

Jesus and the Cross

Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts

2008 / 978-1-870345-65-1 / 226pp

The Cross reminds us that the sins of the world are not borne through the exercise of power but through Jesus Christ's submission to the will of the Father. The papers in this volume are organised in three parts: scriptural, contextual and theological. The central question being addressed is: how do Christians living in contexts, where Islam is a majority or minority religion, experience, express or think of the Cross?

Sung-wook Hong

Naming God in Korea

The Case of Protestant Christianity

2008 / 978-1-870345-66-8 / 170pp (hardback)

Since Christianity was introduced to Korea more than a century ago, one of the most controversial issues has been the Korean term for the Christian ‘God’. This issue is not merely about naming the Christian God in Korean language, but it relates to the question of theological contextualization - the relationship between the gospel and culture - and the question of Korean Christian identity. This book demonstrates the nature of the gospel in relation to cultures, i.e., the universality of the gospel expressed in all human cultures.

Hubert van Beek (Ed)

Revisioning Christian Unity

The Global Christian Forum

2009 / 978-1-870345-74-3 / 288pp (hardback)

This book contains the records of the Global Christian Forum gathering held in Limuru near Nairobi, Kenya, on 6 – 9 November 2007 as well as the papers presented at that historic event. Also included are a summary of the Global Christian Forum process from its inception until the 2007 gathering and the reports of the evaluation of the process that was carried out in 2008.

Young-hoon Lee

The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea

Its Historical and Theological Development

2009 / 978-1-870345-67-5 / 174pp (hardback)

This book traces the historical and theological development of the Holy Spirit Movement in Korea through six successive periods (from 1900 to the present time). These periods are characterized by repentance and revival (1900-20), persecution and suffering under Japanese

occupation (1920-40), confusion and division (1940-60), explosive revival in which the Pentecostal movement played a major role in the rapid growth of Korean churches (1960-80), the movement reaching out to all denominations (1980-2000), and the new context demanding the Holy Spirit movement to open new horizons in its mission engagement (2000-).

Paul Hang-Sik Cho
Eschatology and Ecology

Experiences of the Korean Church

2010 / 978-1-870345-75-0 / 260pp (hardback)

This book raises the question of why Korean people, and Korean Protestant Christians in particular, pay so little attention to ecological issues. The author argues that there is an important connection (or elective affinity) between this lack of attention and the other-worldly eschatology that is so dominant within Korean Protestant Christianity.

Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (Eds)

The Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity

Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys

2010 / 978-1-870345-80-0 / 759pp

This major reference work is the first ever comprehensive study of Theological Education in Christianity of its kind. With contributions from over 90 international scholars and church leaders, it aims to be easily accessible across denominational, cultural, educational, and geographic boundaries. The Handbook will aid international dialogue and networking among theological educators, institutions, and agencies.

David Emmanuel Singh & Bernard C Farr (Eds)

Christianity and Education

Shaping of Christian Context in Thinking

2010 / 978-1-870345-81-1 / 374pp

Christianity and Education is a collection of papers published in *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* over a period of 15 years. The articles represent a spectrum of Christian thinking addressing issues of institutional development for theological education, theological studies in the context of global mission, contextually aware/informed education, and academies which deliver such education, methodologies and personal reflections.

J. Andrew Kirk

Civilisations in Conflict?

Islam, the West and Christian Faith

2011 / 978-1-870345-87-3 / 205pp

Samuel Huntington's thesis, which argues that there appear to be aspects of Islam that could be on a collision course with the politics and values of Western societies, has provoked much controversy. The purpose of this study is to offer a particular response to Huntington's thesis by making a comparison between the origins of Islam and Christianity.

David Emmanuel Singh (Ed)

Jesus and the Incarnation

Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts

2011 / 978-1-870345-90-3 / 245pp

In the dialogues of Christians with Muslims nothing is more fundamental than the Cross, the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus. Building on the *Jesus and the Cross*, this book contains voices of Christians living in various 'Islamic contexts' and reflecting on the Incarnation of Jesus. The aim and hope of these reflections is that the papers weaved around

the notion of 'the Word' will not only promote dialogue among Christians on the roles of the Person and the Book but, also, create a positive environment for their conversations with Muslim neighbours.

Ivan M Satyavrata
God Has Not left Himself Without Witness
2011 / 978-1-870345-79-8 / 264pp

Since its earliest inception the Christian Church has had to address the question of what common ground exists between Christian faiths and other religions. This issue is not merely of academic interest but one with critical existential and socio-political consequences. This study presents a case for the revitalization of the fulfillment tradition based on a recovery and assessment of the fulfillment approaches of Indian Christian converts in the pre-independence period.

Bal Krishna Sharma
From this World to the Next
Christian Identity and Funerary Rites in Nepal
2013 / 978-1-908355-08-9 / 238pp

This book explores and analyses funerary rite struggles in a nation where Christianity is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and many families have multi-faith, who go through traumatic experiences at the death of their family members. The author has used an applied theological approach to explore and analyse the findings in order to address the issue of funerary rites with which the Nepalese church is struggling.

J Kwabena Asamoah-Gyada
Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity
Interpretations from an African Context
2013 / 978-1-908355-07-2 / 194pp

Pentecostalism is the fastest growing stream of Christianity in the world. The real evidence for the significance of Pentecostalism lies in the actual churches they have built and the numbers they attract. This work interprets key theological and missiological themes in African Pentecostalism by using material from the live experiences of the movement itself.

Isabel Apawo Phiri & Dietrich Werner (Eds)
Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
2013 / 978-1-908355-19-5 / 1110pp (hardback)

The *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* is a wake-up call for African churches to give proper prominence to theological education institutions and their programmes which serve them. It is unique, comprehensive and ambitious in its aim and scope.

Hope Antone, Wati Longchar, Hyunju Bae, Huang Po Ho, Dietrich Werner (Eds)
Asian Handbook for Theological Education and Ecumenism
2013 / 978-1-908355-30-0 / 675pp (hardback)

This impressive and comprehensive book focuses on key resources for teaching Christian unity and common witness in Asian contexts. It is a collection of articles that reflects the ongoing 'double wrestle' with the texts of biblical tradition as well as with contemporary contexts. It signals an investment towards the future of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

David Emmanuel Singh and Bernard C Farr (Eds)

The Bible and Christian Ethics

2013 / 978-1-908355-20-1 / 217pp

This book contains papers from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies' quarterly journal, Transformation, on the topic of Christian Ethics. Here, Mission Studies is understood in its widest sense to also encompass Christian Ethics. At the very hearts of it lies the Family as the basic unit of society. All the papers together seek to contribute to understanding how Christian thought is shaped in contexts each of which poses its own challenge to Christian living in family and in broader society.

Martin Allaby

Inequality, Corruption and the Church

Challenges & Opportunities in the Global Church

2013 / 978-1-908355-16-4 / 228pp

Why are economic inequalities greatest in the southern countries where most people are Christians? This book teases out the influences that have created this situation, and concludes that Christians could help reduce economic inequalities by opposing corruption. Interviews in the Philippines, Kenya, Zambia and Peru reveal opportunities and challenges for Christians as they face up to corruption.

Paul Alexander and Al Tizon (Eds)

Following Jesus

Journeys in Radical Discipleship – Essays in Honor of Ronald J Sider

2013 / 978-1-908355-27-0 / 228pp

Ronald J. Sider and the organization that he founded, *Evangelicals for Social Action*, are most respected for their pioneering work in the area of evangelical social concern. However, Sider's great contribution to social justice is but a part of a larger vision – namely, biblical discipleship. His works, which span more than four decades, have guided the faithful to be authentic gospel-bearers in ecclesial, cultural and political arenas. This book honors Ron Sider, by bringing together a group of scholar-activists, old and young, to reflect upon the gospel and its radical implications for the 21st century.

REGNUM STUDIES IN MISSION

Kwame Bediako

Theology and Identity

The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa

1992 / 978-1870345-10-1 / 507pp

The author examines the question of Christian identity in the context of the Graeco-Roman culture of the early Roman Empire. He then addresses the modern African predicament of quests for identity and integration.

Christopher Sugden

Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus

The Practice and Theology of Christian Social Witness

in Indonesia and India 1974–1996

1997 / 1-870345-26-6 / 496pp

This study focuses on contemporary holistic mission with the poor in India and Indonesia combined with the call to transformation of all life in Christ with micro-credit enterprise

schemes. 'The literature on contextual theology now has a new standard to rise to' – Lamin Sanneh (Yale University, USA).

Hwa Yung

Mangoes or Bananas?

The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology

1997 / 1-870345-25-5 / 274pp

Asian Christian thought remains largely captive to Greek dualism and Enlightenment rationalism because of the overwhelming dominance of Western culture. Authentic contextual Christian theologies will emerge within Asian Christianity with a dual recovery of confidence in culture and the gospel.

Keith E. Eitel

Paradigm Wars

The Southern Baptist International Mission Board Faces the Third Millennium

1999 / 1-870345-12-6 / 140pp

The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest denominational mission agency in North America. This volume chronicles the historic and contemporary forces that led to the IMB's recent extensive reorganization, providing the most comprehensive case study to date of a historic mission agency restructuring to continue its mission purpose into the twenty-first century more effectively.

Samuel Jayakumar

Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion

Historical Resources for a Contemporary Debate

1999 / 81-7214-497-0 / 434pp

(Published jointly with ISPCK)

The main focus of this historical study is social change and transformation among the Dalit Christian communities in India. Historiography tests the evidence in the light of the conclusions of the modern Dalit liberation theologians.

Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (Eds)

Mission as Transformation

A Theology of the Whole Gospel

1999 / 978-18703455-13-2 / 522pp

This book brings together in one volume twenty five years of biblical reflection on mission practice with the poor from around the world. This volume helps anyone understand how evangelicals, struggling to unite evangelism and social action, found their way in the last twenty five years to the biblical view of mission in which God calls all human beings to love God and their neighbour; never creating a separation between the two.

Christopher Sugden

Gospel, Culture and Transformation

2000 / 1-870345-32-3 / 152pp

A Reprint, with a New Introduction,

of Part Two of Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus

Gospel, Culture and Transformation explores the practice of mission especially in relation to transforming cultures and communities. - 'Transformation is to enable God's vision of society to be actualised in all relationships: social, economic and spiritual, so that God's will

may be reflected in human society and his love experienced by all communities, especially the poor.’

Bernhard Ott

Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education

A Critical Assessment of some Recent Developments

in Evangelical Theological Education

2001 / 1-870345-14-9 / 382pp

Beyond Fragmentation is an enquiry into the development of Mission Studies in evangelical theological education in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland between 1960 and 1995. The author undertakes a detailed examination of the paradigm shifts which have taken place in recent years in both the theology of mission and the understanding of theological education.

Gideon Githiga

The Church as the Bulwark against Authoritarianism

Development of Church and State Relations in Kenya, with Particular Reference to the Years after Political Independence 1963-1992

2002 / 1-870345-38-x / 218pp

‘All who care for love, peace and unity in Kenyan society will want to read this careful history by Bishop Githiga of how Kenyan Christians, drawing on the Bible, have sought to share the love of God, bring his peace and build up the unity of the nation, often in the face of great difficulties and opposition.’ Canon Dr Chris Sugden, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Myung Sung-Hoon, Hong Young-Gi (Eds)

Charis and Charisma

David Yonggi Cho and the Growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church

2003 / 978-1870345-45-3 / 218pp

This book discusses the factors responsible for the growth of the world’s largest church. It expounds the role of the Holy Spirit, the leadership, prayer, preaching, cell groups and creativity in promoting church growth. It focuses on God’s grace (charis) and inspiring leadership (charisma) as the two essential factors and the book’s purpose is to present a model for church growth worldwide.

Samuel Jayakumar

Mission Reader

Historical Models for Wholistic Mission in the Indian Context

2003 / 1-870345-42-8 / 250pp

(Published jointly with ISPCK)

This book is written from an evangelical point of view revalidating and reaffirming the Christian commitment to wholistic mission. The roots of the ‘wholistic mission’ combining ‘evangelism and social concerns’ are to be located in the history and tradition of Christian evangelism in the past; and the civilizing purpose of evangelism is compatible with modernity as an instrument in nation building.

Bob Robinson

Christians Meeting Hindus

An Analysis and Theological Critique of the Hindu-Christian Encounter in India

2004 / 987-1870345-39-2 / 392pp

This book focuses on the Hindu-Christian encounter, especially the intentional meeting called dialogue, mainly during the last four decades of the twentieth century, and specifically in India itself.

Gene Early

Leadership Expectations

How Executive Expectations are Created and Used in a Non-Profit Setting

2005 / 1-870345-30-9 / 276pp

The author creates an Expectation Enactment Analysis to study the role of the Chancellor of the University of the Nations-Kona, Hawaii. This study is grounded in the field of managerial work, jobs, and behaviour and draws on symbolic interactionism, role theory, role identity theory and enactment theory. The result is a conceptual framework for developing an understanding of managerial roles.

Tharcisse Gatwa

The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994

2005 / 978-1870345-24-8 / 300pp

(Reprinted 2011)

Since the early years of the twentieth century Christianity has become a new factor in Rwandan society. This book investigates the role Christian churches played in the formulation and development of the racial ideology that culminated in the 1994 genocide.

Julie Ma

Mission Possible

Biblical Strategies for Reaching the Lost

2005 / 978-1870345-37-8 / 142pp

This is a missiology book for the church which liberates missiology from the specialists for the benefit of every believer. It also serves as a textbook that is simple and friendly, and yet solid in biblical interpretation. This book links the biblical teaching to the actual and contemporary missiological settings with examples, making the Bible come alive to the reader.

I. Mark Beaumont

Christology in Dialogue with Muslims

*A Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims
from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries*

2005 / 978-1870345-46-0 / 227pp

This book analyses Christian presentations of Christ for Muslims in the most creative periods of Christian-Muslim dialogue, the first half of the ninth century and the second half of the twentieth century. In these two periods, Christians made serious attempts to present their faith in Christ in terms that take into account Muslim perceptions of him, with a view to bridging the gap between Muslim and Christian convictions.

Thomas Czövek,
Three Seasons of Charismatic Leadership
*A Literary-Critical and Theological Interpretation of the Narrative of
Saul, David and Solomon*
2006 / 978-1870345-48-4 / 272pp

This book investigates the charismatic leadership of Saul, David and Solomon. It suggests that charismatic leaders emerge in crisis situations in order to resolve the crisis by the charisma granted by God. Czövek argues that Saul proved himself as a charismatic leader as long as he acted resolutely and independently from his mentor Samuel. In the author's eyes, Saul's failure to establish himself as a charismatic leader is caused by his inability to step out from Samuel's shadow.

Richard Burgess
Nigeria's Christian Revolution
The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)
2008 / 978-1-870345-63-7 / 347pp

This book describes the revival that occurred among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and the new Pentecostal churches it generated, and documents the changes that have occurred as the movement has responded to global flows and local demands. As such, it explores the nature of revivalist and Pentecostal experience, but does so against the backdrop of local socio-political and economic developments, such as decolonisation and civil war, as well as broader processes, such as modernisation and globalisation.

David Emmanuel Singh & Bernard C Farr (Eds)
Christianity and Cultures
Shaping Christian Thinking in Context
2008 / 978-1-870345-69-9 / 271pp

This volume marks an important milestone, the 25th anniversary of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS). The papers here have been exclusively sourced from Transformation, a quarterly journal of OCMS, and seek to provide a tripartite view of Christianity's engagement with cultures by focusing on the question: how is Christian thinking being formed or reformed through its interaction with the varied contexts it encounters? The subject matters include different strands of theological-missiological thinking, socio-political engagements and forms of family relationships in interaction with the host cultures.

Tormod Engelsen, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen, Thor Strandenæs (Eds)
Mission to the World
*Communicating the Gospel in the 21st Century:
Essays in Honour of Knud Jørgensen*
2008 / 978-1-870345-64-4 / 472pp (hardback)

Knud Jørgensen is Director of Areopagos and Associate Professor of Missiology at MF Norwegian School of Theology. This book reflects on the main areas of Jørgensen's commitment to mission. At the same time it focuses on the main frontier of mission, the world, the content of mission, the Gospel, the fact that the Gospel has to be communicated, and the context of contemporary mission in the 21st century.

Al Tizon

Transformation after Lausanne

Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective

2008 / 978-1-870345-68-2 / 281pp

After Lausanne '74, a worldwide network of radical evangelical mission theologians and practitioners use the notion of "Mission as Transformation" to integrate evangelism and social concern together, thus lifting theological voices from the Two Thirds World to places of prominence. This book documents the definitive gatherings, theological tensions, and social forces within and without evangelicalism that led up to Mission as Transformation. And it does so through a global-local grid that points the way toward greater holistic mission in the 21st century.

Bambang Budijanto

Values and Participation

Development in Rural Indonesia

2009 / 978-1-870345-70-4 / 237pp

Socio-religious values and socio-economic development are inter-dependant, inter-related and are constantly changing in the context of macro political structures, economic policy, religious organizations and globalization, and micro influences such as local affinities, identity, politics, leadership and beliefs. The book argues that the comprehensive approach in understanding the socio-religious values of each of the three local Lopait communities in Central Java is essential to accurately describing their respective identity.

Alan R. Johnson

Leadership in a Slum

A Bangkok Case Study

2009 / 978-1-870345-71-2 / 238pp

This book looks at leadership in the social context of a slum in Bangkok from a different perspective than traditional studies which measure well educated Thais on leadership scales derived in the West. Using both systematic data collection and participant observation, it develops a culturally preferred model as well as a set of models based in Thai concepts that reflect on-the-ground realities. It concludes by looking at the implications of the anthropological approach for those who are involved in leadership training in Thai settings and beyond.

Titre Ande

Leadership and Authority

Bula Matari and Life - Community Ecclesiology in Congo

2010 / 978-1-870345-72-9 / 189pp

Christian theology in Africa can make significant development if a critical understanding of the socio-political context in contemporary Africa is taken seriously, particularly as Africa's post-colonial Christian leadership based its understanding and use of authority on the Bula Matari model. This has caused many problems and Titre proposes a Life-Community ecclesiology for liberating authority, here leadership is a function, not a status, and 'apostolic succession' belongs to all people of God.

Frank Kwesi Adams

Odwira and the Gospel

A Study of the Asante Odwira Festival and its Significance for Christianity in Ghana

2010 / 978-1-870345-59-0 / 232pp

The study of the Odwira festival is the key to the understanding of Asante religious and political life in Ghana. The book explores the nature of the Odwira festival longitudinally -

in pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence Ghana - and examines the Odwira ideology and its implications for understanding the Asante self-identity. Also discussed is how some elements of faith portrayed in the Odwira festival can provide a framework for Christianity to engage with Asante culture at a greater depth.

Bruce Carlton

Strategy Coordinator

Changing the Course of Southern Baptist Missions

2010 / 978-1-870345-78-1 / 273pp

This is an outstanding, one-of-a-kind work addressing the influence of the non-residential missionary/strategy coordinator's role in Southern Baptist missions. This scholarly text examines the twentieth century global missiological currents that influenced the leadership of the International Mission Board, resulting in a new paradigm to assist in taking the gospel to the nations.

Julie Ma & Wonsuk Ma

Mission in the Spirit:

Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology

2010 / 978-1-870345-84-2 / 312pp

The book explores the unique contribution of Pentecostal/Charismatic mission from the beginning of the twentieth century. The first part considers the theological basis of Pentecostal/Charismatic mission thinking and practice. Special attention is paid to the Old Testament, which has been regularly overlooked by the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movements. The second part discusses major mission topics with contributions and challenges unique to Pentecostal/Charismatic mission. The book concludes with a reflection on the future of this powerful missionary movement. As the authors served as Korean missionaries in Asia, often their missionary experiences in Asia are reflected in their discussions.

Allan Anderson, Edmond Tang (Eds)

Asian and Pentecostal

The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia

2011 / 978-1870345-94-1 / 500pp

(Revised Edition)

This book provides a thematic discussion and pioneering case studies on the history and development of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the countries of South Asia, South East Asia and East Asia.

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S. Hun Kim & Wonsuk Ma (Eds)

Korean Diaspora and Christian Mission

2011 / 978-1-870345-89-7 / 301pp (hardback)

As a 'divine conspiracy' for Missio Dei, the global phenomenon of people on the move has shown itself to be invaluable. In 2004 two significant documents concerning Diaspora were introduced, one by the Filipino International Network and the other by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. These have created awareness of the importance of people on the move for Christian mission. Since then, Korean Diaspora has conducted similar research among Korean missions, resulting in this book

Jin Huat Tan

Planting an Indigenous Church

The Case of the Borneo Evangelical Mission

2011 / 978-1-870345-99-6 / 343pp

Dr Jin Huat Tan has written a pioneering study of the origins and development of Malaysia's most significant indigenous church. This is an amazing story of revival, renewal and transformation of the entire region chronicling the powerful effect of it evident to date! What can we learn from this extensive and careful study of the Borneo Revival, so the global Christianity will become ever more dynamic?

Bill Prevette

Child, Church and Compassion

Towards Child Theology in Romania

2012 / 978-1-908355-03-4 / 382pp

Bill Prevett comments that "children are like 'canaries in a mine shaft'; they provide a focal point for discovery and encounter of perilous aspects of our world that are often ignored." True, but miners also carried a lamp to see into the subterranean darkness. This book is such a lamp. It lights up the subterranean world of children and youth in danger of exploitation, and as it does so travels deep into their lives and also into the activities of those who seek to help them.

Samuel Cyuma

Picking up the Pieces

The Church and Conflict Resolution in South Africa and Rwanda

2012 / 978-1-908355-02-7 / 373pp

In the last ten years of the 20th century, the world was twice confronted with unbelievable news from Africa. First, there was the end of Apartheid in South Africa, without bloodshed, due to responsible political and Church leaders. The second was the mass killings in Rwanda, which soon escalated into real genocide. Political and Church leaders had been unable to prevent this crime against humanity. In this book, the question is raised: can we compare the situation in South Africa with that in Rwanda? Can Rwandan leaders draw lessons from the peace process in South Africa?

Peter Rowan

Proclaiming the Peacemaker

The Malaysian Church as an Agent of Reconciliation in a Multicultural Society

2012 / 978-1-908355-05-8 / 268pp

With a history of racial violence and in recent years, low-level ethnic tensions, the themes of peaceful coexistence and social harmony are recurring ones in the discourse of Malaysian society. In such a context, this book looks at the role of the church as a reconciling agent, arguing that a reconciling presence within a divided society necessitates an ethos of peacemaking.

Edward Ontita

Resources and Opportunity

The Architecture of Livelihoods in Rural Kenya

2012 / 978-1-908355-04-1 / 328pp

Poor people in most rural areas of developing countries often improvise resources in unique ways to enable them make a living. Resources and Opportunity takes the view that resources are dynamic and fluid, arguing that villagers co-produce them through redefinition and renaming in everyday practice and use them in diverse ways. The book focuses on ordinary

social activities to bring out people's creativity in locating, redesigning and embracing livelihood opportunities in processes.

Kathryn Kraft

Searching for Heaven in the Real World

A Sociological Discussion of Conversion in the Arab World

2012 / 978-1-908355-15-7 / 142pp

Kathryn Kraft explores the breadth of psychological and social issues faced by Arab Muslims after making a decision to adopt a faith in Christ or Christianity, investigating some of the most surprising and significant challenges new believers face.

Wessley Lukose

Contextual Missiology of the Spirit

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India

2013 / 978-1-908355-09-6 / 256pp

This book explores the identity, context and features of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India as well as the internal and external issues facing Pentecostals. It aims to suggest 'a contextual missiology of the Spirit,' as a new model of contextual missiology from a Pentecostal perspective. It is presented as a glocal, ecumenical, transformational, and public missiology.

Paul M Miller

Evangelical Mission in Co-operation with Catholics

A Study of Evangelical Tensions

2013 / 978-1-908355-17-1 / 291pp

This book brings the first thorough examination of the discussions going on within Evangelicalism about the viability of a good conscience dialogue with Roman Catholics. Those who are interested in evangelical world missions and Roman Catholic views of world missions will find this informative.

REGNUM RESOURCES FOR MISSION

Knud Jørgensen

Equipping for Service

Christian Leadership in Church and Society

2012 / 978-1-908355-06-5 / 150pp

This book is written out of decades of experience of leading churches and missions in Ethiopia, Geneva, Norway and Hong Kong. Combining the teaching of Scripture with the insights of contemporary management philosophy, Jørgensen writes in a way which is practical and applicable to anyone in Christian service. "The intention has been to challenge towards a leadership relevant for work in church and mission, and in public and civil society, with special attention to leadership in Church and organisation."

Mary Miller

What does Love have to do with Leadership?

2013 / 978-1-908355-10-2 / 100pp

Leadership is a performing art, not a science. It is the art of influencing others, not just to accomplish something together, but to want to accomplish great things together. Mary Miller captures the art of servant leadership in her powerful book. She understands that servant leaders challenge existing processes without manipulating or overpowering people.

Mary Miller (Ed)
Faces of Holistic Mission
Stories of the OCMS Family
2013 / 978-1-908355-32-4 / 104pp

There is a popular worship song that begins with the refrain, 'look what the Lord has done, look what the Lord has done'. This book does exactly that; it seeks to show what the Lord has done. Fifteen authors from five different continents identify what the Lord has indeed been doing, and continues to do, in their lives. These are their stories.

David Cranston and Ruth Padilla DeBorst (Eds)
Mission as Transformation
Learning from Catalysts
2013 / 978-1-908355-34-8 / 77pp

This book is the product of the first Stott-Bediako Forum, held in 2012 with the title *Portraits of Catalysts*. Its aim was to learn from the stories of Christian leaders whose lives and work have served as catalysts for transformation as each, in his or her particular way, facilitated the intersection between the Good News of Jesus Christ and the context in which they lived, in particular amongst people who are suffering.

Brian Woolnough (Ed)
Good News from Africa
Community Transformation Through the Church
2013 / 978-1-908355-33-1 / 123pp

This book discusses how sustainable, holistic, community development can be, and is being, achieved through the work of the local church. Leading African development practitioners describe different aspects of development through their own experience.

Makonon Getu (Ed)
Transforming Microfinance
A Christian Approach
2013 / 978-1-908355-31-7 / 264pp

"This book highlights the important role that Christian-based organisations bring to the delivery of financial services for the poor. It is timely, significant and important and deserves a wide circulation".

Lord Carey of Clifton, former Archbishop of Canterbury

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Douglas Peterson
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David Singh
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Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity

Although Pentecostalism worldwide represent the most rapidly growing missionary movement in Christian history, only recently scholars from within and outside the movement have begun academic reflection on the mission. This volume represents the coming of age of emerging scholarship of various aspects of the Pentecostal mission, including theological, historical, strategic, and practical aspects. The more than 20 authors from all five continents, men and women, academicians, mission leaders, and practitioners, offer exciting perspectives on Pentecostal movements' contributions to the search of Christian unity in various global contexts.

The Era of the Holy Spirit has arrived! Within the century since Edinburgh 1910, Pentecostal Christianity has grown to half a billion constituents, predominantly in the global South. Pentecostal mission's unique contribution to global Christianity is undeniable and the Edinburgh 2010 conference recognized it. Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity, in my view, is the most comprehensive treatment of a multidimensional and complex global Christian movement. This is a must read for anyone, scholar and lay Christian alike, who wishes to understand the wondrous phenomenon of contemporary Christianity.

Tetsunao Yamamori, Senior Fellow
Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California

Since its inception during the early 20th century, Spirit-empowered mission has been a vital force in the spread of the global Pentecostal movement. Although scholars of late have noted Pentecostalism's phenomenal growth, they have focused primarily on its structural adaptations and acculturations while neglecting the pneumatological dimension. This excellent collection of articles moves beyond the shell of Pentecostal growth to the heart of the phenomenon. Without dismissing the problems that arise when religious experience is a propelling social force, taken together the contributed articles offer an illuminating portrait of the way Spirit-led mission is changing the face of global Christianity.

Margaret M. Poloma, Professor Emeritus of Sociology
The University of Akron (Akron, OH)

Wonsuk Ma is Executive Director and David Yonggi Cho Research Tutor of Global Christianity at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA and Docent of Ecumenics at University of Helsinki, Finland.

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu is Professor of Contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal Theology at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana.

The cover shows a local congregation of the Church of Pentecost, Ghana, campaigning a peaceful election.



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