

# PENTECOSTAL EDUCATION

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the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education

*“Pentecostal Social Engagement”*

Ulrik Josefsson and Barry Saylor  
*Guest Editors*

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### **Aims and Scope**

*Pentecostal Education* (formerly *The Pentecostal Educator*) semiannually e-publishes scholarly and practical articles related to theological education within the Pentecostal tradition to encourage the continuing maturation of Pentecostal theological education. It is intentionally practical, applied, and international.

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## Editorial

The guest editorial of this edition of *Pentecostal Education* provides a thorough introduction to the important subjects covered by the articles. Educators cannot avoid the importance of compassionate and Christ-honoring social action, and this edition of our journal marks a positive contribution to the subject from a Pentecostal perspective.

I would encourage you to continue to familiarize yourself with the work of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education. WAPTE continues to fulfill its mission through the dedicated members of our Board. The various committees of the Board work throughout the year at their tasks. There is profitable ongoing consideration of concepts such as teacher certification, early attempts at some form of endorsement for institutions, and even a global accreditation process.

The tri-annual conference of the Pentecostal World Fellowship is scheduled for July next year. This event also affords WAPTE the opportunity to coordinate a consultation. We look forward to a fruitful time together.

I would like to use my editorial to call for continued and greater involvement from Pentecostal educators around the world. The contact details for our two editors are to be found in this journal as well as the contact details for our Executive Director, Dr. Barry Saylor. We value contact, suggestions, submissions, and questions.

I add my thanks not only to our capable editors but also to those who have contributed both the events that led to the publishing of papers and their subsequent inclusion in this edition.

May this Journal, and this edition in particular, contribute to fruitful and God-honoring social action in a fractured world that needs to see tangible evidence of God's love for people everywhere.

Paul R Alexander  
Senior Editor, WAPTE Chair

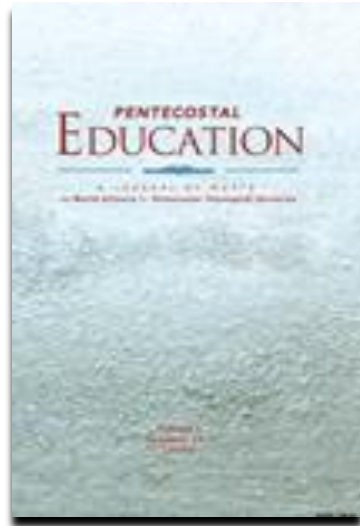
***Pentecostal Education (PE)*** invites submissions to be published in this journal. The journal welcomes relevant studies based on experience and field data, substantiated by literary evidence. Considering different contexts where Pentecostal life, mission, and theological education take place, your insight may be a unique contribution to many others. *PE* is also an excellent space where younger faculty members and emerging leaders to publish their studies.

*PE* may extend its service to various commissions of the Pentecostal World Fellowship to publish their documents and studies.

For any questions, please contact the executive editor.

Please, enjoy reading!

*PE* Editorial Team





## **We Welcome Teamwork and Cooperation**

In this issue, we celebrate the international cooperation between the different missiological agencies of the church. That is one of the reasons we consider this number as historic. In its content, the Journal refers to issues of high importance for the church today. This also provides the international Pentecostal community with relevant literature that offers very useful ideas for the theological and missionary formation of believers.

The emphasis on cooperation, to which we adhere, has been initially generated within the World Pentecostal Conference. WAPTE and the missions commission have agreed to launch an issue that contains up-to-date ideas about the mission of the church in critical times like the one that humanity lives in at this time. The different articles in this volume provide ideas for strengthening Christian service in different contexts.

On the other hand, this volume highlights the critical thinking of theologians committed to their communities and to the ministry of the church. The scope of mission and the implementation of theological education have taken a turn that must be carefully studied. Here we also call for an objective reading of the events that are occurring today. Behind each article is the intention to generate innovative and transformative ideas that improve the service of the church.

Conversely, Pentecostal Education reaches out to a globally located community of readers. Publishing articles produced in different contexts allows us to offer creative ideas that should motivate readers to delve deeper into their studies of the mission and education of the church.

Once again, thank you for reading this volume and for sending us your feedback by sharing your ideas. As we pointed out, at Pentecostal Education, we are committed to higher levels of cooperation for mission and collaboration.

Miguel Alvarez  
Executive Editor

## **EPTA Conference, 4 to 7 July 2022, Warsaw, Poland**

### **“Pentecostal Theology: Mainstream and Extremes”**

#### **Call for Papers**

The European Pentecostal Theological Association is seeking proposals for papers to be presented at the 2022 annual conference. The meeting will take place at the College of Theology and Social Sciences in Warsaw, Poland from 4 to 7 July 2022. Further conference details will follow in due course at [www.eptaweb.org](http://www.eptaweb.org).

The conference explores the nature, purpose, and focus of Pentecostal theology in the late modern world. It seeks to analyse and discuss what may be identified as the ‘mainstream’ and the ‘extremes’ in Pentecostal theology and practice worldwide. The theme invites reflection on the diversity of Pentecostal theological methods, themes, doctrines, and practices. EPTA encourages research on Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Europe and further afield, and it welcomes theological, biblical, historical, and interdisciplinary presentations. Preference is given to proposals that relate to the conference theme.

Proposals should be 300-500 words in length and include (1) the paper’s title; (2) author’s name, institutional affiliation, and email address; (3) an abstract or summary of the argument; (4) preference for either a 60 minute or 30 minute presentation (the timings include a 20 minute or 10 minute Q&A slot respectively).

Proposals should be sent by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 to Simo Frestadius, Chair of EPTA,



at [simo.frestadius@regents-tc.ac.uk](mailto:simo.frestadius@regents-tc.ac.uk). Notification of acceptance is expected by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

## Special Theme: “Pentecostal Social Engagement”

### Introduction

Ulrik Josefsson and Barry Saylor

Pentecostalism has passed 100 years of existence, and with growing time and size, its self-understanding is increasing. Particularly over the last half-century, scholarly interest in Pentecostalism has been growing both from scholars within Pentecostalism and those studying the movement from the outside. This relatively new situation for a global Pentecostalism of considerable size, impact, and growing maturity creates both possibility and responsibility.

This new situation can be seen in different fields. Pentecostals are involved in ecumenical dialogues, both national and global, with Catholics, Lutherans, and other Christian traditions. In 2010, the well-known publishing house Eerdmans started the series *Pentecostal Manifestos* showing that Pentecostalism has come out as an important theological dialogue partner. In the field of social engagement and community transformation, scholars like Dena Freeman argue that Pentecostals are more effective change agents in society than the United Nations, global agencies, or traditional NGOs. This is once again a reminder of Pentecostalism’s newfound possibility and responsibility.

This volume of *Pentecostal Education* can be seen as one step of taking that responsibility. In this volume, we have gathered three important global voices on the theme of Pentecostal social engagement. In addition to that, three authorities in Pentecostal academia have offered responses to each article. But first, let us briefly sketch the context behind this project.

The background to this volume is found in the planning for the World Pentecostal Conference held in Calgary 2018. In WAPTE’s portion of that conference, we dealt with issues of community transformation and Pentecostal social engagement. The seminars led to several new conversations and initiatives. At that time, leaders from different global Pentecostal aid and development organizations were involved in a conversation about their theological foundation. In the period after the

Calgary meeting, these organizations initiated work on a position paper for a socially engaged Pentecostalism.

Our hope in initiating a theological conversation around Pentecostal societal involvement was to encourage critical engagement around a more socially engaged Pentecostalism. This concern is based specifically in the fact that the majority of Pentecostals live in the global south and that the challenges of community transformation are glaringly obvious in these regions. Therefore, we wanted to give voice to theologians who have previously done research in these areas in order to broaden and deepen our understanding. This topic was also processed in two global seminars that WAPTE hosted in January and May 2021.

In this volume's first article, Miguel Alvarez deals with the issue of holistic or integral mission in a Latin American perspective and a response is given by Allan Anderson. In the second article, Kyama Mugambi deals with Pentecostal churches and social engagement from a Kenyan context, and Cheryl B. Johns gives a response. Lastly, Naar M'fundisi-Holloway discusses Pentecostal social engagement in a political perspective with material from Zambia with a response from Amos Yong.

Pentecostalism is described as one of the largest Christian groups and the fastest growing. Although each individual movement contains internal differences, Pentecostalism is a specific entity with a strong focus on experiential spirituality, conversional Christianity, and high expectations of supernatural experiences.<sup>1</sup> The different Pentecostal groups are often divided into categories like Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics, and independent Pentecostal churches.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that when discussing Pentecostal social engagement, each group will have different appearances. We are not defining Pentecostalism, but as the aim of the issue is to discuss and analyze the social engagement and impact, we first want to briefly include five perspectives of the study of Pentecostalism.

The first perspective is taken from Harvard professor Harvey Cox. He wrote the groundbreaking book *Fire from Heaven* in 1994.<sup>3</sup> After having predicted the decline of the Christian Church, he admitted that he had been wrong and wrote about the globally fast-growing Pentecostalism. Among

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are and How They Got There* (Chichester: Wiley - Blackwell, 2021); Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Development Worldwide* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies and Definitions," in Andersson et al (eds), *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Los Angeles: University of California Press).

<sup>3</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Addison-Wesley, 1995).

many other things, Cox mentions two aspects that are interesting here. The first one is contextualization. Pentecostalism must be understood in its context. It is described as a religion made to travel, meaning that out of a core of values, Pentecostalism seems to take shape in its context. It is one type of Christianity with many different forms.<sup>4</sup> The second aspect Cox mentions is his way of describing Pentecostalism as primal spirituality. Pentecostalism has all the signs of a formal religion with structure, doctrinal statements, rituals, and so on, but Cox means that the essence of Pentecostalism has reached beyond confessions and ceremonies to a primal faith. He talks about speaking in tongues as the holy breaking of language barriers, a spirituality blurring the border between cognitive and emotional, and an eschatology where the future hope is present.<sup>5</sup> If Cox is right, then we need to study the core of Pentecostalism beyond the written documents and the formal statements and structures. We need to dig into empirical material close to the lived religion. We also need to understand both the contextual dimension and the fluid nature of Pentecostalism, a religion based on experiences of the holy in the ordinary world and the personal spirituality expressed in the communal life lived in this world. If we want to take the specific identity of Pentecostals seriously, we cannot use a formal religious framework and impose it on people's reality. Instead, we must develop our knowledge in cooperation with practitioners in each context.

The second perspective on Pentecostalism is brought in by the two scholars Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, in the book *Global Pentecostalism*. They asked missiologists around the globe for churches with a strong social engagement and discovered that over 80% of these churches were charismatic. They also saw that not all Pentecostals were socially engaged and used the term “progressive Pentecostals” for the ones that were. They argued that these churches of progressive Pentecostals deliberately offered a new self-understanding with dignity to people living in poverty. This was based on a theology where God is the owner of the world, mankind is created in His image, and life with all its hardship can be lived in the presence and victory of God.<sup>6</sup> Miller and Yamamori argue that social engagement is not simply based on programs or on the tasks necessary to solve a social problem. For progressive Pentecostals, social engagement is founded in theology and

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<sup>4</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*; Carla Poewe (ed), *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, & Douglas Petersen (eds.), *The Globalisation of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Cox, *Fire from Heaven*.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Miller & Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2007).

religious experience. These groups experience the holy primarily in communal worship and personal prayer. The encounter with the holy enforces action in both personal piety and service to others. Miller and Yamamori see a development where Pentecostal groups are enlarging the arena for their social action, not abandoning the task to ease individual suffering, but expanding into more structural arenas like politics and advocacy. For progressive Pentecostals, this is not about being political but putting their faith into practice in a new and broader scale. To summarize their findings, the progressive Pentecostals shape their social engagement in the light of worship and lived religion.<sup>7</sup>

The third perspective brought into consideration is taken from the American sociologist Elisabeth Brusco and her study from Colombia, *The Reformation of Machismo*. It is a well-known phenomenon that many groups in evangelical Christianity show social upward mobility. From a Weberian perspective, this is based on theological convictions, a modest lifestyle, and possibly an interplay with international capitalism. Brusco argues that the new conversional lifestyle is instead redirecting the income back into the household and thereby raising the living standard for women and children. One interesting aspect of Brusco's analysis is the faith-based liberation for women. She shows that the new conversional logic of life gives women dignity founded in the religious value system. Women are viewed as created in the image of God, liberated by the power of God, and filled with a new life by the presence of God through the indwelling Spirit. With this new identity, women are much better off to take a leadership position in both family, church, and society. Brusco points out a social reformation from below or from within that gives both men, women, and children an opportunity to form new roles and new identities. This can, in the long run, lead to sustainable structural changes in society.<sup>8</sup>

Dena Freeman, a British social anthropologist at the London School of Economics, brings in the fourth perspective. Her research in Africa shows both the logic and the effectiveness of different groups working with community development. Her analysis is that some Pentecostal groups are "rather more effective change agents than are development NGOs" based on theories of structural economics. Her analysis of the inner logic of the power for development is intriguing. Freeman is putting together a chain of interdependent factors in the process of development. Personal conversion, transformation, and empowerment are both individual and communal. This experience is connected to the behavioral change and moral legitimacy of the group. Even if the new conversional behavior is clashing with

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<sup>7</sup> Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*.

<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth Brusco, *The Reformation of the Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Colombia* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995)

traditional values, the Church offers a new worldview and a framework for social change. This kind of interpersonal community is shown to be essential for the sustainability of personal transformation and can even be a power to structural, economic, and political development.<sup>9</sup>

As already mentioned, the academic interest in Pentecostalism has exploded in the last decade. The first studies were mostly interested in historical aspects of the origin and development of the movement.<sup>10</sup> Today many scholars from social science are working with Pentecostalism to understand its impact on the field of Humanities.<sup>11</sup> In this field, the interest of Pentecostalism is growing rapidly. Within the field of theology, the interest in Pentecostalism as a social change agent has been weaker. One of the pioneers is the American theologian Douglas Petersen with his groundbreaking book *Not By Might Nor By Power*.<sup>12</sup>

The fifth perspective put into consideration is that in recent years, theologians have been engaged in developing a theology for social change. Among them, it is important to consider Amos Yong's *In the days of Caesar*. Yong places Pentecostalism in relation to other political theologies and shows that a Pentecostal contribution must take the starting point in the theological distinctives of the movement.<sup>13</sup> In the global South, the field of research is exploding, with the three authors featured in this volume as a prime example.<sup>14</sup> Most recently, the two-volume work *The Holy Spirit and Social Justice* has been published.<sup>15</sup> The different articles elaborate on Pentecostalism as social reform. Two major things are obvious in that study: the empowering experience of the Spirit is seen as the driving force,

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<sup>9</sup> Dena Freeman, *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Like Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Distinctive Character* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1964); Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Peabody, Mass: Henrickson, 1988); Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> See for example *PentecoStudies* under the European research network GloPent.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might Nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology for Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum books, 1996)

<sup>13</sup> Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010)

<sup>14</sup> Miguel Alvarez, *Integral Mission: A Paradigm for Latin American Pentecostals* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017); Kyama Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostals in Kenya* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020); Naar Mfundisi-Holloway, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Spiritualities and Civil Engagement in Zambia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020)

<sup>15</sup> Antipas Harris & Michael Palmer (eds.), *The Holy Spirit and Social Justice: Interdisciplinary Global Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: Seymour Press, 2019).

and a radically holistic view on the message is the framework. Together this concept of Pentecostalism forms a strong theological motivation for the Church to be a socially engaged change agent in the world.

We trust that this special volume of *Pentecostal Education* will inspire in you, its readers, a renewed sense of mission in serving one's community, empowered by the Spirit to demonstrate the tangible love of Christ.

Ulrik Josefsson ([Ulrik.josefsson@ALTutbildning.se](mailto:Ulrik.josefsson@ALTutbildning.se)) researches and teaches practical theology and spirituality in a Pentecostal perspective at Academy for Leadership and Theology and Institute for Pentecostal Studies. He has written numerous articles mostly in Swedish. He is a pastor in the Swedish Pentecostal movement for more than 30 years and serves as vice-chair of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education.

Barry Saylor ([bsaylor@trinitybiblecollege.edu](mailto:bsaylor@trinitybiblecollege.edu)) serves as the Executive Director of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education and Associate Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School in Ellendale, ND, USA. His main area of research interest lies in the next generation and how the church might best reach and disciple them.



# Pentecostal Social Engagement: Challenges and Possibilities for the Global South

Kyama Mugambi

## Abstract:

Pentecostals, especially those in the Global South, face broad and daunting challenges in their quest for social engagement. The circumstances that invite such engagement provide an avenue to celebrate Christ's power at work in the world. Such contexts also point to the need for His urgent return to redeem a broken world. Acutely aware of the difficult realities, Pentecostals highlight Christ's power as well as His imminent return in their theology and praxis. Despite these commitments, Pentecostals outside Latin America are not visible enough at the forefront of social engagement. This paper explores this paradox. It examines the challenges standing in the way of broader, more meaningful engagement. Using the Kenyan experience as a test case, this paper considers the opportunities to remedy the shortcomings and even chart new ways forward. Solutions for sustainable social engagement, in the private and public spheres, lie in spiritual formation at the academy and in discipleship. Social engagement will be also bolstered by catalysis at the grassroot level where local initiatives provide sustainable models for social engagement.

**Key words:** Pneumatic Christianity, sustainable social engagement, theological formation, discipleship

## Introduction

Pentecostals longingly look ahead to the eschaton, while affirming God's evident power as seen by the Holy Spirit's work in the present. Because of their views about the end times, and their emphases on present personal piety, social engagement historically came further down the mission priorities of many Pentecostals.<sup>1</sup> By Pentecostals, I consider here a broad

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<sup>1</sup> Attitudes began to shift in the 1970s among Pentecostals in Latin America. As I will argue, this is changing in other parts of the global south, including Africa. See Martin Lindhardt, *Power in Powerlessness: A Study of Pentecostal Life Worlds in Urban Chile*, XIII, 272 Pp. ed. edition (Brill, 2012), 41; Murray Dempster, "Christian Social

range of “pneumatic Christian” expressions which include classical Pentecostals, Newer Pentecostal movements, as well as charismatic expressions in historic mission denominations.<sup>2</sup> These “pneumatic” movements prioritize the palpable vigor of the Holy Spirit’s work in believers’ lives. Their Christian devotion to the Holy Spirit inspires personal piety. It also produces outward signs, among them, tongues, prophecy, and healing. The miraculous is part and parcel of this Christian expression. To situate the enthusiasm evident in their pneumatology, Pentecostals make frequent references to the first-century Christian experience. The New Testament church thus remains the standard from which Christian expression is patterned.

The return of Christ is an important aspect of first-century Christianity. Historic mission denominations seemed to neglect this, and so Pentecostals filled the gap. This urgency of the eschaton propels Pentecostals to mission. They, for a time, defined mission narrowly as evangelism and church planting.<sup>3</sup> Pentecostals relentlessly and fervently pursued these two dimensions of mission spurred by current realities, especially in the Global South. Poverty, disease, injustice, war, natural disasters present today mirror New Testament prophecies calling to attention the end of the ages.

I note here that these same realities are in themselves an urgent call for Christian social engagement.<sup>4</sup> Christian social engagement in this paper refers to a church’s participation in activities to meet community needs. It is

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Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1, no. 2 (January 1, 1993): 51–64.

<sup>2</sup> The definition of Pentecostals in the global south requires a nuanced approach that takes into consideration a wide variety of expressions. A helpful term would be to address these as “pneumatic Christianity.” See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations From an African Context* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 4.

<sup>3</sup> For a broader discussion on this see, Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission* (Maryland, USA: University Press of America, 2002); Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> We disambiguate here social engagement as a theological and ecclesial position from the more recent reference to engagement with social media. Social media engagement, also sometimes called ‘social engagement’ refers to the use of social media platforms to achieve a particular goal. Social engagement may also refer to engaging relationally challenged groups using social skills. See for example Mira Sucharov, *Public Influence: A Guide to Op-Ed Writing and Social Media Engagement*, Reprint edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); Marci Laurel and Kathleen Taylor, *Social Engagement & the Steps to Being Social: A Practical Guide for Teaching Social Skills to Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder* (USA: Future Horizons, 2016).

an attempt by Christians to accede to Christ's emphatic call "to be good neighbors, addressing the social needs of people in their community."<sup>5</sup> Such engagement also includes social transformation, where aspects of societal structures change for the better. This systemic modification happens at the micro-level in the neighborhoods. Society-wide change, however, is the desired aim of social transformation. Social engagement takes different forms.

The most visible aspect of social engagement is the activism commonly associated with civic or political change. It promotes an agenda consisting of issues already contested in the public domain. These include voting rights, gender equity, poverty alleviation, constitutional changes, war, refugee status, national debt, among other issues. The late 1990s, for instance, saw the rise of such activism within the church in several African countries. Church leaders in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and other African countries publicly took part in the clamor for a new, more democratic constitutional dispensation. In Kenya, senior clerics Ndingi mwana'Nzeki, David Gitari, and Timothy Njoya, from different denominations, stand out from the 1980s and 1990s as icons of Christian activism for constitutional change.<sup>6</sup> Agents of such change mobilize large numbers of individuals, social capital, and finances using public forums. The result is highly visible activism which permeates, and sometimes dominates, public discourse. Its goal is to change at the national or regional scale. Such activism is not only political; it may also be environmental, economic, or cover other sectors of society.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, First Edition, Includes DVD edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>6</sup> These were clergy from historic mission churches – Mwana'Nzeki was a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church, Gitari was the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya. Njoya is a senior priest in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa-Kenya. See David Gitari, *Troubled but Not Destroyed: Autobiography of Dr. David M. Gitari* (BookBaby, 2014); David M. Gitari and Ben Knighton, *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest* (Macmillan, 2009); John Karanja, "The Biblical, Prophetic Ministries of Henry Okullu and David Gitari," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 75, no. 4 (2006): 580–604; Timothy Murere Njoya, *Out of Silence: A Collection of Sermons* (Nairobi: Beyond Magazine, 1987); Timothy Murere 1941- Njoya, "Prophetic Response to Political Challenges in the Context of Existing Christianity," *Reformed World* 52, no. 4 (2002): 184.

<sup>7</sup> The Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai was a prominent environmentalist. John Githongo was a government whistleblower who highlighted corruption. These were not Christian activists per se, but received strong support nationally from Kenyan Christian leaders in their activism. See Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (Lantern Books, 2003); Wangari

Social engagement is not limited to such public society-wide initiatives. Churches also engage at the micro-level. The main goal here is to address the issues faced by vulnerable groups within a local community. Such engagement is less public in nature. It mobilizes fewer individuals and groups than nationwide initiatives. Groups come together to serve orphans, widows, poverty-stricken neighborhoods, addiction centers, and other spaces. Christians in Kenya, for example, run centers for the marginalized.<sup>8</sup> The result is societal change at the individual and local levels. Both national and local level initiatives are important in weaving a fabric of engagement that yields results consistent with the scriptural mandate to be the salt and light of the world. The theological framework which brings these approaches into convergence is widely referred to as “integral mission” or “holistic Christianity.”<sup>9</sup>

In this paper, I reflect on the challenges of social engagement among Pentecostals. We also look at the emerging opportunities which leverage Pentecostals’ pneumatic perspectives to fulfill God’s purposes today. I argue that careful attention to theological formation, discipleship, along with grassroots catalysis, will yield fruitful avenues for the future. We now begin by looking at the relationship between Pentecostals, their theology, and their lived experience.

Pentecostals want to experience the power of God. The challenges of a broken world heighten the hope to see God’s evident power through the miraculous. This is the unique gift Pentecostals bring into the diverse landscape of the global Christian experience. Historic mission churches, especially from the rational post-enlightenment context, downplayed Biblically supported perspectives on the miraculous. Pentecostals fortuitously filled this glaring omission with language and expressions that boldly apprehended the salient issues. Their response was that “God can

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Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*, Reprint edition (New York: Anchor, 2007); Michela Wrong, *It’s Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*, Illustrated edition (Harper Perennial, 2010); John Githongo, “Independency, Investigation and Denunciation of Corruption from the Press—The Case of Kenya,” in *8th International Anti-Corruption Conference, Lima, Peru, September, 1997*.

<sup>8</sup> Silas Kinyua Waweru, “Middle-Class ‘Christ Is the Answer Ministries’ (CITAM) and the Urban Poor: A Study of Community Action with Recommendations” (Ph.D., United States -- Kentucky, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2010), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/734423880/abstract/F0A6C475E32549E3PQ/14?accountid=8380>.

<sup>9</sup> See Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 1; Rene Padilla and Tetsunao Yamamori, eds., *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairos, 2004); Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma, eds., *Holistic Mission: God’s Plan for God’s People*, vol. 5 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011).

and will heal, speak, deliver, and provide.” The Global South’s cultural, social, economic, and political context then became a fertile ground for the expression of God’s power through healing, prophecy, deliverance, and material provision.

Furthermore, the theological implications of the Acts 2 Pentecost event provided precedent, linking personal conversion with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal believes they are saved by the grace of God, and then filled with the Holy Spirit, ready to worship the living God. The outworking of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the gathered community necessarily produces a vibrant worship experience. The social and cultural environment in places like Africa provides a context within which this exuberant Pentecostal expression takes root.

Pentecostal worship in the Global South makes frequent reference to the challenges people face. Their vibrant music includes words of hope, conjuring visions of victory above the present troubles. The themes of God’s abundant goodness and his “double blessing” accompany sermons highlighting the power of the Cross to intervene in the individual’s life. A popular praise medley, “God is Good,” for instance, calls out a double blessing on one’s material possessions.<sup>10</sup> Such themes attend the energetic oral liturgy among African Pentecostals. Their preaching carries on the trajectory of overcoming adversity. We will revisit this shortly. Suffice it to say here that Pentecostal expressions explicitly cite the hardship members face in their context. The leaders exercise their pastoral authority to address prevailing hardships with both helpful and damaging results.

Pentecostals’ eschatological aspirations, ecclesial concerns, and liturgical practices described above find expression within the social context of difficult global realities. This is precisely where the challenges and possibilities emerge. Social engagement is, by definition, an attempt to come to terms with the way individuals and systems fail society. Such engagement resolves to publicly name, and then repair what is wrong with society. Social engagement envisages tangible responses to the difficulties faced in such diverse issues as urban poverty, political dysfunction, health care, race relations, gender issues, systemic injustice, educational deficiencies, global inequalities, and so on. It is, therefore, curious that with its proven awareness and expression of God’s evident power on earth, Pentecostalism is not as visible at the forefront of social engagement in many places around the world. We will explore the challenges and possibilities represented by this dilemma.

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<sup>10</sup> *Joyous Celebration - My God Is Good (Live at the Mosaïek Theatre - Johannesburg, 2009)*, accessed June 12, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wiQtQn8SzE>.

## Challenges

The early twentieth-century eschatological urgency tilted Pentecostal mission priorities towards evangelism. While this urgency yielded a rich harvest of souls around the world later in the 1970s into the 1990s, it left a glaring gap. The eager Pentecostal missionaries all but neglected social engagement as a basic aspect of mission. The focus became the saving of souls at the expense of the social, economic, and political context these souls lived in.<sup>11</sup>

More recent Global-South Pentecostal responses to healthcare and economic issues focus on power encounter Christianity. The widespread appeal of these power encounters had two effects. The first was to push social engagement to the back burner. The second effect was the rise of many instances of counterfeit, showman leadership.<sup>12</sup> Both of these effects handicap Pentecostals' efficacy in social engagement at the individual, church and societal levels.

The openness to the miraculous, especially in the Global South, provided an open field for charlatans. Misusing their pastoral positions, they took advantage of difficult social realities to enrich themselves at the expense of poor and ill followers. The manifestation of God's power in Christian mission became the stage for some church leaders to stack wealth in the pretext of healing and provision miracles. Elsewhere, the unceasing state of economic and political incertitude became a breeding ground for sham prophetic ministries. The counterfeit prophets greedily leeches on their destitute followers. Their congregations became vulnerable as they sought security through the preachers' prophetic utterances about their uncertain future. This is not normative of all Pentecostals. These occurrences, however, deal a serious blow to the credibility of an expression of Christianity that holds much promise for the distressed Global South.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This has been discussed variously. See R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Terence O. Ranger, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Both these effects find a focused albeit captious treatment in such publications as Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2015); Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2009); Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Paul Gifford disagrees with this conclusion about the value of Pentecostalism for a distraught Africa. This notwithstanding, I have written about the ways Pentecostalism offers hope. Kyama M. Mugambi, "Audacity, Intentionality and Hope in the Churches of the Global South," in *Southern Mission Movements: Missional*

A further challenge lies in the spiritual and theological formation of Pentecostal leadership. Many formation processes in churches neglect social engagement as an aspect of mission. Discipleship within these circles relies on the pulpit and on non-indigenous materials. In instances where the leadership prioritizes orthodox preaching, then the congregation might be spared of deficient discipleship. However, the recent liberalization of media in the Global South extends the reach of the more dramatic and sometimes bizarre sermons. Such messages are without social engagement content. Where they are used, foreign discipleship materials fail to engage with the local contexts. The books and manuals leave out crucial formational content regarding social engagement.

The same is true of theological education. Theological formation is a costly undertaking historically underwritten by the Global North. The absence of models and content that addressed the Southern Global realities severely undermined leaders' capacity to engage with their own situations. The historical, theological, and ecclesiological input in seminaries prioritized Western perspectives. Frequently the faculty and their curriculums at best ignored, or at worst, discredited local concerns and experiences. One only needs to walk through the libraries of theological schools to become aware of the large scope of the problem.<sup>14</sup>

## Possibilities

These challenges present opportunities that, if harnessed, will chart a way forward regarding sustainable social engagement. The following ideas are by no means exhaustive. They are indicative of what is possible within existing frameworks. I begin with my last observation about theological schools where leaders train. Theological formation is increasingly becoming important among Pentecostal leaders in the Global South.<sup>15</sup> Pentecostal leaders with a proven record of social engagement trace the roots of their

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*Conversations*, ed. Cathy Ross and Colin Smith (UK: SCM Press, 2018), 147–55; Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*.

<sup>14</sup> For perspectives on this see J. N. K. Mugambi, “The Future of Theological Education in Africa and the Challenges It Faces,” in *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*, ed. Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Oxford, United Kingdom: Regnum Books International, 2015), 117–25; James Kombo, “The Past and Presence of Christian Theology in African Universities,” in *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*, ed. Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 100–107.

<sup>15</sup> Chammah J. Kaunda, “African Pentecostalism Coming of Age: The Association for Pentecostal Theological in Africa (APTEA) from an Ecumenical Perspective,” in *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*, ed. Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 1050–63.

informed concern to theological formation. Socially aware pastors can often point to a lecturer, mentor, author, or pastor who shaped their thinking. Linda Adolwa, a charismatic clergywoman, and Oscar Muriu, a bishop, trace their perspectives of social engagement to a course during their theological studies at Africa International University.<sup>16</sup> Both these leaders refer to Chester Wood's Biblical theology course, which coalesced around the theme of justice.<sup>17</sup> Large Pentecostal churches led by leaders like these have an important role to play in shaping their leaders. In Africa, these megachurches have slowly developed a rich heritage of theological institutions for their leaders.<sup>18</sup> The institutions are beginning to affect their leaders, but more needs to be done.

Social engagement is as much a formation issue as it is a matter of praxis, for which Pentecostals are known. One possibility lies in promoting partnership models that enable more theological institutions to become sustainable as they offer cost-effective programs. More pastors can then be better trained. Such an approach empowers the development of indigenous leaders with a healthy, doctrinally sound approach to social issues. Pan Africa Christian University (PACU) in Kenya, for example, provides unique leadership courses for grassroots leaders.<sup>19</sup> The university runs bachelor, diploma, and certificate level courses for the leaders of small churches working far from major urban centers. Some components of the courses are taught on-location in rural areas.

Closely connected is the development of theological training materials and curriculum. Quality books and manuals written by indigenes provide the needed groundswell of content to develop sound social engagement models.<sup>20</sup> Such publications reflect indigenous priorities from theological, ecclesiological, historical, and practical perspectives. Training is, therefore, necessary for authors and editorial professionals to produce quality material

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<sup>16</sup> Oscar Muriu, interview by Kyama Mugambi, August 31, 2014; Linda Ochola-Adolwa, *Hatua* (Nairobi: Fearless Publications, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Chester Wood, "Watch & Listen | In Paths of Righteousness," accessed September 8, 2018, <http://www.inpathsofrighteousness.org/sessions/>.

<sup>18</sup> One can find an extensive discussion of this trend in Africa from a historical perspective in Kyama M. Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> See undergraduate courses in Church leadership here <https://www.pacuniversity.ac.ke/index.php/academics/schools-departments/school-of-theology>

<sup>20</sup> Local publishing is thin on content about these topics. Thankfully, books published abroad by African authors addressing various aspects of social engagement are finding their way back to the continent. One example that is now published in Africa is Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Eerdmans, 2010).



locally for theological institutions.<sup>21</sup> African Theological Network Press (ATNP) for example, recently embarked on a program to train authors and editors. The publisher maintains a collection of free online resources for authors on the continent.<sup>22</sup>

Support initiatives for local publishers help various initiatives launch and begin to meet the need.<sup>23</sup> Much more can be done than the resources available can sustain. More financial and human resources are needed. Curriculum development and the associated research may accelerate the growth of useful programs that encourage sustainable social engagement at the grassroots level. Few initiatives exist which provide this kind of capacity. One such initiative comes from the Nagel institute, which began the “African Theological Advance” and the “Engaging African Realities” grant programs.<sup>24</sup> Under these programs, researchers from Africa identify various issues on the continent for which research is called for. The research themes often address social engagement issues from a theological perspective. Such funded programs are few, and the need remains great.

On the dearth of relevant catechetical content, discipleship programs in many Pentecostal churches need an overhaul. Indigenous material is required, which not only addresses doctrinal integrity, but better reflects proper social engagement responses. To this end, various churches have embarked on ambitious, relatively successful initiatives to develop material. Mavuno, International Christian Church (ICC), and Christ Is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) are three Kenyan examples of such Pentecostal churches.<sup>25</sup> Linda Adolwa designed *Hatua* as a discipleship program for congregations to sensitize themselves specifically around themes of social justice.<sup>26</sup> Pioneered in Pentecostal congregations and Anglican churches, the

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<sup>21</sup> African Theological Network Press recently launched a program for training editors. Daystar University in Kenya hosted editorial training programs in the 1990s and 2000s. Workshops and webinars for global south editors and authors are now more common.

<sup>22</sup> ATNP, “Authors’ Resources,” accessed June 12, 2021, <http://www.atnpress.com/p/contact-us.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Notable examples are Regnum-Africa based in Ghana, Acton Publishers and African Theological Network Press, both based in Nairobi Kenya. See <https://www.aci.edu.gh/research/publications>, <https://acton.co.ke/indexframeset.php?region=ea>, <http://www.atnpress.com>

<sup>24</sup> See for example “The Nagel Institute,” accessed June 12, 2021, <https://nagelinstitute.org/>.

<sup>25</sup> Several examples come to mind from each of these churches. Muriithi Wanjau, *Mizizi* (Nairobi: Fearless Publications, 2007); *Enter: The Call to Know, Laying the Foundations - The Safari*, The Safari (Nairobi, Kenya: CITAM CED, 2014); Philip Kitoto, *Connect: Discipleship Process* (Nairobi, Kenya: Ascent, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Ochola-Adolwa, *Hatua*.

program uses a manual that guides the participants on a ten-week survey through the Old Testament. Simon Mbevi, a Pentecostal pastor, wrote the Marketplace manual to raise awareness for workplace and business engagement among Christians.<sup>27</sup> Both these programs form a part of church discipleship programs in Kenya. Much like theological curriculums and publications, discipleship initiatives need support, particularly at the origination and editorial level.

At the grassroots level, within churches and local groups, catalyst events provide a context for effective future social engagement. To this end, many Pentecostal congregations developed initiatives that address the needs of local communities.<sup>28</sup> These are locally created and funded initiatives that, though limited in their resources, have proven effective. Partnership is one way to broaden the scope and effectiveness of these initiatives. Instead of developing dependency, partnerships between local communities and foreign faith-based organizations should be limited to catalyzing existing indigenous initiatives. One existing program is the Spread the Love initiative.<sup>29</sup> This is an annual initiative where members of Mavuno Church engage issues among the neglected and underprivileged. All Mavuno's twenty congregations spread over Africa, seek out schools and other government establishments that serve the poor. Over the course of a month, congregation members give time and money to paint schools, police stations, prisons, and other neglected establishments. This is a locally funded initiative. Occasionally local and foreign partners join the initiative, or mirror it in their localities, exchanging people and resources.<sup>30</sup> Where possible, financially strong Global North partners facilitate tripartite events

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<sup>27</sup> Simon Mbevi, *Marketplace* (Nairobi: Transform Nations, 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Several examples might be quoted. Spread the Love by Mavuno church engages the local needs in neighborhoods. Msafara, was a one-time inter-church initiative in 2008 address post-election violence and displacement. "Mavuno Spread The Love - September 2012 Facebook," n.d., <https://www.facebook.com/mavunochurch/photos/a.486994487985908.111505.110845182267509/486994591319231/>; "MsafaraBlog - Wheels of Hope," MsafaraBlog - Wheels of Hope, accessed September 1, 2015, <https://msafara.wordpress.com/>; "Msafara Wheels of Hope | Rescue Kenya," Msafara (blog), accessed September 1, 2015, <https://rescuekenya.wordpress.com/category/msafara-wheels-of-hope/>.

<sup>29</sup> "Mavuno Spread The Love - September 2009," n.d., <https://mavuno.wordpress.com/2009/09/06/mavuno-spread-the-love-festival/>.

<sup>30</sup> "Mariners Spread The Love - November 2011," n.d., <http://www.marinerschurch.org/compass/go-spread-the-love>.

involving two Global South partners where all learn from each other in a mutually edifying context.<sup>31</sup>

Where called upon and led of the Spirit, partnerships should focus on local initiatives that have already begun. Financial aid for such initiatives will serve as a catalytic multiplier. This should inspire a shift away from donor-dependent models to true partnerships which are more sustainable and representative of The New Testament. Oscar Muriu, the Bishop of the Nairobi Chapel family of 150 congregations, argues that the value of active partnerships lies in their capacity to strengthen the Body of Christ for mission.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

Social engagement is part and parcel of mission in a world in need of both the message and the power of Christ. Pentecostals hold in tension longing for the return of Christ and the manifestation of God's power mediated by the work of the Holy Spirit. Sustainable social engagement is both a celebration of Christ's power at work and an acknowledgment of the need for His return to redeem a broken world. I argue here that despite the clear and formidable challenges, the answer lies in indigenous, contextual theological formation at the academy and in discipleship. Catalysis at the grassroots level will bolster local initiatives for more sustainable social engagement.

Spirit-empowered leaders are an essential part of the charismatic tradition of the Bible. The examples of Moses, the seventy elders, and some of the judges and kings show that the coming of the Spirit was an integral part of leadership emergence already recorded in the Old Testament (OT) literature. This study will explore different types of charismatic leadership, employing the contemporary concepts of leadership, and drawing on selected examples from the OT. It will be argued that a specific style of leadership can be considered charismatic only insofar as it enables the followers to fulfill their specific mission and fosters their personal development. In the course of the inquiry, the hypothesis that transformational and servant paradigms of leadership realize the nature of charismatic leadership due to their relational and empowering nature will be tested.

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<sup>31</sup> Churches like the Nairobi Chapel have navigated a few such tripartite partnerships with reasonable success. Much more is needed.

<sup>32</sup> For an elaboration of this see Oscar Muriu's reflections Oscar Muriu, *Urbana Missions Conference 2006: Interdependence Model of Missions*, 2006, <https://vimeo.com/69504380>.

Kyama Mugambi ([drkyama.mugambi@gmail.com](mailto:drkyama.mugambi@gmail.com)) researches African urban Christianity at the Centre for World Christianity, African International University, and lectures at the Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya. He authored *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya* (Baylor, 2020). He has served as a pastor for more than 20 years.

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## **Response to Kyama Mugambi's "Pentecostal Social Engagement: Challenges and Possibilities for the Global South"**

Cheryl Bridges Johns

Kyama Mugambi provides a concise and clear overview of the history of African Pentecostalism. He notes that from the beginning, the movement focused on two theological themes: eschatology-Christ's imminent return-and salvation as healing and deliverance-Christ's power. Unfortunately, these theological themes have not translated into larger, systemic categories. For the most part, African Pentecostals have defined mission narrowly as evangelism and church planting. In doing so they "neglected the social, economic, and political context these souls lived in." In addition, the rise of "power encounter Christianity" provides fertile ground for counterfeit, showman leadership." These factors have contributed to a lack of social engagement within the movement.

African Pentecostals exist in a world rift with poverty, disease, injustice, war, and natural disasters. These aspects of their lived world represent what professor Mugambi describes as "an urgent call for Christian social engagement." He sees social engagement as needing to happen at both the micro and macro level. The result being "societal change at the individual and local level" that are consistent with the scriptural mandate to be the salt and light of the world.

For the most part, discipleship within the African context focuses on the pulpit and is dependent upon the use of foreign discipleship materials. These approaches to discipleship are failing to empower believers to engage with their local contexts. Theological formation takes place within models that ignore southern global realities. Libraries of these schools are filled with books written by North American and European authors whose writings reinforce a narrow definition of Christian ministry.

Using Kenyan churches as a test case, Mugambi explores avenues of moving forward toward "sustainable models for social engagement." Keys to this remedy would be more contextual discipleship and better theological formation. Mugambi makes an important assertion, namely that "Social engagement is as much a formation issue as it is a matter of praxis, for

which Pentecostals are known.” Formation, be it in the local church or the theological school, is critical for the future of African Pentecostalism.

Mugambi’s own experience as a pastor, teacher, and curriculum developer help to enrich his thesis. He gives other examples of ambitious and relatively successful initiatives involving local churches and theological schools. His paper has a hopeful tone in addressing the need for indigenous, contextual theological formation.

To Mugambi’s insightful paper, I would add that it is important for Pentecostals to enlarge their vision of soteriology, developing an understanding of salvation as the healing of creation. African Pentecostals already have a robust belief in healing, but as with their counterparts in the north, they need to expand healing to societal and environmental levels. To this end, Wesleyan dialogue partners, both in the southern hemisphere and in the north would be helpful.

In addition, helping believers to think critically, to see themselves as subjects in the world and not merely as objects immersed in the world is vitally important in Pentecostal discipleship. This type of education should begin young. Unfortunately, colonial forms of elementary and secondary education foster what Paul Freire called a “banking model” in which students sit passively while instructors deposit information into their brains. Participatory, problem-solving learning from a young age opens people to exploring the world and to seeing the larger issues surrounding their daily lives. When this type of learning is in synergy with the Holy Spirit, a creative, critical, and hope-filled praxis is created. It is harder to achieve higher levels of formal operational thought in adults. For that reason, many adults resist critical, systemic thinking, even when given training.

In the end, this is a hopeful paper. It portends a more mature, indigenous African Pentecostalism than currently exists.

Cheryl B Johns ( [cjohns@ptseminary.edu](mailto:cjohns@ptseminary.edu) ) is a professor at Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Cleveland TN. She researches and teaches in various fields in Practical Theology, Spiritual formation and Ecumenism. Among other honorary assignments, she has served as President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. She authored *Pentecostal Formation* and numerous articles for academic journals. She is an ordained minister in the Church of God.

# Theological Foundation for Pentecostal Holistic Mission

Miguel Alvarez

## Abstract

From his Latin American and Pentecostal perspective, the author elaborates on a theology of mission for the church that is consistent with the teachings of the gospel in theory and practice. He selects social issues of significant relevance to the life and ministry of diverse Pentecostal movements. Besides scholars from his region, he intentionally includes authors from other latitudes with whom he maintains a broad and mature dialogue in the document. This ample discussion allows him to focus the debate on a productive and dynamic ending. This presentation further expands the space for an intercultural dialogue on the mission of the church. This study intends to input mission information that will inform the understanding of mission among Pentecostals in general.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal mission, Progressive Pentecostalism, holistic missiology, social concern, Pentecostal spirituality, social transformation

## Introduction

The theme of Pentecostal mission has been present in my academic and ministerial life for many years. Being exposed to other cultures and academic environments that lead to a responsible and in-depth study of the mission of the church provided me with good information to address this issue with a great sense of responsibility.

To begin, I will try to dialogue with some authors who have advanced a lot in their research on the subject. I will get on the bandwagon, and from there, I will draw my own conclusions.

For instance, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori have already done a significant work in the field of social action, as observed in their study on progressive Pentecostal theology. They have moved out from that stream of Pentecostalism that emphasizes personal salvation to the exclusion of any attempt to transform the community. Instead, they have adopted a new

field of action in Christian service. They are calling it Progressive Pentecostalism.<sup>1</sup>

Miller and Yamamori define Progressive Pentecostals “as 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 people in their community.”<sup>2</sup> These emerging Pentecostals are known for their contemporary and expressive praise and worship. They empower lay people for ministry. They also show genuine compassion for the holistic needs of people. Progressive Pentecostals serve the individual and the community. They perceive the move of the Holy Spirit individually and in the worshipping community.<sup>3</sup>

With Miller and Yamamori’s definition in mind, we have organized new ideas and insights that arise from the previous sections. Once we have classified the issues, we will proceed to analyze them with the purpose of establishing creative proposals, which may be useful to understand Pentecostal integral mission. During the course of the discussion, we make reference to some points that require further research and reflection. Nevertheless, those issues pointed out here are useful to this work.

Finally, we discuss the reason why Pentecostals seem to be successful in building communities referred to here as communities of faith. Such communities base their faith and action around spiritual principles, values, and virtues. Pentecostal communities have been established mostly among the poor and marginalized. As we have seen, in recent decades, the RCC and other Christian organizations have assumed the position of opting for the poor in their approach to mission.<sup>4</sup>

The difference between mission service provided by Christian entities and the Pentecostal church could be explained this way: Pentecostal mission starts from and within the poor. Pentecostals did not have to go to the poor. They are the poor, and their missiology comes from within as a movement of the poor. Poverty is part of their historical background. Their

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<sup>1</sup> Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> The preferential option for the poor is one of the significant teachings for social service in the Roman Catholic Church of Latin America. Pedro Arrupe used the phrase ‘option for the poor’ in 1968 in a letter to the Jesuits of Latin America. As a developed theological principle, Gustavo Gutiérrez, first articulated it in his landmark book on liberation theology. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Lima, Perú, Perspectivas, 1971), 33-34. See also Gerald S. Twomey, “The Preferential Option for the Poor,” *Catholic Social Thought from John XXIII to John Paul II* (Vatican: Edwin Mellen, 2005), 278-90.



faith and commitments taught them to overcome poverty with the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, which is initiated by the practice of the gospel from the inside out. Liberation theologians may argue that they also come from the poor. The difference lies in the spiritual approach. Pentecostals act out of spiritual conviction, while liberation theologians seem to have acted out of sociopolitical and religious convictions which were not compatible with Pentecostals.<sup>5</sup>

Some Pentecostal churches, however, still struggle in their understanding of mission because they tend to spiritualize social ills. Poverty, injustice, and illness are seen as direct consequences of evil activity in human nature. Pentecostals may find it beneficial to learn how to address the issue of institutional sin and recognize that social evils could also be produced by evil structures of power that work against God's purpose for humanity. However, Pentecostals seem to be expanding their faith beyond beliefs and committing to more faithful practicalities. Although current Pentecostal churches are paying more attention to church growth, such numbers are also generating the ability to affect the community by transforming old paradigms into new life standards that will complete the fullness of God's purpose for the community. To meet such demands, Pentecostals may have to re-focus their attention to areas of service such as community development and integral assistance to the poor that are social responsibilities that do not seem to be intentionally included in most contemporary Pentecostal ministries.

## **Mission and Social Concern**

Pentecostals understand the community of believers as God's dwelling place with men and women. With regards to community life, David Bosch states,

Pentecostal believers share their joys and hopes, their anxieties and sadness, stand with every man and woman of every place and time, to bring them the good news of new life in the Kingdom of God. Christ Jesus manifested the signs of God's kingdom. This has come and continues to be present among those who believe.<sup>6</sup>

Bosch also suggests that it is in the present world where the church serves as the agency, whereby

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance C. René Padilla, "A Message for the Whole Person," *Transformation* 9:3 (1993), 1. See also hi, "Evangelism and Social Responsibility," *Transformation* 9:3 (1993), 27.

<sup>6</sup> See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 99-113.

God shares his love and hope. God's love inspires and sustains every commitment to human freedom and advancement. The church is present amongst mankind as God's dwelling place. In it men and women find support and solidarity, which is an expression of the redeeming love of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

This idea leads to the assumption that the community of faith is neither an abstract ideal nor simple spiritual teaching. The church was designed to serve people in the context of human history and in the real world. Thus, believers are inspired by the Spirit of love to serve the community. That way, believers show their willingness to cooperate with God's divine redemptive plan for humanity.

Darío López states that every person is unique in his or her individuality and that every individual establishes his or her relationships in a free society with others.<sup>8</sup> With this framework in mind, Valerio Gerber suggests that human life was designed in a way that individuals could network with people who also have the capability to relate to other individuals and social groups. Pentecostals could also assist their 'people to invest in the formation of social communities for the advancement of their personal and family groups'.<sup>9</sup> These are some of the factors that originate and shape society with structures that express its political, economic, juridical, and cultural constructs.<sup>10</sup> Then rightly so, Pentecostals affirm that the Holy Spirit is the agent who enables the church to become efficient in serving the community. Therefore, in David Harley's words at the end of one of his works, "the church is therefore able to understand humanity in his or her vocation and aspirations, limits and misgivings, in his or her rights and duties, and to speak a word of life that reverberates in the historical and social circumstances of human existence".<sup>11</sup>

## Permeating Society with the Gospel

Pentecostal churches seem to be successful at proclaiming the gospel. The high number of believers testifies that; however, they seem to show limitations in the presentation of the redemptive and transformative mission of the gospel. Because of that, they seem to be limited in the

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<sup>7</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 92. On the same topic, see also Darío López, *El Nuevo Rostro del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Lima, Perú: Ediciones Puma, 2002), 68.

<sup>8</sup> López, *El Nuevo Rostro*, 56.

<sup>9</sup> Vergil Gerber, *Missions in Creative Tension: The Green Lake '71 Compendium* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1971), 56.

<sup>10</sup> Gerber, *Missions in Creative Tension*, 56.

<sup>11</sup> David Harley, *Preparing to Serve: Training for Cross-Cultural Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995), 89.

advancement of the community. For example, the field of education still seems to be one of the major challenges for them to overcome.

Pentecostals may have to revise their understanding and practice of integral mission if they are to enrich and permeate society with the transforming mission of the gospel.

The way Pentecostals serve the community could indicate their levels of spirituality and commitment to transform the life of every individual affected by their ministry. The deficiency may lie in their instruction as agents of social transformation. They do not have a theology of integral mission incorporated into their teachings. In reality, Pentecostals have not been indifferent to the suffering of the poor and the marginalized. They are aware of these difficult situations that negatively affect society.

Pentecostals have been attentive to the moral conditions of the community. In their own way, Pentecostals have promoted the human aspects that enrich people's lives. For them, society is not simply a secular and worldly reality, and therefore, foreign to the message of salvation. Instead, Pentecostals understand that the best of the community is accomplished when the principles of the gospel are observed. For Pentecostals, society is made up of men and women who are the primary subjects to be served by the church. What Pentecostals need is to develop solid teaching of integral mission that will strengthen their current efforts in the community.<sup>12</sup>

Through their current teachings, Pentecostals realize that it is the Holy Spirit who inspires believers to proclaim the message of redemption wrought by Christ in the gospel. Redemption also carries the purpose of transforming human history. However, in the back of their minds, Pentecostals seem to view this transformation as a secondary goal as one of the blessings of being redeemed. Therefore, since social transformation is not considered part of the core of redemption, those who advocate for integral mission would notice something missing in the Pentecostal teachings. "The community of faith proclaims the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and in love, bearing witness to men and women, in the name of Christ Jesus, to the dignity and fellowship with persons."<sup>13</sup>

Another area of concern is the teaching of peace and justice in conformity with the principles of the gospel. Carmelo Álvarez advocates for these teachings to be openly taught not only at seminaries but also studied at the local church level by all members of the congregation. Álvarez asks

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<sup>12</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 96.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 312-21.

Pentecostals to leave their comfort zone of the neighborhood and proceed to defend and speak boldly in favor of peace and justice.<sup>14</sup>

In reality, social justice and peace are part of the core of integral mission. For Lopez, these are also Pentecostal concerns because they deliver a message that brings spiritual, moral, and social freedom to humanity.<sup>15</sup> This means, “the gospel has the effectiveness of truth and grace that comes from the Spirit of God, who penetrates hearts, predisposing them to thoughts and designs of love, justice, freedom, and peace.”<sup>16</sup> By transforming society with the gospel, Pentecostals will have to infuse freedom, which is found in the gospel, into the human heart. That is the gospel that promotes a society befitting humanity in Christ Jesus. They ought to build a community that is more human because it is a society in greater conformity with the purpose of God for the world.<sup>17</sup>

Through their involvement in community service, Pentecostals will have to carry out their mission at a local level. There they will serve as instruments of social transformation. Hence, in the redemptive mission that Christ entrusted to them, there is also room for the supernatural to take place, especially in attending to the poor, the weak, and the marginalized. The supernatural dimension is also an expression of the unlimited power of Pentecost to transform people’s lives. This dimension is also an expression of the integral power of the gospel.<sup>18</sup> It is good though that “Pentecostals do not understand the supernatural as an entity or as a place that begins where the natural ends. Instead, they see it as the union of the supernatural with the natural, whereby the natural is lifted a higher level through holiness.”<sup>19</sup>

For Norberto Saracco, it is clear that “for Pentecostals, everything that belongs to the human order is also part of the supernatural, for in the exercise of the supernatural the human condition is also found within it,”<sup>20</sup> and that is so because the person is living in the Spirit. Thus, the gifts of the

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<sup>14</sup> Carmelo Álvarez, *Santidad y Compromiso: El Riesgo de Vivir el Evangelio* (México, D.F.: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1985), 25-34.

<sup>15</sup> López, *El Nuevo Rostro*, 61.

<sup>16</sup> David Bueno, “The Struggle for Social Space: How Salvadoran Pentecostals Build Communities in the Rural Sector,” *Transformation* 18:3 (2001), 171-191.

<sup>17</sup> Bueno, “The Struggle for Social Space,” 172.

<sup>18</sup> Chandler Russell, “Fanning the Charismatic Fire,” *Christianity Today* 12:4 (1967), 39-40.

<sup>19</sup> Russell, “Fanning the Charismatic Fire,” 39.

<sup>20</sup> Juan M. Castañeda, “Objetividad y Subjetividad en la Experiencia Cristiana,” in René Padilla, ed., *La Fuerza del Espíritu en la Evangelización: Hechos de los Apóstoles en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairós, 2004), 157-174.

Holy Spirit are delivered in order to assist the limitations of humanity, and because of that, those who participate in the love of God are able to exercise them. Likewise, Jesus Christ is also the fulfillment of all things in the present social order.<sup>21</sup> Through him, humanity is able to recover its original connection with the Creator of life, wisdom, and love.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.”<sup>23</sup> Since this connection was lost with the first Adam, God has re-connected with humanity through the last Adam, Jesus his Son.<sup>24</sup>

The Pentecostal teaching of redemption begins with the Incarnation, by which the Son of God takes on all that is human except sin according to the solidarity established by the wisdom of the Creator and embraces everything in His gift of redeeming love.<sup>25</sup> Humanity then is touched by this love in the fullness of his being, which is corporeal and spiritual, in solidarity with others. Hence, the whole person is involved in the mission of the gospel. The community of believers follows a path enlightened with a mission that is integral, involving an effective action in favor of the poor and the weak. Pentecostal believers understand that they are faithful to the gospel when they offer themselves as instruments of transformation in the hands of God. They become agents of integral redemption to those who receive Christ as Lord and Savior.<sup>26</sup> This is one of the marks of Pentecostalism, especially in the condition of human suffering. The combination of the proclamation of the gospel to the poor and marginalized with the action and assistance of the supernatural generates new life and gives hope to people.

## Social Responsibility

This debate of social responsibility is born out of the relationship between the gospel message and the community. Understood in this way, social responsibility is distinctive, whereby Pentecostals may commit themselves to carrying out the proclamation of the gospel and assuming a prophetic role. This proposal is for Pentecostals to recognize that teaching and

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<sup>21</sup> Donald Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Nueva Creación, 1991), 26-30.

<sup>22</sup> Padilla, “A Message for the Whole Person,” 1-4.

<sup>23</sup> López, *El Nuevo Rostro*, 65.

<sup>24</sup> Russell, “Fanning the Charismatic Fire,” 39.

<sup>25</sup> David Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 210.

<sup>26</sup> Roger Cabezas, “Despertar Ecueménico del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano,” in *Jubileo: La Fiesta del Espíritu. Identidad y Misión del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Maracaibo, Venezuela: CEPLA, 2001), 78-91.

spreading the gospel with social responsibility is essential to ministry by the community of faith.

This concept of integral mission takes into consideration the consequences of the message proclaimed and social actions involved. Evidently, the message will initiate spiritual change, which will affect the community's daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ as the Savior. At this point, Burrell's argument is valid; he says, "social mission is also part of the very heart of Christian service."<sup>27</sup> This teaching may offer refreshing ideas to Pentecostals as they effectively engage in social responsibility. Pentecostals may now see the mystery of salvation as a service that stems not only from the proclamation of the gospel but also from leading in the transformation of the community.

It is clear that the Pentecostal community cannot assume all responsibility for what happens in the community, but it could speak with authority and competence against social evils and in favor of what is good for the people. When these matters are integrated into the proclamation of the gospel, then the community is benefited. On this subject, Donald Dayton has written, Jesus did not bequeath the church a mission merely in the political, economic, or social order. The purpose Christ assigned to his followers was holistic and included both the physical and spiritual realities of people.<sup>28</sup>

Dayton also adds, "this mission of evangelization can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigor to establish and consolidate a community according to the law and purpose of God for humanity."<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, Pentecostals do not intervene directly in technical questions with regard to social concerns, but their Christian principles enable them to act as the Holy Spirit guides them in any given political or socioeconomic circumstance. They seem to be skillful in implementing their principles and have the ability to propose systems or models of social organization that benefit the common interest of people. This is more relevant in the most marginalized areas where the local church usually takes the initiative to find solutions to problems of common interest for the people.

Although Pentecostals realize that this is not the only mission entrusted by Christ to their community of faith, some still insist that "the church's competence comes from the principles of the gospel – believers are to proclaim the truth that sets individuals free, which is the message proclaimed and witnessed to by the Son of God made human."<sup>30</sup> Yet, a

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<sup>27</sup> Burrell, *Freedom and Creation*, 208.

<sup>28</sup> Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo*, 129.

<sup>29</sup> Dayton, *Raíces Teológicas del Pentecostalismo*, 129.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Freston, "Pentecostalism in Latin America: Characteristic and Controversies," *Social Compass* 45:3 (1998), 335-58.

new generation of Pentecostals is becoming involved in the principles of integral mission, which may lead to a more significant presentation of the gospel.

## Confronting Evil in Socio-Political Structures

Some Pentecostals still adhere to the traditional teaching that the ministry of believers is to assist individuals in finding the path of salvation. This seems to be their primary and sole purpose for ministry. This action provides them with an overall idea that social teaching is not needed in the church. If the church becomes involved in social action, it may miss its goal which is proclaiming the gospel of salvation to the lost.<sup>31</sup> These Pentecostals believe that the community of faith has the responsibility to teach the truth and the way of integrity to people. They also understand that believers need to serve their fellow citizens in order to make Christian principles real to humanity. They teach that the purpose of the gospel is to put its principles into practice.<sup>32</sup> For them, true faith and sound behavior will be manifested in the field of practice, which involves believers sharing their lives with other individuals in the community. Whether or not these responsibilities seem spiritual, their purpose remains focused on the human being whom God calls by means of the Christian community to participate in his gift of salvation.

Other Pentecostals see missiology as the discipline that teaches them to embrace the idea that people will not respond to the gift of salvation through partial, abstract, or merely verbal acceptance, but with the whole of their lives. Men and women leave their old lifestyle to initiate anew, which is also relevant and testifies of their redemption in Christ.<sup>33</sup>

These Pentecostals do not see mission as a privilege, but instead, “they think of it as the right and responsibility that believers have to proclaim the gospel in the context of community.”<sup>34</sup> That will make the liberating Word of the gospel transform in the complex worlds of production, labor, business, finance, trade, politics, law, culture, and social communications,

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<sup>31</sup> For a broader understanding of the development of social doctrine in the evangelical churches of Latin America, see In Sik Hong, *¿Una Iglesia Posmoderna? En Busca de un Modelo de Iglesia y Misión en la Era Posmoderna* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairós, 2001), 72-86.

<sup>32</sup> Russell, “Fanning the Charismatic Fire,” 40.

<sup>33</sup> A good source to understand the wholeness of Pentecostal mission is found in Allan H. Anderson, “Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World,” in Grant McClung, ed., *Azusa Street and Beyond* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2006), 169-89.

<sup>34</sup> Allan H. Anderson, “Structures and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission,” *Misionalia* 32:3 (2004), 233-49.

where men and women live and work.<sup>35</sup> For these Pentecostals, mission is not restricted to a purely private sphere, and the Christian message is not relegated to purely spiritual salvation incapable of shedding light on earthly human existence.

Therefore, it is significant that some Pentecostals are interested in learning that they cannot remain indifferent to social matters. These believers are aware that mission is to instill spiritual and moral principles in the community, including those pertaining to social order, and to denounce prophetically any human injustice.

## Political Participation

Pentecostals view God's mission not as a simple participation in activities of benevolence. Instead, they think of it as part of a mission that was formed over the course of time to participate in social solutions using diverse actions according to the teachings of the gospel.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Pentecostals realize that there are adjustments that have to take place in their mission thinking in order to continue with their ministry successfully. Such adjustments have to do with methods and epistemological definitions of integral mission, theology, and practice. At the moment, Pentecostals associate social responsibility (which also includes political participation) with the experience of Christian life.

However, according to Juan Sepúlveda, "theology and particularly, mission theology cannot be defined by socio-economic parameters only."<sup>37</sup> Thus, the gospel does not present mission as an ideology nor as a pragmatic political or socio-economic system that intends to change or create new political structures or socioeconomic patterns aligned to particular interests. On the contrary, Sepúlveda adds, "Pentecostals are looking at mission as an instrument of reflection and practice of socio-economic and political justice, which ought to be exercised in accordance with the principles of the gospel."<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, Pentecostal mission is also looking at ways to interpret and implement Christian principles to the reality of the community. Sepúlveda also acknowledges that Pentecostals are also determining how they will approach human vocation, which once was considered earthly and

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<sup>35</sup> Anderson, "Structures and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission," 233-49.

<sup>36</sup> This line of thought is shared by Quentin Schultz, "Orality and Power in Latin American Pentecostalism," in Donald E. Miller, ed., *Coming of Age: Protestantism in Contemporary Latin America* (Boston, MA: University Press, 1994), 65-88.

<sup>37</sup> Juan Sepúlveda, "Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity," *International Review of Mission* 78:309 (1989), 80-88.

<sup>38</sup> Sepúlveda, "Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity," 86.



transcendent. They want to guide believers to choose wisely with their participation in Christian service in order to fulfill the purpose of the gospel in the community.<sup>39</sup>

Pentecostal churches interpret social doctrine as theological in nature, specifically theological and moral, since it is a doctrine aimed at guiding people's spiritual and moral behavior. Regarding this matter, Doug Peterson said,

Pentecostals find this teaching at the crossroads where Christian life and conscience come into contact with the real world. They see it in the efforts of individuals, families, people involved in evangelism, cultural and social life, as well as politicians and statesmen, to give it a concrete form and application in history.<sup>40</sup>

Brian Smith also argues that Pentecostals in Latin America could find these three levels of missiological teaching in the community.

Pentecostal mission observes at least three areas of interest in social service: (1) the theological basis that motivates mission into action; (2) the principles that drive believers to transform society and (3) the spiritual intentionality that generates the power and the ability to face any given situation for the good of people.<sup>41</sup>

These areas of interest help the church define the method and motivation that believers use in the transformation of society.

In principle, Pentecostals' social responsibility finds its strength in biblical and spiritual revelation on the practice of the faith by great-commission-committed Christians. The Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration and understanding of the gospel. He drives believers into social service and inspires them to understand human needs and to guide individuals to enhance human life. In God's plan for humanity, He created men and women with the capacity of fellowship with one another. The practice of this principle is important in the transformation of the community.

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<sup>39</sup> Sepúlveda, "Pentecostalism as Popular Religiosity," 80.

<sup>40</sup> Although Doug Petersen did not specifically address the matter of Pentecostal theology of moral behavior, he does seem to imply that Pentecostal mission is generally focused on the behavioral change when the person is inducted into the community of faith. See Douglas Petersen, "Pentecostals: Who are They?" in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, eds., *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999), 76-111.

<sup>41</sup> Brian Smith, *Religious Politics in Latin America: Pentecostal vs. Catholic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 86-112.

Smith also said, “Christians receive the divine Word by faith and put it into practice when it is activated by the Holy Spirit, who also interacts with reason in the practice of mission.”<sup>42</sup> Reason structures the understanding of faith and leads it into practical action. For Smith, “mission is accomplished when it is driven beyond knowledge and understanding into practical circumstances of human life. Mission deals with the typical difficulties and the needs of people in the context of their life.”<sup>43</sup>

As long as Pentecostal mission remains centered on the teachings of Christ, there is no danger of weakening its transformative ability. Eldin Villafañe also points out that since “the revelation of Christ by the Holy Spirit illuminates the ministry of believers through service, they find understanding of the meaning of human dignity and the ethical requirements inherent to it.”<sup>44</sup> Pentecostal mission, then, is the ability to transform society through faith and obedience to Jesus Christ. By faith, they also develop a greater capacity to impart knowledge and to transform people with the truth that affirms solidarity with those who remain marginalized by the negative circumstances of life.

## Mission and Other Sources of Knowledge

The teaching of integral mission should also be able to draw information from other sources of knowledge. It should have the ability to dialogue with interdisciplinary and academic scholarship. This Pentecostal mission could become capable of discussing themes such as the incarnation of the truth in a changing society continually affected by political and social ingredients that require interdisciplinary discussions in order to present the cause effectively.<sup>45</sup> It should be able to understand and dialogue with those disciplines concerned with humanity and look for options that could contribute to the wellbeing of humanity.

According to Villafañe, this theology of integral mission could be capable of making significant use of the various disciplines that build their structures of knowledge on the principles of philosophy. “Pentecostal integral mission should be capable of using descriptive analysis and reports that come out of the human sciences.”<sup>46</sup> However, Pentecostal missiologists

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *Religious Politics in Latin America*, 92.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *Religious Politics in Latin America*, 92.

<sup>44</sup> Villafañe, *El Espíritu Liberador: Hacia una Ética Social Pentecostal Hispanoamericana* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996), 123-30.

<sup>45</sup> Edward L. Cleary, “Latin American Pentecostalism,” in Murray Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Doug Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 1999), 131-150.

<sup>46</sup> Villafañe, *El Espíritu Liberador*, 121.

know neither philosophy nor the social sciences are neutral. They have their own structures and core values that determine, to a considerable degree, what they describe and the conclusions they deduce from their observations. Nonetheless, dialogue is necessary and has to be done in accordance with scriptural and spiritual principles that are natural to missiology as well as to Pentecostalism.

Although Pentecostals may not have dialogued with the social sciences, it may be valuable to recognize that a significant contribution to the development of mission theology could also be obtained from an objective dialogue with them. In a way, Cleary admits,

The church could receive valuable ideas from the social sciences, which could facilitate missiological and anthropological understanding of humanity. There is a wider range and complexity of knowledge that derives from the networking activity experienced through social relations.<sup>47</sup>

This attentive and constant openness to other branches of knowledge could make Pentecostal mission relevant and reliable in contemporary ministry. The contributions of the various disciplines of the social sciences could add valuable elements that would enhance a theology of Pentecostal integral mission. This approach to knowledge could also open opportunities for Pentecostal believers to speak to individuals in more convincing manners. It would allow them to be more effective in fulfilling the task of incarnating the revelation of the Word of God in the conscience of people, thus making social responsibility relevant in integral mission theology.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, social sciences will have to recognize the relevance of theology of integral mission. This could validate an interdisciplinary dialogue that challenges the social sciences to study Christian mission from another angle. Theology of integral mission aims at serving humanity from a biblical and spiritual perspective. The incarnation of the gospel in society could provide the opportunity for believers to promote and work for the benefit of society with the principles of the gospel.

## **Mission in the Community of Faith**

A theology of integral mission belongs to the community of believers. This is so because local congregations are the agents that propose and formulate its objectives as well as the dissemination of its principles and teachings. Integral mission is not the prerogative of a specialized group in the church. Instead, it is the objective and goal of all believers who are part of a

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<sup>47</sup> Cleary, "Latin American Pentecostalism," 140.

<sup>48</sup> Jorge Soneira, "Los Estudios Sociológicos Sobre el Pentecostalismo en América Latina," *Sociedad y Religión* 8:1 (1991), 60-67.

community of faith. For Vaccaro, integral mission also expresses the way the congregation understands and approaches social structures and community attitudes towards social, economic, and political responsibility.<sup>49</sup> Pentecostals could benefit to learn how to stimulate the community of faith to participate in the planning, definition, and purpose of integral mission. Leaders could trust believers to assume different and specific tasks that make use of gifts and natural abilities available to the community of faith.

These contributions would be expressions of the commitment made by believers associated with God. They also bear witness to the appreciation for the supernatural found among Pentecostals. This combination of natural and supernatural activities enables believers to appreciate their Pentecostal faith and stimulates unity in the church to promote missional teachings as part of the nature of the church. It also affirms Christian education, which carries the responsibility to form people capable of exercising the ministry of teaching in the areas of faith and morals with authority received from the Holy Spirit. The church's mission is not only the thought or work of qualified persons but also the thought of the congregation insofar as it enables believers in the work of ministry.

Therefore, in the Pentecostal community, if social responsibility is taught intentionally, one required component is the teaching and acceptance of the priesthood of all believers. That understanding determines the direction of the development of mission. This teaching, in turn, is integrated into the general ministry of the church in the concrete and particular situations of the many circumstances. This integration gives a precise definition to this teaching, translating it and putting it into practice. Snell states, "understanding mission, in its most extensive meaning, helps the validation of the contributions and emphasis put on the concept of mission practiced in the community of faith."<sup>50</sup> Let us also bear in mind that mission education also focuses on the integration of the body of believers in the process of service.

Pentecostals also seem to be paying attention to the corrective measures of their approach to the church's teaching of mission. For decades they have integrated their mission mandate integrally to the needs of the community. By conferring the same dignity and authority to these fields of service, they have taken an essential step in the development of the community at large. Concerning this matter, Murray Dempster has said,

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<sup>49</sup> Gabriel Vaccaro, and Raúl Serrano, *Identidad Pentecostal* (Quito, Ecuador: CLAI, 1990), 40. Also, Cornelia Butler Flora, *Pentecostalism in Colombia* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976), 31-36.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey T. Snell, "Beyond the Individual and Into the World: A Call to Participation into the Larger Purposes of the Spirit on the Basis of Pentecostal Theology," *Pneuma*:14 (1992), 45-46.

The Pentecostal weight of mission teaching requires solid involvement from the part of leaders, who also model mission to their students. Mission has to be taught all the time and it should be the object of support by all members of the community of faith.<sup>51</sup>

## **Mission of Reconciliation**

Essentially, the object of Pentecostal mission is to reach out to the individual with the offer of salvation, which is integral to its purpose and scope. The person is also entrusted to the church to care for him or her with spiritual and human responsibility. By virtue of its mission, the community of faith is enabled by the Holy Spirit to show integral concern for every individual. The community of faith is made aware of the importance of enhancing the quality of life and social relationships, which are built upon integral justice and godly love.

The convergence of these elements becomes the very fabric of human society. For Anthea Butler, “mission depends decisively on the quality of protection and promotion offered to humanity. In the end, this mission seeks the promotion and implementation of this condition in every community that has come to exist in the world.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, the dignity of humanity and the right of every individual constitute the basic components of healthy relationships between individuals, communities, and nations. These are missional objectives that Pentecostal communities may have to incorporate when implementing their service to the community.

Integral mission also carries a prophetic duty or responsibility that is to denounce evil when it is present in human relationships. For instance, violence and injustice are social evils that are continually working against God’s purpose for society. Believers are responsible for denouncing them, and the community of faith is called upon to assume a prophetic role to uncover the forces of evil that violate human rights. The gospel pays special attention to the mission of protecting the poor and the weak. The rights of the poor and the weak are not to be ignored or trampled upon. Societies that allow this kind of evil are becoming strongholds for a greater expansion of violence and cycles of injustice. People under these categories eventually rise up against the abuses and imbalances that lead to significant

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<sup>51</sup> Murray Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), 52-53.

<sup>52</sup> Anthea Butler, “Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas* (San José, Costa Rica: World Council of Churches, 1996), 28-44.

social upheaval.<sup>53</sup> A large part of the social responsibility of the church comes about in response to important questions to which social justice provides the proper answers.

Pentecostal integral mission understands that humanity has to be liberated from everything that oppresses men and women. He or she has to be given the opportunity to fulfill the purpose of God designed for all human beings. Thus, mission has the purpose of indicating the path in establishing harmony and the way that a reconciled society should follow in order to experience love, justice, and harmony in the community. Plutarcho Bonilla states, “Mission works in a society that anticipates with its ethics and moral standards the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.”<sup>54</sup> And rightly so, Pentecostals will have to anticipate the coming of that new humanity by working integral mission through society in the power of the Spirit.

## Mission to the Community

In the case of Pentecostals, the first recipient of mission is the community, so all believers are expected to live their faith in the community. The call for Pentecostals is to teach that social responsibility is a critical part of that mission because social responsibility plays a significant role in the obligations of peace and justice in society.<sup>55</sup> This mission calls for a moral truth that inspires people in the community to respond to the assistance offered by believers committed to social work. Some congregations have gifted members who are capable of serving the community with a great deal of success.

This awareness of social responsibility in Pentecostal mission also includes the assumption of responsibilities that affect the design and organizational functions of the community. The practice of an integral mission makes significant contributions to political structures, economic systems, and administrative skills implemented in society. With this idea in mind, Bonilla states, “the community of faith, not only pastors, is to take these variables into consideration when it plans and executes its mission to society.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, social responsibility as practiced by the church is not only sensitive to the needs of the individual but also to the corporate needs and group limitations.

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<sup>53</sup> Antonio González, *El Evangelio de la Paz y el Reinado de Dios* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairós, 2008), 56-63.

<sup>54</sup> Russell, “Fanning the Charismatic Fire,” 36.

<sup>55</sup> Villafañe, *El Espíritu Liberador*, 125.

<sup>56</sup> See Plutarco Bonilla, “Crisis del Protestantismo Costarricense Actual,” *Revista Pastoralia* 18 (1987), 65-128.

Historically, Pentecostals have thought of social responsibility specifically as the natural change that happens to individuals after conversion. They have assumed that redemption and social uplift occur naturally to those who believe. However, there is a new generation of Pentecostals who know that social responsibility also has a universal destination and has to be implemented with an intelligently designed plan of action. Anthea Butler wrote:

The gospel mission must affect the entire society and ought to serve all people. Mission raises consciousness about the needs of society and assumes an active disposition to tackle human difficulties in the way of the Spirit, which is manifested in the works of the gospel expressed by God's people.<sup>57</sup>

Butler is right in the extension of social mission to all people, which is something that Pentecostals do not seem to have included in their mission theology yet. Nevertheless, the positive argument is that Pentecostals continue to add new insights to their mission thinking. Eventually, they may include integral mission in the structure of their theology of social responsibility.

To accomplish the above, Pentecostals may have to adjust to the fact that the ultimate design for mission is to affect all people of the community. Integral mission works on behalf of humanity, highlights the dignity of people, and promotes the wellbeing of the community. Hence, integral mission gives everyone the opportunity to decide for or against Christ's gift of redemption and to become the persons that God intended for him or her to be when He created him or her. Therefore, Pentecostals may have to incorporate the teaching that mission is also designed to reach out to the benefit of all people groups. That integral mission ought to be practiced by all followers of Christ in order to reach individuals and community needs.

## **Mission, Spirituality, and Renewal**

There is evidence that Pentecostals are now self-studying their mission, which shows significant advances related to the continuity of their faith commitments and the renewal of their principles and practices of ministry.<sup>58</sup> One point in their favor is that they could justify this self-critique as guided by the perennial revelation of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Pentecostals claim that their commitments do not depend on arguments related to

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<sup>57</sup> Butler, "Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality and Justice," 29.

<sup>58</sup> Grant McClung, "Pentecostals, the Sequel: What Will It Take for This World Phenomenon to Stay Vibrant for Another 100 Years?" *Christianity Today* 50:9 (April 1, 2006), 29-30.

cultural differences or to political ideologies prevailing in certain contexts. Rather, they make sure that their service remains faithful to the Pentecostal inspiration that moves mission into practicing principles of ministry that are biblical and consistent with theologically sound reflection.<sup>59</sup> Méndez also claims, “this exercise helps believers to identify criteria of discernment and understanding of social action. It also links the ministry of the congregation with the gospel message and principles revealed by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>60</sup> Being like this, one would expect that this continuous revelation that is foundational in Pentecostal theology would also be permanent in their approach to integral mission.

This continuity of revelation may cause Pentecostalism to move consistently in expanding its mission in contemporary history. This is one of the reasons David Bosch said, “Pentecostals are neither conditioned by having to comply with historical demands nor limited in their potential and capability to be creative.”<sup>61</sup> Then, they should not be afraid of this new approach to service because we have seen how the Holy Spirit renews the church in its mission and purpose continually.

Having discussed it, we can now say that Pentecostal mission could also teach social responsibility as a work in progress, where the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of society is always ongoing. That mission is backed by the fact that truth is capable of penetrating human circumstances, indicating the path to social justice and the road to peace in society. This is why Méndez states: “Pentecostals realize that the gospel’s message cannot be confined to the convenience of changeable socio-economic circumstances or to political realities within a particular historical context.”<sup>62</sup> This is true because this kind of teaching takes a dynamic approach to mission through reflection and continues to create the ideal approach to changing negative situations that harm people in the community. It is this approach to mission that drives believers to serve society by presenting a message that is relevant in the transformation of the community.

As we have seen, the Pentecostal congregation is not retreating within itself from its social responsibility. On the contrary, it has always been driven to reach out to the suffering and assist the needs of the poor and marginalized. Very often, they do this as a personal initiative, or sometimes they even act together as a congregation. Pentecostals have always served in

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<sup>59</sup> Mario G. Méndez, “La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu; Su Unidad y Diversidad,” in Carmelo Alvarez, ed., *Pentecostalismo y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1992), 201-216.

<sup>60</sup> Méndez, “La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu,” 110.

<sup>61</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 109.

<sup>62</sup> Méndez, “La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu,” 88.



the midst of people, and they have been considered as a model in living the gospel with the community. According to Anthea Butler, “Pentecostals think that the Holy Spirit sends them to serve people wherever they are, with their existential difficulties and human circumstances that carry them away from God’s purpose for their lives.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, for Pentecostals, the community of faith is the first point of contact with the gospel. The next step is to witness to those who are not part of the community. This witnessing includes using all of the resources made available to them by the Holy Spirit. The aim is to transform the lives of people and the community. According to Butler, Pentecostal believers are initiated in a process that leads them into understanding the message of reconciliation with God and the following freedom that is experienced through love, justice and peace for those who believe.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the potential for integral mission is there. It will only take intentional promotion and teaching among the churches for this model to succeed.

## Social Transformation

Historically, Pentecostals have identified their mission service with the person of the Holy Spirit, who is the transformational Agent of individual, as well as cultural and social realities. They have also become instrumental in building human communities by virtue of bringing out the social significance of the gospel to the community. It is commonly accepted that early in the twentieth century, Pentecostals began to address social questions typical of that time, thus creating a new paradigm in the understanding and practice of mission.<sup>65</sup>

In Latin America, Pentecostals learned that they had a message with spiritual and social implications concerning human situations that affected the individual and the community. Although they did not feel capable of formulating the biblical doctrine of church mission, they acted with their conscience and in good faith in order to confront social evils in the community.<sup>66</sup> These efforts also enabled the church to analyze and think about practical solutions to social problems and to indicate directions to follow peace and justice for all the people involved.

In its approach to social responsibility, Pentecostal mission may be capable of understanding the importance of the sort of social service that focuses on the well-being of people in the community. Pentecostals also

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<sup>63</sup> Butler, “Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality and Justice,” 31.

<sup>64</sup> Butler, “Facets of Pentecostal Spirituality and Justice,” 27.

<sup>65</sup> Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2000), 26.

<sup>66</sup> Luis Orellana, “El Futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina,” *Voces del Pentecostalismo Latinoamericano* (Concepción, Chile: RELEP, 2011), 141-156.

seem to be able to articulate a reliable theological understanding of the social condition of people in their communities. According to Luis Orellana, Pentecostals also seem to be learning to cooperate with Christian anthropology by revealing the inviolable dignity of every individual.<sup>67</sup>

Chuck Kraft states: “Pentecostals have the potential to understand the human perspective of economics and analyze the political realities of work in the original design for the community.”<sup>68</sup> Guerrero also writes: “Pentecostals are capable of learning to promote and inspire genuine human values, which are sustained through the implementation of the principles of the gospel to individual needs, cultural practices, and community life.”<sup>69</sup>

Then, we can speak for Pentecostal anthropology that is in support of the various pastoral tasks that care for the individual and his or her wellbeing in the community. Such care incorporates the principles of the Pentecostal faith, whereby the believer is filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. That experience cleans the inner life of believers and enables them to work for the good of people. Carmelo Álvarez states,

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals are able to guide the mind and heart of individuals through sound judgment. In this guidance, new and healthy values precede their decisions and the way they conceive and build new models and patterns for their lives.<sup>70</sup>

Concerning this matter, Luis Orellana also writes: “the present society is confronted by the need to understand the difference between the principles of the gospel and the cultural values assimilated by people.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, Pentecostals make the gospel relatable and available to every individual. The gifts of God are made available to every person in the community by the ministry of believers. This approach to mission is important because a secularized understanding of salvation could reduce the gospel to merely human philosophy. That approach will look for social solutions to the needs of humanity instead of those solutions dispensed by the experience of an integral gospel.

In the case of Pentecostals, Juan Driver argues, “they are now taking a step forward not only in the evangelization effort but also into a new stage of history in their mission work and that social responsibility is present in

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<sup>67</sup> Orellana, “El Futuro del Pentecostalismo en América Latina,” 144-46.

<sup>68</sup> Chuck H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 6.

<sup>69</sup> Méndez, “La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu,” 203.

<sup>70</sup> Álvarez, *Pentecostalismo y Liberación*, 56.

<sup>71</sup> Orellana, “El Fuego y la Nieve,” 143.

the process of evangelization.”<sup>72</sup> It is remarkable that in their own way, Pentecostals have found that society is in need of a proclamation of the gospel, which also focuses on the solution of human needs. They just need a theology of integral mission that may enhance the quality of their service.

## Spirituality and Social Action

As stated earlier, social action is still new to Pentecostals as part of their theological formation. It is true that they have significant involvement in social service, which is taken as part of their spiritual discipline, but that is done on an informal basis. Hence, until they have formal teaching on integral mission incorporated into their curriculum and doctrinal commitments, we may not see a fully developed mission theology among them. Early in their history, Pentecostals realized that the church exists to work in favor of human growth and transformation, and their actions needed to comply with this portion of the ministry.

With regard to this matter, Bernardo Campos states, “The Pentecostal church is able to interact with society and culture. Its mission is to ensure that people experience hope in concrete situations, especially in times of difficulty and despair.”<sup>73</sup> Campos adds, “Social action works in concrete realities and prepares believers to experience the human awareness of evangelization. For example, serving the poor and the weak makes the experience of the gospel complete and builds awareness of redemption to the community in general.”<sup>74</sup>

If Pentecostals want to be socially responsible, they will have to guide believers into a two-fold exercise: helping them to discover the truth and to discern the path to success in their service. Furthermore, they will encourage Christians to bear witness to people with an authentic spirit of service, and that way, the gospel will be effective in the field of social action. Bernardo Campos argues, “this is pure Pentecostal mission, for they understand that once they are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to efficiently proclaim the full gospel to the poor, the weak, and the marginalized.”<sup>75</sup> Their service is accompanied by the witness of spiritual gifts, which are operated by believers committed to Christ. Pentecostal

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<sup>72</sup> Juan Driver, *La Fe en la Periferia de la Historia: Una Historia del Pueblo Cristiano desde la Perspectiva de los Movimientos de Restauración y Reforma Radical* (Ciudad Guatemala: Ediciones Semilla, 1997), 67.

<sup>73</sup> Bernardo Campos, “Pentecostalism: A Latin American View,” in *Consultation with Pentecostals in the Americas* (San José, Costa Rica: World Council of Churches, 1996), 62.

<sup>74</sup> Campos, “Pentecostalism,” 63.

<sup>75</sup> Campos, “Pentecostalism,” 45.

mission also makes social action credible because in its practice, one can see the internal logic and consistency of ministry that is endorsed by the Holy Spirit.

## Formation of Social Responsibility

One recommendation for Pentecostal churches is to embrace the formative value of social responsibility. As we have seen, Pentecostals recognize that the blessing of a new life is the result of the combined effort of the Holy Spirit and the believers. This combined experience enables them to pursue integral redemption for the individual and the community. Bosch states,

This fraternal solidarity takes place in the search for social justice and peace, whereby the fullness of Christian service is presented in actual history. This could be found in the content of the message and methodology of mission employed by Pentecostals.<sup>76</sup>

This approach to mission enriches the reception and application of the gospel by virtue of the dynamic contribution to the areas of the community reached by service. In regard to Christian formation, Pentecostals may not find it difficult to understand that the teaching of social action is directed toward enabling believers to evangelize and promote the humanization of temporal realities. This is similar to what Newbigin states:

The community of faith is the bearer of a spiritual ability and practical understanding of ministry, which provides support to the mission of transforming community life. Such action helps Christian service to conform its actions to the plan of God.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, Pentecostals may have to start training believers to understand and appreciate the moral order. This attitude could motivate them to promote freedom that is constructed when people approach social responsibility with the truth. It would help individuals to become socially responsible. Then, they would strive for truth and justice in cooperation with other members of the community. Evidently, this is a new contribution to Pentecostal mission but once embraced, this could carry significant formative value.

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<sup>76</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 355.

<sup>77</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 138.

## Promotion of Dialogue

Social responsibility is also instrumental in the dialogue between the community of faith, the civil authority, and the political community. Darío López refers to the importance of dialogue as an appropriate instrument for the promotion of attitudes modeled after the teachings of the gospel.<sup>78</sup> However, like in Western societies, he argues, “such actions promote authentic cooperation and productive collaboration in the redemptive process of humanity.”<sup>79</sup> Pentecostals also seek to strengthen civil and political authority in their call to serve society. Many times, pastors approach local authorities with the purpose of supporting their service. This attitude also reveals the level of commitment on the part of Pentecostals toward social concerns and political responsibility.<sup>80</sup>

If we observe the social interaction that takes place in the Pentecostal communities, we can see that they are actively participating in multiple dialogues that foster collaboration with the various groups of society. In addition, since the Pentecostal communities are made up largely of the poor and marginalized, such dialogue could be enriched by the experience of marginalization and oppression that most Pentecostals suffered in their mission contexts. Such dialogues continue to broaden their range of service. For example, a group of Pentecostals is now defending the dignity of the people and promoting peace and justice.<sup>81</sup> They are speaking on behalf of those in poverty and marginalization. They are combating poverty and hunger in the world. They are promoting equal distribution of the goods of God’s earth as well as providing housing and literacy.<sup>82</sup> Thus, it is fair to say that Pentecostals are also learning to focus on the holistic development of the children and the youth. They are participating in national, regional, and global consultations that promote ministries on behalf of the emerging generations.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Darío López, *Los Evangélicos y los Derechos Humanos: La Experiencia Social del Concilio Nacional Evangélico del Perú 1980-1992* (Lima, Perú: CEMAA, 1998), 102.

<sup>79</sup> Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 95.

<sup>80</sup> Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 76.

<sup>81</sup> This is the Pentecostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice Movement, which unites scholars and practitioners around a table to reflect on issues pertaining to such matters. See PCPJ, “Charismatics Peacemakers and Peacemaking,” *Pentecostals for Peace and Justice* (2009), <http://www.pcpj.org/index.php/resources-topmenu-45/86-charismatic-peacemaking-and-peacemakers>, accessed November 10, 2009.

<sup>82</sup> B. Battaini-Dragoni, “Panel on ‘Social Justice and Security,’” (World Youth Conference; León, Guanajuato: México, August 23-27, 2010).

<sup>83</sup> Enrique Pinedo, *Niñez, Adolescencia y Misión Integral: Nuevos Desafíos de la Educación Teológica en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Kairós, 2012), 24.

It is not surprising that because of their Christian experience, Pentecostals have the tendency to emphasize the need for a powerful and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit to overcome the influence of evil in society. This is perhaps one of the reasons they seem to proclaim a message that changes the individual first, then the family, friends, and the world.

## The Community of Faith

Pentecostals believe that the entire community of faith has a role to play in the fulfillment of God's mission. Nevertheless, their definition of mission has historically been narrowed to proclamation and teaching only. However, Pentecostals have begun to understand and practice mission in various ways through each member according to the gifts and the manner of each person's calling. Mario Méndez thinks that Pentecostals are now responding to the responsibility to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel with the understanding that every mission effort involves all who believe and are willing to obey the call of the Holy Spirit to service.<sup>84</sup> Christian mission is biased to the poor. It is mindful that, in the story of Jesus, God becomes vulnerable with the poor and marginalized. It is aware, moreover, that God undertakes a mission of transformation from that position of weakness. This is the meaning of the cross. Today most church members are not found among the wealthy and powerful but rather among the poor and vulnerable. What does it mean for mission when its agents come mainly from contexts of poverty and exclusion?

As for Pentecostals, they seem to be aware of the pastoral work that is needed in the social context. This way of ministry fits them well because they involve all believers. They become active agents of transformation in the community. They also know that one of their responsibilities is to bear pastoral witness to the poor and marginalized. In this, we concur with Mario Méndez, who thinks that Pentecostals may be on the way to becoming successful not only in the proclamation of the gospel but also in defense of human dignity.<sup>85</sup> They seem to be spiritually furnished to act individually or associated with groups that participate in this endeavor.

This ministry in the community context involves the service of devoted believers who are capable of using their spiritual and natural gifts.

Their faithful witness and service is needed particularly in times of intense condition of poverty. Situations like these open significant opportunities to

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<sup>84</sup> Méndez, *La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu*, 24-26.

<sup>85</sup> Méndez, *La Iglesia: Fuerza del Espíritu*, 22.

serve people and reminds believers about their principles of holiness and sincere love to the poor and marginalized.<sup>86</sup>

Here we realize that Pentecostals could be easily found at the service of the incarnated Christ. It is this Christ whose love for people shown through Christians suggests some aspects of the new humanity that His mission is encouraging among believers.

Miguel Alvarez (PhD Oxford Centre for Mission Studies) ([moalvarez@msn.com](mailto:moalvarez@msn.com)), a missionary from Honduras, is President of Seminario Bíblico Pentecostal Centroamericano (SEBIPCA) in Guatemala. He is Professor of Theology and Mission.

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<sup>86</sup> López, *Pentecostalismo y Transformación Social*, p. 38.

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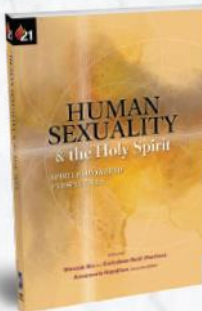
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## **Theological Foundation for Pentecostal Holistic Mission: A Response to Miguel Alvarez**

Allan H. Anderson

First, I want to thank my friend Miguel Alvarez for his interesting and comprehensive paper, where he deals with a most important subject, “holistic mission,” which he also describes as “integrated mission.” His argument, backed by solid theological principles, is also aspirational – or what he calls a “work in progress.” That is, Pentecostals as a whole have not yet articulated the principles on which a holistic mission that includes social service to the poor is based. Alvarez is presenting us with an ideal, not something that has already been achieved. He may have been too kind in his assessment of the need, understandable for an insider and a “classical” Holiness Pentecostal, but he makes clear what Pentecostals should do to achieve an integrated mission theology. What the theological foundation for this is, is explored in this insightful article. In this response, I concentrate on just a few of the many arguments Alvarez makes in this paper and offer a few critical comments of my own. In so doing, I hope to open both a friendly and constructive debate with the author.

To comment on where Alvarez begins his analysis, Pentecostalism outside Europe and North America is usually a grassroots movement appealing, especially to the disadvantaged and underprivileged. They thrive in “developing” countries like those in Latin America. Many, if not most of the rapidly growing Christian churches in these countries, are Pentecostal. The Global South has seen a remarkable expansion of Pentecostalism in the last half-century, an expansion that has altered global religious demographics considerably. This is an important religious and social phenomenon that has enormous implications for socio-political and economic progress in “developing” (in contrast to “developed”) countries. The concept of “holistic mission” is an important one, as theologians need to understand the ethical demands of the Christian message, by reflecting on the moral demands of Christian discipleship, particularly as enunciated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, but also as reflected by the Hebrew prophets. More dialogue with Christian ethics will certainly help Pentecostals better understand their responsibilities to the wider society. Alvarez has raised issues that may feel uncomfortable to those of us in the Global North. Involvement in social change is not a subject that many

Pentecostals are at home with. Pentecostals in the Western World have struggled with issues of social involvement for many years. They emphasize the priority of evangelism, and social involvement is often rejected. Alvarez is on point to remark that Pentecostals have “tended to spiritualize social ills” and overlook or even ignore the “evil structures of power” that perpetuate poverty, oppression, and suffering. It is true that scholars have more recently begun to recognize the contribution of “progressive Pentecostals” (Miller and Yamamori), but these contributions have only scratched the surface of the need. Pentecostals in Latin America, like those in many other parts of the world, do not usually separate socio-political engagement from evangelism.

In an article like this, it is important to know which Pentecostals the author is writing about, so it might be made clearer that in statements like Pentecostals “are the poor,” there are many exceptions of Pentecostals who are very wealthy, not only in the Global North. Proponents of the “prosperity gospel” with enormous empires are found in Africa, Asia, and not least, Latin America. These are most often defined or at least identified with Pentecostalism, and although many Pentecostal scholars have lamented this more recent distortion of the Christian message, they continue to “prosper.” As I have written elsewhere, their “prosperity” is often at the expense of their followers, who follow because of the promise of an impossible dream, and the only one who gets rich is the leader himself (or rarely, herself). In his classic work on American Pentecostals, *Vision of the Disinherited*, Robert Anderson (correctly, in my view) posits the theory that Pentecostals originated among the poor but, in time, became part of the very institutional system that had perpetuated their poverty.

It is also important to see how Pentecostalism in Latin America has been interacting with liberation theology, and not necessarily put in juxtaposition to it. It is true that while liberation theology opted for the poor, in many cases, the poor opted for Pentecostalism. Significant studies like that of Shaull and Cesar (2000), and Wadkins (2017) have pointed out how this interaction happens on the ground, and challenge Pentecostalism to reassess its mission in the light of the goals of liberation theology. So, I would like to see this paper address these challenges. Some of the earliest Latino/a Pentecostal scholars, like Villafañe, Solivan, and Sepulveda were among the first to enter such a dialogue with liberation theology. Poverty and God’s “option for the poor” remain urgent issues in our contemporary society. It might also be necessary to revisit some of the arguments of the past to update the situation among Latin American Pentecostals.

Before proceeding, a few minor matters are missing from this article, including a definition of RCC (probably referring to the Nigerian denomination, Redeemed Christian Church of God). The majority of sources used are over two decades old, and given the author’s familiarity

with his native language, there are not many Spanish-language sources. Here Alvarez could make a wider contribution to those of us who don't read Spanish. In addition to that, there are several recent publications on the subject of Pentecostalism and civic/social engagement and on development issues. Here there could be, as Alvarez suggests, a fruitful conversation between social scientists and (Pentecostal) theologians. Given that Miller and Yamamori's book was published in 2007, their terminology is hardly a new field.

Nevertheless, this article is an attempt to correct a gap in Pentecostal mission theology and more clearly articulate a theological foundation for social ministry. Although some Pentecostals more recently have been involved in social issues like race, class, or gender equality, others have often failed to take a stand and have simply reflected the discrimination that prevails in the wider society. They have been accused of an otherworldly spirituality that avoids involvement in "worldly" issues like politics and the struggle for liberation and justice. They have sometimes been justifiably charged with proclaiming a gospel that either spiritualizes or individualizes social problems. The result has been a tendency either to accept present oppressive social conditions or to promote a false gospel that makes material gain a spiritual virtue. In particular, Pentecostals have traditionally been opposed to political involvement even when they have operated social services. They have preferred to be involved in various charitable activities rather than in direct political and social engagement.

There is an increasing awareness of the potential of Pentecostalism for a politically and socially relevant engagement, particularly because of its tendency to attract marginalized and working-class people. This is Alvarez's starting point. This awareness is especially strong in some parts of the Global South. These significant changes are to be welcomed. Many Pentecostal leaders, however, especially in the Western World, may not yet be entirely convinced of the need to be more involved in an integrated mission, because they think this will deflect them from their central "spiritual" focus. Alvarez places his "Integrated mission" in a pneumatological context. Any kind of transformation in this life, whether through evangelism or social action, can be seen as the work of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal empowerment has the potential to equip people towards liberation, whether personal or collective, and the latter includes oppressive structures in society. Pentecostals do not always separate the spiritual from the physical but integrate them in a holistic whole, leading to involvement in social issues and politics. This is why Alvarez thinks that a holistic Pentecostal mission is possible.

Understandably, Pentecostals sometimes have ambivalence toward involvement in sociopolitical transformation. Their aspirations for political office show themselves in different and contrasting ways. Even when

obvious support for oppressive structures is absent, Pentecostals have only seldom been politically involved, except that they have occasionally shown support for political causes that have later been shown to be those of the wrong kind. In the eschatological view of classical Pentecostalism throughout its relatively short history, current political events are taken as negative signs of the times, proof of the imminent return of the “Soon Coming King.” Historically, however, classical Pentecostalism originated in the socially active revivalist and Holiness movements of the nineteenth century. As a result, some early Pentecostals were committed to the struggle for social transformation. Many early Pentecostal missions had philanthropic and educational activities, especially in the creation of orphanages, schools, and rescue centers; Albert Norton’s work in India, Mok Lai Chi’s in Hong Kong, and Lillian Trasher’s in Egypt being prime examples. The evangelistic activities of the earliest Pentecostals did not therefore obliterate all other concerns, although it must be said that all other activities were usually seen as subservient to the primary task of getting individuals “saved” and filled with the Spirit.

The social commitment of Pentecostals at home and abroad soon changed. Most American Pentecostals supported the “religious right” during the Reagan years, and this has been accentuated during the four years of Donald Trump’s presidency. The vast majority of white American evangelicals have been conspicuous in their support of Trump, but the USA is not alone. In Guatemala, Rios Montt, president of the country from 1982-83 and leader of an oppressive military dictatorship, was a member of an independent charismatic church and leader of a conservative political party. The leaders of the largest Pentecostal denomination in Chile supported the dictator Pinochet when the Roman Catholic Church had turned its back on him. In South Africa, all the white-led classical Pentecostal churches acquiesced to the apartheid system as late as into the 1990s, and in some cases, even showed active support for apartheid. These criticisms may suggest that Pentecostalism has changed from being an “apolitical” and “otherworldly” movement to becoming a supporter of reactionary politics, not only in the USA but in countries like Guatemala, Chile, and South Africa. The reasons for this are complex. For example, Pentecostals sometimes cloud the differences between so-called “moral” issues like being “pro-life” (while supporting the death penalty) and gender and other human rights, with political issues. The result is that right-wing politicians who promote these issues as a political agenda to win votes are seen as having “Christian values” without regard to other policies and practices which are antithetical to Christian ethics, including, most painfully for Latin Americans, a virulent anti-immigration stance. A connected reason for this about-turn may be wily politicians who court the Pentecostal vote being conscious of their significance. There can be no doubt that this was

the strategy of Trump, who successfully gained a huge portion of white American Pentecostal support. Pentecostals have also been influenced by a premillennial eschatology that saw Communism (and now, radical Islam) as anti-Christian; so, they believed that support for the state of Israel (and opposition for Palestine) was a biblical duty. Unfortunately, these views have tended to be shared mostly by figures like Trump representing the wealthy middle class and political right, which has sat uncomfortably with those Pentecostals of more humble status. Pentecostals have also been accused of being representatives of colonialism and obstacles to liberation. In general, they are seen as “apolitical” and “otherworldly.” These examples might certainly give support to these views. But the Pentecostal approach to sociopolitical causes is more nuanced than these stereotypes suggest, especially outside the Western World. Pentecostalism has the potential to transform oppressive structures, as Alvarez has argued. They have been an important part of the ruling president’s support base in some Latin American countries like Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Brazil, and in some African countries as well.

This article makes an important contribution to the field of Pentecostal missiology and is warmly welcomed. I hope that one day these aspirations can become practical realities, and that a “holistic mission” moves to the center of Pentecostal denominational debates and to the center of their theological education. Successful mission is much more than counting numbers, and I am grateful to Miguel Alvarez for drawing attention to what this “much more” is all about.

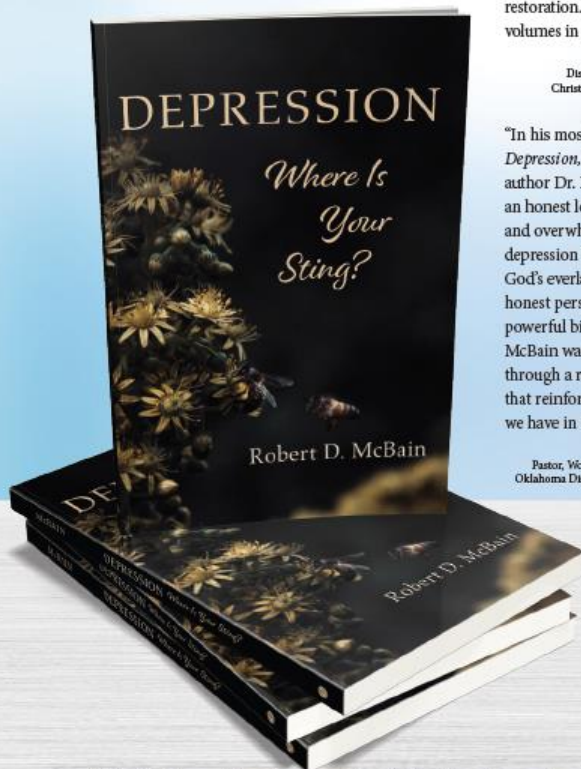
Allan H. Anderson ( <a href="mailto:a.h.anderson@bham.ac.uk">a.h.anderson@bham.ac.uk</a> ) is Emeritus Professor of Mission and Pentecostal Studies in the School of Philosophy, Theology & Religion at the University of Birmingham, UK.
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# The Role of the Church as a Political Entity: A Case for Zambia

Naar M'fundisi-Holloway

## Abstract

In some Christian countries like Zambia, Christianity permeates and influences all spheres of life. The Pentecostal church, in particular, has positioned itself as a source of hope by responding to the gaps created by the failure of the state. This paper argues that the Pentecostal church in Zambia is inherently political by virtue of its interface with politics, matters of civic concern (social action), its focus on prayer and promotion of alternative economics.

**Keywords:** Zambia; Pentecostalism; politics; political

## Introduction

This paper (using the Pentecostal church in Zambia) will argue that the church is political by virtue of what it does and represents. It will address how Pentecostalism (which is inherently political) intervenes in specific socio and political issues on Zambia's public domain. It will look at how Pentecostal churches embody the political in their mission by drawing insights from thematic analysis of qualitative data, which looks at Pentecostalism, Christianity, and politics in Africa.

Some Christians and non-Christians may relegate the church to matters of faith alone and the state to governance. This means the function of the gathered or scattered church is to prepare humanity for the imminent return of Jesus Christ. To that effect, the church is assigned to the soul and the state to the body. Nimi Wariboko, in exploring how political acts relate to the African physiological body in Nigerian Pentecostalism, asks questions surrounding, "how societies' understanding of human bodies interfaces with its understanding of the political, how the political works, and how a person approaches the political either to acquire the power of domination or to transform it for the common good."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), 5.

The church in Africa will speak against a Christian's involvement in politics for fear of contaminating one's spirit. This contamination would also seep into church buildings if for example, used as polling stations during election times. According to Devison T. Banda, "politics remains a dirty game as political actors do all they can to retain power even if it means taming governance to the detriment of the country. In this perception, allowing worship spaces to be used as wards of polling stations becomes a compromise on the sacredness of the church."<sup>2</sup> This apathy towards politics stems in part from how it is understood within the Zambian context. For example, within the Chinyanja language, Politics is called *Ndale*, which can be translated as argumentative, tricks or a trap meant to make someone stumble and fall. Similarly, the word politics can sometimes "invoke memories of propaganda, empty promises, falsehood, and covert schemes and strategies that politicians employ against the opponents to be elected and continued to be re-elected at all costs."<sup>3</sup> Despite this, the irony is that "Christianity, modern statecraft, and politics are intrinsically interwoven in Zambia ... Christianity is embedded in the public culture alongside religious pluralism and toleration."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Christians in Zambia see their ministry as encompassing both the human soul and body. This is because they have taken on the role of preparing the soul for eternal life and the body to be transformed for the benefit of society by educating, feeding, clothing, healing it.

In order to build on the premise that the church in Zambia is inherently political, a distinction needs to be made between the terms "politics" and "political." The term 'politics' is here limited to governance and legislation—the formal dimension of politics understood in terms of government or statecraft.<sup>5</sup> "Political," however, will have a broader and comprehensive meaning to encompass "human life on the public square—the way in which social and cultural life is organised ... where the various dimensions of religion, culture, society, economics and government converge and interface."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, 'political' in this paper will imply "the intersection between

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<sup>2</sup> Devison Telen Banda, "Worship or Political Election Polling Stations?" in Chammah J. Kaunda and Marja Hinfelaar, eds., *Competing for Caesar: Religion and Politics in Postcolonial Zambia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020), 79. Banda is a New Testament and Political Science lecturer at Justo Mwale University in Lusaka, Zambia.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Mika Vahakangas, "Foreword," in *Competing for Caesar*, vii-ix.

<sup>5</sup> Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), p. xix. Amos Yong's definitions of politics and the political and the role of religion are more palatable to this essay because the definitions do not assume purely western categories of formal establishments since the basis of this essay is situated within an African context.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, xix.



Pentecostalism, its beliefs and practices and the public square,”<sup>7</sup> to include direct or indirect political activism.

This paper describes the church as a political entity in the Zambian context as it has positioned itself as a source of hope in a society that is languishing in poverty and the failing state.<sup>8</sup> Pentecostalism’s exponential spread in Africa has a lot to do with the failure of the state to “create effective and efficient public services to mediate infrastructure deficit ... and the failure of the African leadership to deliver on their promises of postcolonial reconstruction and empowerment.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the Pentecostal movements’ ability to modify and be modified by present realities on Zambia’s public domain has made it more attractive and relevant. Once known to be apolitical, newer forms of Pentecostalism have become a ‘this worldly’ force and a key participant in politics (statecraft)<sup>10</sup>, the development of Christianity and faith (soulcraft), and engagement in civic matters. Allan Anderson corroborates this by stating, “Pentecostalism has in so many cases changed from being an apolitical and otherworldly movement to become a supporter of reactionary politics not only in the USA, but in countries like Guatemala, Chile and South Africa.”<sup>11</sup> It can be argued that the church’s engagement with social issues and programs to alleviate suffering causes the government to shun its responsibility to govern all aspects of civic life.

## **Pentecostalism, Politics and the Political**

Pentecostalism and politics in Africa cannot be understood if treated as distinct phenomena. There are numerous expressions of the complex relationship between politics and Pentecostalism in Africa. Since Pentecostalism begun to involve itself in politics, this has in some way blurred the lines between religion and formal politics. Adeshina Afolayan et al. provide reasons for this complexity.

African political leaders at various levels, from president to local government chairpersons, have recruited pastors to their political ambitions;

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Matthews A. Ojo, “Review of *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*, by Ruth Marshall,” *Pneuma* 33:1 (2011), 150-151.

<sup>9</sup> Adeshina Afolayan, “Pentecostalism, Political Philosophy and the political in Africa,” in Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola, eds., *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 224.

<sup>10</sup> Statecraft relates to the “church engaging in political processes and the search for justice. Soulcraft as the church seeking ways in which it can cultivate virtues, character and serve as a witness to the world.” Bradley B. Burroughs, “Christianity, Politics, and the Predicament of Evil: A Constructive Ethic of Soulcraft and Statecraft” (PhD dissertation, Emory University, Atlanta, 2012), 129-190.

<sup>11</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 264.

pastors have campaigned for political positions; politicians and pastors have been at loggerheads; pastors have either asked their congregations to vote or not to vote, based on peculiar interpretations of the Bible; the church has exploited loopholes in the state legal provisions that served their purposes; pastors have prophesied about the political climate and state; and politicians have made policies that are beneficial or not beneficial to churches.<sup>12</sup>

Such is the case within the Zambian context. For an openly Christian nation as Zambia, politicians have capitalized on Christianity. They know that if they position themselves as strong Christians, this can help them gain acceptance and trust in order to be legitimized as good leaders. This is a tactic that has always been employed within the Zambian context. In the last three decades, politicians have been known to visit churches and make donations, covertly influencing Christians to vote for them. Their religious rhetoric always clouds the judgment of people because they articulate their faith using language that is favorable to the Christian faith. Unfortunately, some of these Christian politicians have failed to live up to their professed faith once in power. For example, former President Frederick Jacob Titus Chiluba's tenure (1991-2001) was plagued by corruption which bought Zambia's economy to its knees.

The year 1991 was the dawn of direct political engagement by Pentecostals in Zambia. This is when Zambia elected its first democratically elected President, Chiluba who was a professed Pentecostal under his party, Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). The MMD government elected Pentecostal church leaders to occupy ministerial positions. These included Pastor Danny Pule, Reverend Peter Chintala, Reverend Stan Kristafor, Reverend Anosh Chipawa, and Bishop Kaunda Lembalemba. These Pastors supported a Pentecostal Christian who took the highest office of Zambia. Allegedly, other Charismatic leaders, especially Pastor Nevers Mumba and Bishop Joe Imakando, further persuaded president Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian Nation and create a Ministry of Christian affairs within the government.<sup>13</sup> Pentecostal pastors went to anoint the State House before Chiluba took up residence to cast out demons that were believed to have been left behind by the previous president, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, who ruled from 1964 to 1991. Chiluba intertwined his faith and politics so much that for a time, many Christians were convinced he was a Black Moses sent by God to deliver Zambia even when corruption worsened during his administration.<sup>14</sup> Anyone who spoke against or complained about failures by the state was seen as

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<sup>12</sup> Afolayan, Yacob-Haliso and Falola, eds., *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*, v.

<sup>13</sup> Jan-Bart Gewald, Marja Hinfelaar and Giacomo Macola, *One Zambia, Many Histories: Towards a History of Post-Colonial Zambia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 157-157; Author, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity and Civic Engagement in Zambia* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup> Author, *Pentecostal and Charismatic*, 114.

speaking against God. According to Chammah Kaunda, “religion has contributed to endorsing and perpetuating postcolonial autocratic tendencies among Zambian politicians and clandestine denial of human rights for some minority groups.”<sup>15</sup> This raises questions surrounding why some church leaders automatically legitimize politicians who are professing Christians, and how this, in turn, clouds their ability to challenge them on the failing state.

## **A This-Worldly Pentecostalism**

Earlier forms of Pentecostalism in Zambia were considered otherworldly by mainline churches. This was due to their modest numbers, beliefs, and practices, which privileged preparing the world for the second coming and being baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.<sup>16</sup> Pentecostal churches in Zambia are now assumed as this-worldly because in addition to their initial beliefs, they deal with tangible issues facing Zambians in the here and now. Even though some pastors have little or no theological training, people can relate to their sermons as they bring hope to the existential threats which torment people daily like witchcraft, demon possession, poverty, HIV/AIDS, sicknesses, unemployment, etc. Pentecostalism has a way of “emboldening people to address the source of their oppression.”<sup>17</sup> What follows is a look at various ways in which Pentecostalism has positioned itself as this-worldly and political through social action, prayer, and the promotion of alternative economics.

## **Political Pentecostalism and Social Action**

Allan Anderson states that “the tendency of Pentecostals and charismatics to fuse the spiritual and the physical in a holistic whole often leads to involvement in social issues.”<sup>18</sup> Initially, the Pentecostalism that surfaced in Zambia was influenced by classical North American fundamentalists who were biblical literalists,<sup>19</sup> and eschewed civic engagement. The success of newer forms of Pentecostalism in Zambia today partly hinges on its response to the worldview underlying society in Zambia pertaining to the soul and the body. Pentecostalism has been able to respond to needs rising from witchcraft, possession by evil spirits, mental breakdown, poverty, unemployment, and sickness. Its message of prosperity and healing against the backdrop of these

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<sup>15</sup> Chammah Kaunda and Marja Hinfellar, “Introduction: Religion and Politics in postcolonial Zambia,” in *Competing for Caesar*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Author, *Pentecostal and Charismatic*, 77.

<sup>17</sup> Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 33.

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction*, 261-262.

<sup>19</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 5.

hardships, cause people to remain hopeful. These churches also empower people to take charge of their lives by casting out demons which are believed to control people's lives in order that they might be guided by one Spirit, who is the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup> These responses to human life in the public domain are what makes Pentecostalism inherently political and form part of its Christocentric theology which sees Jesus Christ and savior from the aforementioned challenges.<sup>21</sup>

During my Ph.D. field research in Zambia (2009-2013), I came across various social ministries run by Pentecostal churches, which were more than just acts of service but community-transforming programs. These included responses to crises, providing medical care through HIV/AIDS clinics or home-based care in communities for people living with HIV/AIDS,<sup>22</sup> HIV/AIDS prevention programs, micro enterprise loans, street children ministry, youth programs, services for the elderly, feeding programs, provision of clothing, visiting people in prisons, running and supporting orphanages, the establishment of nurseries, schools, etc. Miller and Yamamori summarized such examples of social action/ministry into eight categories, namely, "mercy ministries, emergency services, education, counseling services, economic development, the arts and policy change."<sup>23</sup> Having identified areas of civic concern which have been exacerbated by successive unreliable governments, the church in Zambia continues to live out God's mission through integral mission. This link to Pentecostalism across the globe has been known to be contextual hence its ability to speak into various issues affecting civil society. Afolayan *et al.* argue that "the political essence of Pentecostalism is context-bound, thus its spiritual and political contours are shaped by geo-cultural factors."<sup>24</sup> Jesus Christ, through scripture, demonstrated that God's salvation and redemption is not limited to the soul but the body as well. Hence the church cannot live out God's full mission by looking into the spiritual needs of people within its four walls, but rather to adopt an outward-facing posture that meets the needs of humanity through the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. This posture cannot purely be one of deficit patching (in areas the government has failed), but one that promotes a lasting whole of life transformation. This is salvific as well as political. This idea that *this world is not my home, I am just passing through*, which somewhat led to some level of apathy towards matters of civic concern by some classical Pentecostals, is no longer a

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<sup>20</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 170.

<sup>21</sup> Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 228.

<sup>22</sup> See my *Pentecostal and Charismatic*, chapter 6; "From Stigma to Intervention: Pentecostals in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in Zambia, and Subsequent Effects on the Family," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 10:2 (2011), 197-215

<sup>23</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Afolayan, Yacob-Haliso and Falola (eds.), "Pentecostalism and Politics," 4.

reality for newer Pentecostals in Zambia. According to Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, “as Pentecostals have become upwardly mobile, better educated, and more affluent, they have begun viewing the world differently. Pentecostals no longer see the world as a place from which to escape, this sectarian view, but instead as a place they want to make better.”<sup>25</sup> They are as much interested in growing saints but also serving and responding to the needs of suffering humanity.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, Pentecostalism can no longer be seen as apolitical as it provides an alternative vision of society that is hopeful as opposed to politicians promises that are not always fulfilled. This leads us to some of the arguments surrounding apolitical versus political Pentecostalism.

## **Apolitical vs Political Pentecostalism**

Previously Pentecostals were legalistic and saw themselves as apolitical. Their strong conviction regarding the imminent return of Jesus Christ caused them to focus on growing saints as opposed to engaging in matters of civic concern. In addition to this, Anderson states,

Pentecostals have been accused of a spirituality that withdraws from worldly issues like politics and the struggle for liberation and justice and of proclaiming gospel that either spiritualises or individualises social problems. The result, some say, has been a pie in the sky approach that has encouraged accepting present oppressive conditions or has led to the health and wealth gospel makes material gain a spiritual value.<sup>27</sup>

While Anderson's assertion remains true, especially in older Pentecostal churches that are disengaged with society, the evidence of various expressions of Pentecostal mission in this paper suggests this is not always the case. There are various reasons why some Pentecostals engage in politics directly and others indirectly. In part, those that have attained high social mobility are more inclined to engage directly in politics. For those that have not had an interest in engaging in politics directly, Yong states,

socio-economic survival has priority hence less interest in lobbying and statecraft...in some cases being poor means being excluded from the realm of the political due to language barriers, non-ownership of the political system, lack of citizenship and political rights...these Pentecostals find

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<sup>25</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 30.

<sup>26</sup> The salvation Army, “Our Vision, Mission and Values,” <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/our-mission-vision-and-values>, accessed June 10, 2021

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction*, 261.

themselves barred, unwanted and without means of entry ...translating into political non-involvement.<sup>28</sup>

Since modern Pentecostals are not completely shaped by and do not place a great emphasis on eschatology, there is a sense that they can assist in remedying some of the socio-economic and cultural challenges faced by people in Zambia. There are various examples to show that the Pentecostal church in Zambia has moved from focusing solely on preaching salvation for one's soul to a gospel that also aims to transform society. For some churches, social action has become part of their missional expression. They have become what Miller and Yamamori have called progressive Pentecostals.<sup>29</sup> Progressive Pentecostals are "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 people in their community."<sup>30</sup> This shows that Pentecostalism has positioned itself in a way that responds to the gaps created by the failure of the state. The church intervenes to provide hope in place of suffering. Succinctly put,

within the traumatic context created by postcolonial suffering, religion engages the failure of politics to generate existential meaningfulness for Africans. One needs a spiritual intervention to actualise the political dynamics that will ensure socio-economic transformation. The Pentecostal religious intervention is nothing short of a revolution that affects the constitution of the self as well as of the society and government.<sup>31</sup>

This revolution has been made possible due to Pentecostals' ability to fuse the physical and the spiritual. Furthermore, this demonstration of the interface between Pentecostalism and the public domain in addressing social needs contributes to what makes it political. What has been seen in the last three decades is a new caliber of Pentecostals who take loving God as seriously as loving their neighbor, not just by ensuring they share the salvific message, but also by meeting their physiological needs.

Miller and Yamamori believe these progressive Pentecostals are non-political. Their observation was that,

they are not trying to reform social structures or challenge government policies so much as they are trying to build from the ground up an alternative social reality. 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.

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<sup>28</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Afolayan, "Pentecostalism, Political Philosophy," 225.

These values are fundamental to the creation of a democratic government, and therefore, at the very least Pentecostalism is preparing good citizens who may exercise their vote in ways that reflect egalitarian values.”<sup>32</sup>

While this description is fair, it is reductionist in its view. Seeing Pentecostalism as merely creating good citizens negates wider implications relating to the empowerment which people experience while subscribing to this brand of Christianity, enabling them to live better and fulfilled lives. Pentecostalism does more than just create good citizens, it helps people lift themselves out of poverty; Pentecostals pray for people to receive healing so they can be productive in society, Pentecostalism creates entrepreneurs, “promotes gender equality and empowerment for women,”<sup>33</sup> and its emphasis on the priesthood of all believers emboldens people to engage in God’s mission through preaching and social action. Pentecostal theology often emphasizes personal self-worth and how valuable everyone is by virtue of being children of God. This message is what gives people hope and motivates them to change their circumstances despite what their background is. It also helps them know that God can change their lives for the better.<sup>34</sup> This is what makes Pentecostal churches successful and inherently political as they position themselves as this-worldly catering to the soul and the body. Therefore, what Miller and Yamamori consider as apolitical is actually political as it demonstrates the intersection between Pentecostalism, its beliefs and practices, and the public domain in its fullness.<sup>35</sup>

## **Pentecostal Prayers as Political**

Engaging in prayer is a crucial aspect of Pentecostalism. Prayer is political as it used to influence others as well as situations that Christians have no control over. Pentecostals globally have been known to place great emphasis on prayer and fasting in order to impact all spheres of society. According to Wariboko, “prayer and politics are a form of speaking to God or a praxis of God’s subject intending the divine to correct the fundamental disagreement of society or existence. Prayer is the pulse of the wound of existence.”<sup>36</sup> Pentecostals have been accused of hiding behind prayer to avoid directly confronting the state and social issues. It is important to note that for Christians in general, prayer is

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<sup>32</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 4-5.

<sup>33</sup> Nimi Wariboko, “African Pentecostal Political Philosophy: New Directions in the Study of Pentecostalism and politics,” in Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola, eds., *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 387.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>35</sup> Yong, *In the Days of Caesar*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Nimi Wariboko, *African Pentecostal Political*, 389.

their starting point to invoke divine guidance and intervention. In the Pentecostal worldview, all of life has a spiritual dimension, and therefore, prayer precedes everything. In line with this, Wariboko further argues that “African Pentecostal prayer often in the form of spiritual warfare is a way of discerning and critically reflecting, contesting, and resisting the play of powers in the ontological conditioning of being, the forces weighing down on current life, and the tensions that drag us towards death by excluding life enhancing support.”<sup>37</sup>

Politicians in Zambia have also capitalized on prayer using the support of Pentecostal pastors. For example, on October 18th, 2015, the current President Edgar Chagwa Lungu declared this day a public holiday to be observed annually as a “Day of National Prayer, Fasting, Repentance and Reconciliation.”<sup>38</sup> Allegedly Pentecostal leaders were consulted and backed this decision. These prayers are targeted at praying for hardships faced by the country which need God’s intervention.<sup>39</sup> While a call for prayer in a Christian country seems legitimate, it speaks to how socio-political issues facing Zambia are spiritualized. This call to prayer can be an example of a decoy used by the state to distance themselves from their part to play in challenges facing the nation. Forces of darkness are held responsible instead, as opposed to the government taking ownership of its failures. On the other hand, Chammah regards this declaration as “seeking a paradigm shift from empty talk prayer to a socio-politically engaged prayer that demands an alternative political vision for the nation.”<sup>40</sup> He argues that “the day of prayer has provided an opportunity for some members of Pentecostal communities (as well as Christians in general) to start raising uncomfortable contextual questions and to reflect on what it means to engage in public prayer in the context of economic crisis and political corruption, nepotism, human rights abuses, and veritable poverty.”<sup>41</sup> While these prayers are meant to evoke divine intervention, the divine response could be that God is giving some Pentecostals a prophetic voice that enables reflection and advocacy. While not every church leader might have the capacity to engage in this level of faith-based reflection, it might be

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> National Prayer Day, “National Prayer Day in Zambia 2021,” <https://www.officeholidays.com/holidays/zambia/national-prayer-day>, accessed June 28, 2021

<sup>39</sup> “Zambians Mark the National Day of Prayer,” *Lusaka Times* Oct 19, 2019, <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2019/10/19/zambians-mark-the-day-of-national-prayers/>, accessed June 28, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Kaunda and Hinfellar, “Introduction,” 56.

<sup>41</sup> Chammah Kaunda, “The Nationalization of Prayer and Prayerization of the Nation,” in Chammah J. Kaunda and Marja Hinfelaar, eds., *Competing for Caesar: Religion and Politics in Postcolonial Zambia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020), 56.



possible that a new breed of conscious and courageous Pentecostals rising to speak prophetically into social issues without fear of being victimized. Another way that both politicians and Pentecostal pastors have capitalized on public prayer is through rituals of anointing and blessing of current presidents.

## **Rituals of Blessing as Political**

The ritual of anointing and blessing presidents, which has been common practice in Zambia for the past three decades, is another rite used to legitimize Presidents in power. Former President Chiluba was anointed by Pentecostal pastors by adopting the biblical Old Testament tradition when kings were anointed before assuming the throne. Since Chiluba's anointing, other presidents after him have also sought this ritual, with Pentecostal pastors at the forefront performing them. More recently, Apostle Peter Ndhlovu, the presiding Bishop of Bible Gospel Church in Africa (BIGOCA) was the presider of the blessings bestowed on President Lungu in the presence of late former President Kenneth Kaunda (1964-1991) and former President Rupiah Banda (2008-2011). The use of public prayer and public anointings for incumbent presidents has been used to sacralise the reigning political system and elevates it beyond human critique."<sup>42</sup> During such public prayers and rituals there is a tendency for religious and traditional leaders to incite members of the public to support these political leaders. They have openly cursed those that oppose these leaders stating they were opposing God instead and punishment would follow them,<sup>43</sup> like when Chiluba was in power. Other pastors have prophesied regarding who will win presidential elections, while some take political stances through endorsing of political leaders. This legitimizing of political leaders can sometimes work in their favor as, the pastors then gain notoriety and can be employed as chaplains for the president.

One of the implications of legitimizing political leaders through rituals of anointing causes the church to overlook keeping political leaders accountable for the languishing economic state of the country.

## **Alternative Economics as Political**

The prosperity gospel is still prevalent in Zambia today. This gospel is political because to an extent, it touches on the livelihood of those that subscribe to it. The prosperity gospel has always been marketed as the answer to poverty

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<sup>42</sup> Chammah J. Jaunda and Mutale M. Kaunda, "An Announcement of a New Spiritual Dispensation: Pentecostalism and Nationalisation of Prayer in Zambia," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 161 (2018), 72.

<sup>43</sup> "Prayer Critics Risk Curse Says Chief Chipeco," *Zambia Daily Mail* October 15, 2015, <http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/prayer-critics-risk-curse-says-chief-chipepo/>, accessed June 1, 2021.

which plagues most of Africa today. Considered “an antidote to poverty,”<sup>44</sup> it gained a lot of traction in Africa as it brought about a message of instantaneous hope for those that have lived a life of poverty. This seemingly magical way of gaining material prosperity and good health was a godsend. All that would be required to activate this divine financial windfall and release from poverty would be through generous giving of tithes and offerings to the church. This gospel has had a track record of exploiting poor people who give money to the church in expectation that they would receive financial prosperity a hundred-fold, but also exploits people who are desperately in need of healing and will do anything to attain health.<sup>45</sup>

On a more positive note, Miller and Yamamori argue that “while some Prosperity Gospel Preachers may rely more on magic rather than sound theology, there may be a latent effect in which individuals start thinking differently about their lives and therefore may pursue courses of action that result in upward social mobility.”<sup>46</sup> In light of this, the prosperity gospel provides optimism about better things to come. Some of the pastors encourage their congregants to be entrepreneurs so that they can give more generously to the church and at the same time empower congregants to aspire for social mobility by joining saving schemes, starting businesses, buying land, and building their own homes. But this alternative economics is judged mainly because the promoters of this gospel seemingly grow wealthy, are always jet-setting, wear fancy clothes and drive flashy cars while some congregants continue to live in poverty. This has caused them to come under scrutiny from the media and criticism from mainline churches. According to Samuel Ajiola, “the justification and condemnation of the prosperity gospel are premised on the number of adherents who have truly experienced a transformation from poverty to wealth while conforming to both spiritual and societal material standards of honest labour to earn wealth.”<sup>47</sup>

The prosperity gospel is seen as an alternative to mainstream economics in the Zambian context. Naomi Hynes analyses the prosperity gospel through the lenses of Christian nationalism. She states, “for church leaders, Zambia’s spiritual development is inextricably linked to the country’s economic progress given the influence of the prosperity gospel.”<sup>48</sup> This is why political and economic leaders are considered at the same level as Apostles and Prophets.<sup>49</sup> These spiritual leaders, in some respects, are regarded as determining Zambia’s

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<sup>44</sup> Samson O. Ijaola, “Pentecostalism, The Prosperity Gospel, and Poverty in Africa,” in Adeshina Afolayan, Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola, eds., *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 137.

<sup>45</sup> Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 175.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 177.

<sup>47</sup> Ijaola, “Pentecostalism,” 139.

<sup>48</sup> Naomi Hynes, “Taking Dominion in a Christian Nation: North American Political Theology in an African Context,” *Pneuma* 43 (June 2021), 230.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

economic success hence their ability to influence people to follow their guidelines linked to the prosperity gospel. On the grassroots level, Haynes' study of neo-Pentecostals on Zambia's Copperbelt Province observed that "at the level of official prosperity gospel doctrine, seed offerings are gifts to God and God alone, in the Copperbelt, seed offerings are also mobilized in believer's social efforts, binding church leaders and lay people together in an ongoing exchange of material gifts on one hand and spiritual service on the other."<sup>50</sup> It can be argued that with this level of grassroots empowerment influenced by the prosperity gospel, the economy is impacted on micro as well as national levels. The more Christians prosper, the more the country's economy is impacted in a positive way. While some claim that the prosperity gospel makes people lazy as its principles are advertised as working like magic, it can be argued that it has empowered people to become 'go-getters'. This gospel has made some people to feel they were no longer paupers but could take charge of their own destinies, pull themselves out of poverty and sickness by simply activating this divine transaction without waiting on the state.

## Conclusion

Public life and religion have always been intrinsically linked in Zambia largely through the religious lenses through which people see the world.<sup>51</sup> Religion in Zambia has played a significant role in civic life and politics. This is seen from the fight to gain independence from colonial rule in 1964, the move from a dictatorship that span almost three decades and thereafter, to a democratic state which remains today. Pentecostals (and some Christians from other denominations) have had great influence, especially around humanitarian undertakings, entrepreneurship, networking, mentorship, leadership training, and role modeling, which are inherently political acts based on the understanding of the political in this paper. Despite this backdrop of active political engagement in explicit and nuanced ways, Pentecostals in Zambia still have shortcomings to contend with. Some of these being the spiritualizing of social ills and legitimizing political leaders (which stifles their prophetic voice) even when their governance is questionable.<sup>52</sup> For Pentecostal ministers who are sincerely wrestling with social issues faced by average Zambians, their voice will have lasting consequences because this requires courage and sacrifice, especially when those who speak prophetically against the state are cursed or victimized by government officials as well as Christians who support the state

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<sup>50</sup> Naomi Haynes, "Affordances and Audiences: Finding the Difference Christianity Makes," *Current Anthropology* 55, No. 10 (2014), S360.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: C. Hurst, 2004), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Chammah J. Kaunda, "Introduction: Religion and Politics in Postcolonial Zambia," in Chammah J. Kaunda and Marja Hinfelaar, eds., *Competing for Caesar: Religion and Politics in Postcolonial Zambia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020), 1.

regardless of their poor performance. What this paper has demonstrated is that the Pentecostal church in Zambia is inherently political in the way it engages with various dimensions of human life on the public domain.

Naar M'fundisi-Holloway ([naarmfundisi@gmail.com](mailto:naarmfundisi@gmail.com)) is an Action Researcher at the Territorial Headquarters of The Salvation Army in London. She completed her PhD at the University of Birmingham (UK) in Theology, looking at Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Zambia focusing on its interface with politics and HIV/AIDS. She is the author of the book entitled, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity and Civic Engagement in Zambia* published by Palgrave Macmillan (2018).

## Zambian Political Pentecostalism: A Case for Many Tongues, Many Politics

Amos Yong

Naar M'fundisi-Holloway's "The Role of the Church as a Political Entity: A Case for Zambia" is a concise account of the emergence of pentecostal Christianity in the public and political space of Zambia, not least its self-declared standing as "a Christian nation."<sup>1</sup> Given her own Zambian pentecostal location and credentials, I have followed her scholarship with interest since her graduate student days at the University of Birmingham and was delighted to initially publish her essay in *Pneuma* (when I was co-editor of the journal from 2011-2015) and then more recently (as series co-editor) to be able to secure a slightly revised version of her dissertation for publication in CHARIS: Christianity and Renewal – Interdisciplinary Studies (Palgrave).<sup>2</sup> The subtitle of her present essay can be read and interpreted in at least two ways: either that she is describing and inviting evaluation of Zambian Pentecostalism's functionality as a body politic, or that she is advocating that Zambia provides a kind of normative model of especially the pentecostal church as a political entity. While the latter is the more substantive argument to mount, not least in the short confines of an essay, M'fundisi-Holloway's body of work provides data and historical perspective conducive to at least some who may be interested in such a posture. It is certainly the case that for pentecostal Christians in societies not erected on a fundamental separation between church-and-state, the

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Ulrik Josefsson and Barry Saylor for their persistence and patience in soliciting this set of brief reflections from me for publication; as with other of my writings, I do not capitalize *pentecostal* (and its derivative forms) when used as an adjective but do so when used as a noun.

<sup>2</sup> Both of these are referenced in M'fundisi-Holloway's essay to which I am responding; in addition, she also wrote for me a third piece, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Zambia: Historical and Theological Developments and Civic Engagements," in Amos Yong, Vinson Synan, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future*, vol. III: *Africa* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2016), 189-202.

possibility of the church as a kind of political entity, if not major or sole state actor, is not off limits, and this begs the question: how might such be achieved, not least for pentecostal Christians who have historically emerged from out of the underside of the political class around the world? Even if M'fundisi-Holloway is quite nuanced in her predominantly descriptive approach to the Zambian case and rather un-aggressive even in suggesting that what is happening within the church of her country-of-origins may provide a template for pentecostal Christians elsewhere to emulate toward political action and engagement, what is happening in this East African nation – which her scholarship carefully describes – will attract other Christians who may feel called to a deeper political involvement.

And more and more pentecostal Christians around the world are being drawn beyond the disestablishment model presumed by North American Pentecostalism that, because of its historic missionary enterprises to the so-called Global South, continues to influence how many pentecostal churches and movements internationally think about the political. The exceptionalism of the Zambian case thus begs other questions, like what were the specific historical conditions within which such a politicized Pentecostalism could emerge.<sup>3</sup> Yet M'fundisi-Holloway's admonition that the shortcomings of the three-decade long Zambian experiment include the ongoing spiritualization of social ills in ways that excuse responsible governance is, paradoxically, the other side of why pentecostal Christians in Western nations may themselves be more enthusiastic today than they have been about political involvement: that the Bible's ethical mandates include caring for the poor and the marginalized in ways that invite a greater degree of socio-political action than strict disestablishment would encourage. The issue is not unrelated to spirituality: there is a spiritual dimension that is interwoven with the material and the political, so the question is how to navigate that interrelationality rather than to spiritualize only some things when they are politically convenient (the point laid bare in M'fundisi-Holloway's overview).

The other problem that the Zambian case has highlighted is the legitimization of political leaders by the pentecostal community, not so much because of accomplished governance but for other religious or politicized reasons. This is precisely the argument for the separation of powers that emerged in the United States, to begin with: to both foster governance based on sound principles and practices on the one hand (the political reason) and nurture the freedom of faith association and practice on the other hand (the religious reason). The latter principle of religious freedom is both all the more important and also the more complex in pluralistic societies, especially as these

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<sup>3</sup> An anthropological analysis is provided by Naomi Haynes, *Moving by the Spirit: Pentecostal Social Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*, *The Anthropology of Christianity* Book 22 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

have expanded and been compounded in late modernity with globalization, migration, and other catalytic social, economic, and historical factors.

Which raises the question about whether Christian nations are in principle possible, even if desirable by a significant segment of a country's citizens. The question is at least twofold: whether Christians would support government actors (those they elect or otherwise) based on principles of good governance (M'fundisi-Holloway's concern) or whether Christians collectively (politically) can be devoted to a national or collective vision that enables the flourishing of all its citizens, including those who are not Christians, whatever the sizes of these minority populations (the broader issue). The recent case of the USA provides empirical data that is less than encouraging on both fronts.

Why might Christians not support and install government agents that will govern rightly? Of course, they will never claim not to do so but that four-fifths of white evangelicals in the United States have supported and continue to support Donald Trump suggests that populist movements are unpredictable, that religious believers are not immune to partisanship, and even that churches and their institutions are susceptible to being caught up by broader social and historical forces.<sup>4</sup> In addition, white pentecostal Christians in the U.S. are no less impervious to the magnetism of charismatic leaders, not least those who galvanize their commitments by drawing on historic revivalist themes including speaking truth to power (in the current case turned inside out to involve the jettisoning of politically correct rhetoric in pitting the masses against the so-called liberal and progressive "elites" designated as bent on taking away the freedoms, including especially religious liberties, of the people) and minimizing reliance on the medical establishment and its messaging (whether about masking up or getting vaccinated which "resistance" is fueled by beliefs in divine healing and protection long part of pietist traditions).<sup>5</sup> The political arena is therefore fraught: we may believe that *our government* is acting on behalf of our best interests, but sometimes, those interests are themselves un-informed or even mal-formed.

And because Christians have historically just as likely been the subjects of political persecution (real or imagined), they have also, understandably, erected defense mechanisms against their (felt) oppressors. Survival instincts thereby

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<sup>4</sup> My son and I assess the role of theological institutions in the making of the contemporary evangelical church in the USA; see Aizaiah G. Yong and Amos Yong, "Seeking Healing in an Age of Partisan Division: Reckoning with Theological Education and Resounding the *Evangel* for the 2020s," in Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Faith and Reckoning after Trump* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2021), 214–27.

<sup>5</sup> See also Aizaiah G. Yong and Amos Yong, "The Inequitable Silencing of Many Tongues: Political, Economic, and Racialized Dimensions of the Pandemic in American Pentecostal-Charismaticism," in Wonsuk Ma and Opoku Onyinah, eds., *Response of the Global Spirit-Empowered Church to the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Tulsa, OK: ORU Press, 2022, forthcoming).

set up us-versus-them constructs and these carry over even into democratic contexts where *our* values are being assailed by outsiders. *Who* is “inside” and *who* is “outside,” according to *what* criteria defined by *whom*, are therefore often contested. When we see that the so-called common good is not only a moral ideal but also one arrived at through common dialogue and disputation, then the political and religious dimensions are baked-in. The complications of the latter sphere are evident throughout the New Testament writings, beginning with the apostolic experience.<sup>6</sup> In principle, if Pentecost invites consideration of the Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh – indeed, all peoples, ethnicities, nations, and language groups – then the commons involve the world’s inhabitants that in turn become the object of God’s redemption mission of salvation.

Yet, even at the climax of the divine revelation that unveils and uncovers those from every nation, language, tribe, and people gathered around the throne room of God, there remains the diabolic trinity and its Babylonian regime, including, putatively, reprobate human followers cast eternally into the fiery lake. Thus, the political does not, at least in its apocalyptic imagery, escape otherizations, in fact, specifically condoning and even sanctioning the understanding of *us* the people of God over-and-against *them* the people of the dragon.<sup>7</sup> So, ironically, if the separation of church-and-state was a uniquely American experiment designed to extricate religiosity and its practice from government control, its specifically Christian formulations always include non-Christian others, and this imperils the hopes and aspirations of any multi-religious democracy. In pluralistic societies, then, non-Christian others are at least potentially threats to Christian freedoms and this makes it at least always possible that when Christians are dominant demographically, they will act out of self-interest and preservation – or can be stoked by politicians to do so – in ways that marginalize minority communities and their commitments.

If the political is the historical, then there may be no relief on this side of the eschaton from the effects of sin and its agonistic expressions in the public square. This also means it will be practically impossible to endorse any historical political form as theologically normative and to consider instead that the Christian task may be one that involves ongoing critical interactions with any and all existing governance models. The result does not need to be a political fatalism or quietism but one involving ongoing Christian witness as empowered by the divine Spirit. This stance should be motivating if Christians (pentecostal or otherwise) recognize that even if there are better or worse

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<sup>6</sup> My essay, “The Spirit, the Common Good, and the Public Sphere: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Intellectual in Apostolic Perspective,” in Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and Christopher J. Devers, eds., *Public Intellectuals and the Common Good: Christian Thinking for Human Flourishing* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021), 21-41, focuses on the Acts of the Apostles.

<sup>7</sup> See my *Revelation, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021).



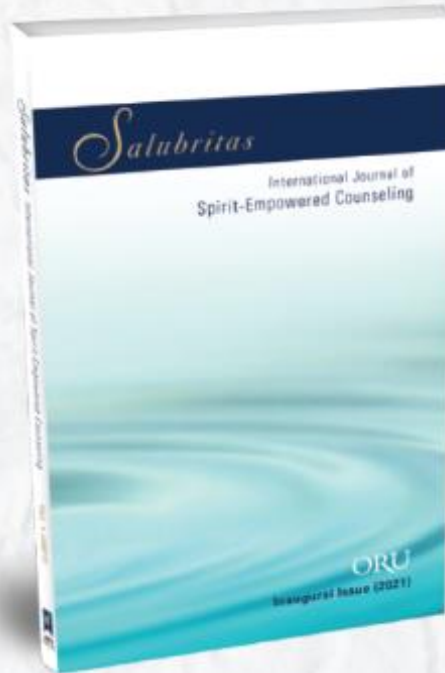
forms of government, every manifestation has redemptive features and possibilities, and it is part of the task of the people of God in each space and time to discern how to best and differentially respond to the seals, trumpets, and bowls of divine judgment in history so as to act toward the healing of the world and the arrival of the New Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, “the case for Zambia” is also a case for wider political, religious, and theological consideration, one that now sets that example alongside others, including the U.S.A.’s, especially but not only for those in the global pentecostal movement as they consider the call to this-worldly citizenship after Pentecost and in anticipation of the new heavens and new earth.

Amos Yong ([amosyong@fuller.edu](mailto:amosyong@fuller.edu)) serves as professor of theology and mission and Dean of the School of Mission & Theology, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, California, U.S.A.

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<sup>8</sup> My book-length argument here is *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology – The Cadbury Lectures 2009*, Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age series (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2010); a shorter version of this thesis is elaborated on in dialogue with America’s theologian in my essay, “Voices Crying Out in the Wilderness and the Public Square: Redirecting Jonathan Edwards’ Teleology of the Political after Pentecost,” in Steven M. Studebaker and Amos Yong, eds., *Pentecostal Theology and Jonathan Edwards*, T & T Clark’s Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology series (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 227-45.

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## Essays

### **Afrodiasporic Mission: Opportunities and Challenges: A Case Study of Christ Is the Answer Ministries**

Charles Morara Obara

#### **Abstract**

The concept of reverse flow of mission is a well-established phenomenon in global missiological discourse. The Global South is now sending more missionaries to the rest of the world than the Global North. The debate, however, has been on what kind of influence the diasporic churches are having in the host nations. The main discussion focuses on the impact of the Afrodiasporic churches on the host nations, the once heartland of Christianity. It argues that the diasporic churches have had significant influence among the host nations beyond reaching the immigrant communities, the challenges notwithstanding. This study is intended to serve as a practical missiological guide for diasporic engagement with vision, strategy, and Spirit empowerment as an important theme for the Pentecostal mission.

**Keywords:** Pentecostalism, diaspora, reverse flow, mission partnership

#### **Introduction**

The last five decades or so have witnessed two major phenomena in World Christianity: the astronomical growth of Christianity in the Global South and the reverse flow of missions back to the once heartland of Christianity in the West. The growth of Christianity in the South has shifted the center of Christianity from the North to the South and East. The reverse flow of mission on the other hand, has revived hopes of a renewal of Christianity in the Western World where the numbers of Christians have been shrinking over the decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This development has resulted in a situation where the question is being asked, who owns Christianity?

The Southward shift of Christianity has been largely driven by the exponential growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. These renewal movements have not only changed the contours of Christianity, particularly in the continent of Africa, but have also swept into the mainline churches in what is often referred to as the ‘Pentecostalization’ of mainline churches. Going by the growth rate of the missionary movement witnessed in the 1980s and 90s, it was projected that Western missionaries would be 131,700 and Two-Third World missionaries’ number over 164,200 by the year 2000.<sup>1</sup> This means that Majority World is now sending more missionaries to the West than the West is sending to the rest of the world. The flow of missions has been reversed.

### *Objective*

In this research, I shall explore the opportunities and challenges of the Afrodiasporic mission in the host nations using Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) Romanian mission as a case study. I have chosen CITAM because it was established by Canadian missionaries and is based in Kenya with a global outreach objective. CITAM also represents both the concept of the flow of Western Christianity into Africa and the reverse flow of missions now to the Global North. The choice of the East African-based church is also significant. There has been a lot of coverage of West African and South African Christianity, while the East African story has not gotten the attention it deserves considering the growth of Christians in this region. The choice of Romania is also important. A lot of African diasporic studies have tended to focus more on Western Europe and North America. Apart from Sunday Adelaje’s mega-church in Ukraine, we do not hear much of what else is happening in Eastern Europe.

In this research, I shall argue that the Afrodiasporic mission has had an impact in the host nations. I shall demonstrate this using CITAM Romania mission as a case study. I shall also explore the opportunities and challenges of African missions abroad and highlight some lessons that can be learned from CITAM’s global mission.

Although some mainline churches in Africa are also involved in sending African missionaries to the rest of the world, this research will focus on Pentecostal Afrodiasporic mission. I need to acknowledge here that the reverse flow of missions is also being witnessed in other parts of the Majority World, such South America and Asia. Due to the limited scope of this paper, I shall not be able to explore these regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry D. Pate, “The Changing Balance in Global Missions,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 15:2 (April 1991), 58.

## *Terms*

The key terms I have used in this paper are Pentecostalism, Evangelism, Diaspora, and Reverse Flow. For clarity purposes, I shall define these terms.

**Pentecostalism:** The terms Pentecostal and Pentecostalism refer to a wide variety of movements scattered throughout the world that can be described as having “family resemblance.”<sup>2</sup>

**Evangelism:** The word “evangelism” despite its varied used over time, in its original sense refers to a joyful message of God’s gracious and peaceable reign.<sup>3</sup> Evangelism is, therefore, primarily concerned with the proclamation of the good news of salvation to humanity through the gospel of Jesus Christ. John Wimber used “Power evangelism” in the 1980s to describe the combination of verbal evangelism with supernatural manifestations such as healing and deliverance.<sup>4</sup>

**Diaspora:** The term is used to refer to Africans living outside the continent of Africa as immigrants in minority situations.

**Reverse Flow:** This refers to the influx of Christians from the Global South to the Global North. The concept of “reverse flow” was reinvented in missiological discourse in Africa during the late 1970s as part of the debate on indigenization of the churches, moratorium, and the decolonization of the African church.<sup>5</sup>

## **African Pentecostalism and Its Mission**

Africa has been associated with Christianity from the first century. It was, however overrun by Islamic invasion during the crusades. The 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, which intended to map out ways of promoting Christianity, did not think much about the evangelization of Africa as it was assumed that Africa would be Islamized. Scott Sunquist

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<sup>2</sup> Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre F. Drogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Michael J. McClymond, “Missions and Evangelism,” in Gerald R. McDermott, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ogbu Kalu. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford, Oxford Press: 2008), 272.

notes that this conference marked the turn on Western missionary from a spiritual movement to business-like enterprise.<sup>6</sup>

The Western missionaries who came to Africa from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century established schools, hospitals, and mission stations across the continent. Their brand of Christianity; however, had some major challenges such as association with colonialism and cultural insensitivity which undermined its effectiveness in the continent. Consequently, Western missionary Christianity did not take much root in the African soil.

### *African Pentecostalism*

Pentecostalism exploded in Africa in the 1960s and 70s. This was the period when many African states were gaining their political independence from the colonialists. The reasons for this explosion are varied and cannot be fully explored in this brief paper. Suffice to mention that Pentecostalism resonated well with the African cultures and provided answers to the spiritual questions that Western Christianity had ignored. The phenomenal growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa has been termed as a new “African Reformation” of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> This widespread movement of the Spirit has fundamentally altered the character of African Christianity.<sup>8</sup> It has also challenged the traditional Western categorization of religion. Kenneth Ross observes that “The growth of Christianity in Africa means that it has become impossible to sustain the sharp distinctions by which Westerners defined the faith in terms of liberals, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics.”<sup>9</sup>

Globally, Pentecostalism can be viewed today as the most rapidly expanding religious movement in the world. Within the past thirty years, there has been an estimated 700 percent increase in the number of Pentecostal believers, who represent about a quarter of the world’s Christian population and two-thirds of all Protestants. The rapid expansion of Pentecostalism has pushed so-called mainstream Protestantism into a minority position.<sup>10</sup> A more recent estimate puts the number of Pentecostal-charismatics worldwide at 669 million, which is over a quarter

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<sup>6</sup> Scott W. Sunquist, *The Unexpected Christian Century: The Reversal and Transformation of Global Christianity, 1900-2000* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: 2015), 24.

<sup>7</sup> Clifton Clarke, *Pentecostalism: Insights from Africa and the African Diaspora* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018), 11.

<sup>8</sup> Clarke. *Pentecostalism*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth R. Ross, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, and Todd M. Johnson (eds), *Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Allan H. Anderson et al., eds., *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (University of California Press: 2010), 3.

of the world's Christian population.<sup>11</sup> With this succinct overview of Pentecostalism in Africa and globally, I shall now briefly discuss Pentecostalism in Kenya.

### *Pentecostalism in Kenya*

The first Pentecostal missionary arrived in Kenya in 1912 from Finland. In the same year, a charismatic movement known as *Robo* (Spirit) emerged in the Anglican Church. In 1918, North Americans established a mission that was later affiliated with Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The churches resulting from this mission became independent in 1965 and were renamed the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.<sup>12</sup> In the 1930s, the missionaries' opposition to female circumcision triggered the establishment of indigenous churches, including the Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, later renamed the Independent Pentecostal Church of East Africa. The East African revival, which broke out in Rwanda in the late 1920s, reached Kenya in 1937. This revival emphasized repentance from sin, brokenness, and holiness. In many ways, therefore, it mirrored the classic traits of Evangelical revivalism. However, from the beginning, it had a very distinctive African feel about it, not least because it was the African leaders who provided the energy, as well as the intellectual and emotional dynamic.<sup>13</sup> This revival, together with the Classical Pentecostal missionaries from America and Canada, laid the foundation for Charismatic Christianity in Kenya.<sup>14</sup>

The Pentecostal-Charismatic revival broke out in Kenya in the 1960s and 70s featuring both local and international preachers. The leading local figures of this movement included Joe Kayo, Margaret Wangari, and David Kimani. The international luminaries of this revival were led by T. L. Osborn and later Morris Cerullo, Benny Hinn, and Reinhard Bonke, among others. This revival swept through schools and colleges and is credited for raising leaders who later established charismatic churches that now dot the

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<sup>11</sup> Allan H. Anderson, *Spirit-Filled World: Religious Dis/Continuity in African Pentecostalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Luis Lugo, "Spirit and Power," in *Country Survey of Pentecostals* (New York: PEW Forum, 2010), 83-87.

<sup>13</sup> Kevin Ward, "Historical Overview," in Emma Wild-Wood, ed., *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (Farnham: Taylor & Francis, 2017), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Philomena J. Mwaura, "The Role of Charismatic Christianity in Reshaping the Religious Scene in Africa: The Case of Kenya," in Afe Adogame, Roswith Gerloff, and Klaus Hock, eds., *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage* (London: Bloomsbury 2011), 183.

East African country's landscape.<sup>15</sup> One of the key features of the Neo-Pentecostal revival in Kenya, as seen elsewhere in Africa, is the role played by the youth in spreading the revival flames. The student movements in particular, Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS) among university students and Christian Union's in high schools played a vital role in spreading Pentecostalism across the country.

Over the past five decades, Kenya has registered tremendous growth of Christianity. This East African country is now the most evangelical African nation, with 56 percent of its Christians being "born again," beating the more populous South Africa and Nigeria at 34 percent and 26 percent, respectively.<sup>16</sup> This phenomenal growth has been attributed to the growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. According to the research conducted by the PEW Forum, the "renewalists – including Charismatics and Pentecostals – account for roughly half of Kenya's population. Approximately seven-in-ten Protestants surveyed are either Pentecostal or Charismatic, and about one-third of all Catholics can be classified as charismatic."<sup>17</sup> The mainline protestant churches, on the other hand, have experienced stagnation or even decline in terms of membership. Some have lost their members to Pentecostal-charismatic churches due to their rigid traditions, beliefs, and practices, which tend to limit worshipers in expressing their faith.<sup>18</sup>

With this background on Pentecostalism in Kenya and the rest of the African continent, I shall now briefly discuss the diasporic missions and the reverse flow.

## **African Diaspora Mission**

The concept of reverse flow originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when a forward-looking missionary anticipated a "blessed reflex" when the sending churches of the West would be challenged and renewed by the churches then springing up in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>19</sup> As noted earlier, this terminology was reinvented as "reverse flow" in missiological discourse in Africa during the late 1970s as part of the debate on indigenization of the churches, moratorium, and the decolonization of the African church. This

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<sup>15</sup> Dickson N. Kagama and Bernard Gechiko, "Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya, Growth, Culture and Orality." *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education* 3:1 (2014), 27-33.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Muindi, *Pentecostal-Charismatic Prophecy: Theological Analysis* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018), 15.

<sup>17</sup> Lugo. "Spirit and Power," 83-87.

<sup>18</sup> Nkonge and Gechiko, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kenya," 27-33.

<sup>19</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 272.



could have been informed by political decolonization that had taken place earlier in the decade but was aimed at indigenizing the church and contextualizing the gospel. In the same period, there was an explosion of Pentecostalism in Africa with the growth of African Initiated Churches (AIC's) and new Pentecostal churches. Politically, the newly independent states were not doing well economically and socially. There were military coups, oppressive regimes, and corruption which all resulted in the perpetuation of poverty and in some cases, internal displacement of citizens. The hopes for the prosperous independent states of Africa had collapsed.

About this time, African church leaders, especially from the mainline churches, were also agitating for the indigenization of the church in Africa. The leaders who had become impatient with the slow pace of this process called for a five-year moratorium to allow for the African church to develop its local structures as opposed to depending on missionary structures.<sup>20</sup> Part of the agenda in the moratorium debate was a concern whether cross-cultural mission was a biblically mandated monopoly of the whites. Some mainline churches made efforts to demonstrate that they were ready to take the gospel back to its heartland in the West, but their efforts were largely unsuccessful. Kalu observes that “Africans in the mainline churches who started the reverse flow concept fumbled the ball near the goalpost.”<sup>21</sup> The rising tide of Pentecostalism across Africa, which seemed to be more organized, energized, and flexible, quickly stole the thunder from the mainline churches. With political, socioeconomic, and religious pressure bearing on the continent's citizens, migration and reverse flow was bound to explode.

Professor Andrew Walls observes that the “great new fact of our time- and it has momentous consequences for mission- is that the great migration has gone into reverse. There has been a massive movement, which all indications suggest will continue, from the non-Western to the Western world.”<sup>22</sup> This migration can be attributed to a number of factors which can be summarized in three categories, namely, economic reasons, education, and religious factors. These factors deserve a brief mention here. Post-independent Africa had many challenges which pushed many of its citizens to live in poverty. The civil wars and intrastate conflicts which arose caused mass movements of people in and out of the continent. Hancels notes that by the year 2000, the total number of international migrants within Africa

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>21</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 277.

<sup>22</sup> Babatunde A. Adebibu, “Reverse Missions or Migrant Sanctuaries? Migration, Symbolic Mapping; and Missionary Challenges of Britain's Black Majority Churches,” *Pneuma* 35:3 (January 2003); 405-423.

(including refugees) had risen to sixteen million, up from 9 million in 1960.<sup>23</sup> With the dwindling of the economic fortunes in Africa, significant numbers of Africa's elite migrated to the Western world to seek greener pastures, better healthcare, and quality education resulting in what is often referred to as the "brain drain."

From the beginning, Christianity has had a missionary impulse. Believers understood that being a follower of Jesus meant taking the faith to others.<sup>24</sup> This understanding is expressed in Pentecostalism perhaps more than any other Christian tradition. Pentecostalism is a missionary movement, a religion on the go, and wherever Pentecostals have migrated to, they have also set up churches that pretty much resemble their home churches.

We have noted that migration and reverse flow from the African continent are triggered by political, economic, and religious reasons. I shall now discuss CITAM's global missiological approach.

## **CITAM in Romania**

### *Its Missiological Orientation*

CITAM is a classical Pentecostal Church that was established by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) in 1959 to reach primarily the English-speaking community in Nairobi. It was initially called the Nairobi Pentecostal Church and was led by white missionaries who were sent directly from Canada by the PAOC. The initial services were held in a tent near Jeevanjee Street in Rahimtulla Hall, downtown Nairobi. In September 1960, the church moved to Valley Road, where the present CITAM Valley Road is located.<sup>25</sup> At the turn of the millennia, something very significant happened in the Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC). Pastor Dennis White, under whose leadership the church had grown significantly, handed over the church leadership to the locals, effectively ending the era of Western missionary leadership in the NPC. The first local senior Pastor was Rev Boniface Adoyo, under whose leadership the NPC continued with its rapid expansion from Nairobi to other cities in the country and beyond and was later renamed Christ is the Answer Ministries. It was, however, under Bishop David Oginde, his successor, that CITAM finally set its foot in the diaspora through the planting of CITAM Romania, opening a new chapter of reverse flow of missions in CITAM.

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<sup>23</sup> Jehu Hancels, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 227.

<sup>24</sup> Sunquist, *The Unexpected Christian Century*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> "CITAM Strategic Plan (2016-2025)," 10, <http://www.citam.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CITAM-Strategic-Plan-2016-2025.pdf>, Accessed on April 29, 2021.

CITAM's vision is a "Community of Believers impacting the World with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit." Its mission is "To know God and to make Him know through evangelism and discipleship."<sup>26</sup> Both the vision and the mission of this ministry show that CITAM perceives herself as a global missionary enterprise. This global view of missions is characteristic of Pentecostalism. Pentecostals see themselves as commissioned to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel. Their mandate is based on the Great Commission in Mark 16:15, Matt 28:18, and is empowered by the fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit in Acts 1:8. Ogbu Kalu observes that "Pentecostal outlook is notoriously international. Many African Pentecostals have built up the logistical support to sustain the enterprise of missions, and the guts or passion for challenging the Northern monopoly by reversing the flow."<sup>27</sup> This global ambition has seen some local churches change their names to accommodate their expanding vision. CITAM, for instance, changed her name from the Nairobi Pentecostal Church to Christ is the Answer Ministries in 2003 to accommodate her global ambition.

I have briefly discussed the history of CITAM; I shall now discuss its foray into the diasporic space with a specific focus on Romania. A brief history of the socio-cultural background of Romania will be helpful in appreciating the current spiritual realities of this Eastern European country.

### *Afro-Romanian Mission*

Romania is located in Eastern Europe, bordering the former Soviet Republic of Ukraine to the east and Hungary to the west. Three major historical provinces make up modern Romania: Moldova, Walachia, and Transylvania. These provinces once used to be separate but came together during the unification of 1918. Challenges of regional diversity can be traced back to this period. State-building in Romania reinforced the hegemony of the national churches, which were given priority over minority denominations. The "sects" or new churches, including the Pentecostals, were banned in a general attempt to control the public sphere.<sup>28</sup>

The Romanian Orthodox were favored by the authorities, while other religions were seen as a threat to national unity. The communist administration controlled all religious activities directly through a raft of measures such as regulating the number of religious services, controlling of

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<sup>26</sup> "CITAM Strategic Plan (2016-2025)," 14.

<sup>27</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 290.

<sup>28</sup> Denes Kiss and Laszlos Foszto. "Pentecostalism in Romania: The Influence of Pentecostal Communities on the Life-Style of the Members," *La Ricerca Folklorica*, April 2012, 53.

the permits and movements of the preachers, and replacing disobedient leaders with loyal ones, among others.<sup>29</sup>

Pentecostalism entered Romania in the 1920s and primarily focused on the villages close to the western border of the country. The early Pentecostals were converted from rural Baptist communities which maintained ties with Romanian Pentecostal communities in the United States. Conversions to Pentecostalism increased considerably in the years between 1968 and 1988 despite state control. This growth has been attributed to the flexibility of association and avoidance of confrontation by the Pentecostal churches.<sup>30</sup> Gele Duminica has credited this growth to the fact that the Pentecostal preachers “use the Romani language to touch their congregants, integrate traditional Roma music into their services, and they offer much-needed humanitarian aid.”<sup>31</sup>

CITAM began its international foray in 2012 with the sending of Walter Openda as a missionary Pastor to Bucharest, Romania, through a partnership with a local church *Biserica Internationala Harul* (Grace Internal Church), led by Pastor Ioan Ceuta. This church needed a pastor who would minister to the international community, primarily the English-speaking people who are mainly expatriates. Later, Openda was released to plant the CITAM Romania church in 2014. The church began with a handful of people, some of whom were members who used to attend Grace International Church. Within a period of five years, the congregation grew to about 180 people consisting of mainly Romanian citizens.

### *Challenges and opportunities*

Mission, whether short-term or long-term, has always been done against a host of obstacles. Jehu Hancels observes that challenges face the diasporic church planters regardless of their natural ministry gifts, level of professional achievement, or educational attainment.<sup>32</sup> He notes further that “being immigrants” places significant limitations on their endeavors and forestalls the immediate realization of their missionary vision.<sup>33</sup> Some immigrants have faced racial discrimination, isolation, and humiliation at the hands of the host nations. Dyron Daugherty observes that what people from the Global South encounter in the West is overwhelming secularization, changing laws against immigrants, cold receptions, and an

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>31</sup> B. J. Ramnicelu, “Romania’s Evangelical Romanies,” *The Economist* Jan 17, 2011. <https://www.economist.com/eastern-approaches/2011/01/17/romanias-evangelical-romanies>

<sup>32</sup> Hancels, *Beyond Christendom*, 347.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

overall “fortress mentality.”<sup>34</sup> Walter Openda experienced some significant challenges in his Romanian mission, although they were somewhat different. Romanians are “very warm people and do not have racial prejudices,”<sup>35</sup> Recalls Openda. Romanian culture is receptive to visitors from the Majority World, perhaps unlike Western Europe.

The other challenge is immigration restrictions. “The immigration restrictions and strict visa requirements that have been implemented by Western democracies in response to non-white migration preclude the possibility of individual African Christians entering most countries as ‘missionaries,’ except under the auspices of an American church or denomination.”<sup>36</sup> In Romania, the Openda’s had difficulties getting legal resident status. It took them almost a year before being granted residence visas.

The language barrier, differences in the education system, and the weather presented other challenges the missionary family had to face. Rev Walter arrived in Bucharest in the middle of the winter season, which was very harsh to him, having grown up in the tropics. Openda observed that these challenges saw his children “lose two years of schooling during the transition period.”<sup>37</sup>

Another challenge that has affected the diasporic mission is capacity. Many pastors who serve the immigrant communities do not possess theological training and lack relevant cross-cultural intelligence. Hancels observes that “in spite of the African Pastors having a vision for diasporic evangelism, few have the capacity to minister interracially or interculturally on an organized and sustained basis—at least not until they successfully negotiate the process of cultural adaptation and social incorporation themselves.”<sup>38</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that many of these pastors do not possess theological training and requisite cultural intelligence. Kalu observes that most African immigrant churches are started by lay immigrants.<sup>39</sup>

With all these challenges facing the Afrodiasporic missions, has any recognizable impact been experienced, especially among the host nations? I shall now discuss this contentious issue.

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<sup>34</sup> Dyron B. Daugherty. *To Whom Does Christianity Belong? Critical Issues in World Christianity* (Lanham, Fortress, 2015), 202.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Openda, Interview by Author, April 27, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Hancels, *Beyond Christendom*, 347.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Hancels, *Beyond Christendom*, 334.

<sup>39</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 285.

## *Impact of Afrodiasporic mission*

It is no doubt that the African diasporic mission has had a significant impact on the immigrant communities. These churches provide a home away from home, a place where immigrants get a soft landing in foreign lands, and a place for spiritual nourishment. Kalu observes that the Afrodiasporic communities “cater for the African psyche that is deeply religious, that these churches provide a home away from home, buttress identity, empower immigrants; provide coping mechanisms, social networks, security, employment, and legal and financial services and counseling on how to engage the new society with success.”<sup>40</sup>

The opinion is, however, divided as to what kind of impact the diasporic mission has had on the host countries. Babatunde Adebibu notes that “In the light of the proliferation of African Christianity globally, various scholars have observed the lack of impact of these churches among the indigenous peoples.”<sup>41</sup> Some have termed them immigrant sanctuaries or enclaves to indicate that they only serve to minister to the immigrants.<sup>42</sup> Amos Yong, however, is more positive on this matter. He affirms confidently that the Afrodiasporic mission has had some significant impact on the host nations. “We are observing, sensing, and feeling the transformative renewal of world Christianity within and out of the African context.”<sup>43</sup> He observes further that this reverse flow has a unique character. “Pentecostal renewal now coming out of Africa is not the same one that the Pentecostal missionaries brought into the continent in the last century.”<sup>44</sup> Kwabena Asamoah is of a similar opinion, “The point is that African immigrants are revealing new paradigms in Christian mission that ‘raise the prospect of a revitalized Christian presence on European soil.’”<sup>45</sup>

In response to aspersions that these communities are simply ethnic enclaves for people seeking to better their economic fortunes, Kwabena is assertive, “Immigrant churches with their ethnic compositions and informal, expressive, and ‘noisy’ services may not be attractive to secular-minded Westerners, but the witness of presence is also important, even if

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<sup>40</sup> Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 287.

<sup>41</sup> Adebibu, “Reverse Missions,” 416.

<sup>42</sup> Adebibu, “Reverse Missions,” 416.

<sup>43</sup> Amos Yong, “Out of Africa? Pentecostalism in Africa, the African Diaspora, and to the Ends of the Earth,” *Pneuma* 35 (2020), 315-317.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission, and Religious Others in World Christianity: An African Perspective,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39:4 (October 2015), 189-92.

that turns out to be the only contributions that the so-called religious others make to world Christianity.”<sup>46</sup>

CITAM Romania has had a considerable impact in terms of cross-cultural appeal and influence among the natives if the composition of the congregation in terms of nationalities is anything to go by. The church has a rich diversity of membership drawn from seven nations, namely: Kenya, Rwanda, Mexico, Brazil, Angola, France, and the host nation Romania, which has the lion share of 75% of the congregation. This international appeal is commendable and can be attributed to CITAM’s strategic focus of reaching the international community as opposed to just targeting only the immigrant communities. Across the border, Sunday Adelaja’s Embassy of the Kingdom of God has had a tremendous impact in Kiev. This mega-church of over 20,000 members is composed of 99.99% Ukrainians. Casley Essamuah observes that Sunday Adelaja started off by reaching the outcasts of society, prostitutes, robbers, and alcoholics. As changes took place in the lives of these people, the city noticed the work of these African pastors.<sup>47</sup> Paul Freston’s argument that Latin America, particularly Brazil, is best placed to reach Europe because of other factors like culture and sports, especially soccer,<sup>48</sup> in my opinion, is not very well informed. Freston overlooks the fact Africa is also very well represented in top European soccer leagues. Except for isolated sentiments of racism in some countries, these African players have been embraced due to the quality of their play. In other disciplines like athletics, countries like Kenya and Ethiopia are world beaters.

In this section, I have argued that the Afrodiasporic mission has had an impact both among the immigrant communities as well as in the host nations using the Romanian example. I shall now consider some of the lessons that can be drawn from CITAM’s diasporic mission.

### *Lessons from the Diaspora*

Afrodiasporic mission is a very challenging undertaking and success does not often come easily. This reality poses a major challenge to the pastors involved in this mission because of the pressing financial needs they must shoulder. This forces some of them to do other jobs to meet their personal needs. While this might seem prudent in view of their challenging circumstances, it tends to distract them from focusing on growing their

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<sup>46</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, “Migration, Diaspora Mission,” 189-92.

<sup>47</sup> Casley B. Essamuah, and David K. Ngaruiya, eds., *Communities of Faith in Africa and the African Diaspora: In Honor of Dr. Tite Tienou with Additional Essays on World Christianity*. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Paul Freston. “Reverse Mission: A Discourse in Search of Reality?” *PentecoStudies* 9:2 (2010), 153–74.

churches and expanding the outreach. CITAM has addressed this matter well by extending financial support to the missionaries in the diaspora. With the burden of finances adequately addressed, the missionaries can focus on ministry. Rev Walter Openda attributes his success partly to the support he received from CITAM as he ventured out to Romania. He did not have to worry about housing, upkeep, and schooling of his children in Romania as that was taken care of by the sending church. The sending churches need to therefore consider this support system to cushion their missionaries who have had to forgo a lot of comfort and security to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The second lesson from the diaspora mission is that the cultural differences between the missionary's culture and the host nation's culture is a key factor to be considered in this venture. One of the greatest challenges of doing missions cross-culturally is gaining acceptance in the new culture. One way this challenge can be addressed is through a partnership between the missionary's sending church and, where applicable, the churches in the host nation. This can help the African missionaries to gain quick acceptance and adjust to the local culture. Walter Openda observes that his entry point to Romania was through the invitation of Ioan Ceuta of *Biserica Internationala*. The church embraced him and helped him to settle down faster. This approach is, therefore, a much-needed paradigm in the way diasporic missions is done and will possibly make for faster integration and transformation of the host nation. For this model to work well, cooperation from both the African missionaries and the host nation is essential.

Sometimes, however, partnerships may not work well all the time. The *Biserica Internationala Harul* church had to release Walter Openda to plant a CITAM church in Romania after it was apparent that the partnership could not be sustained due to differences in ministerial approach. The host church demonstrated maturity and humility in releasing the missionary to establish a new church plant in Bucharest.

Another major consideration for the diasporic mission to succeed is a sense of divine calling or divine orchestration. More than just for convenience or even out of a desire to be involved in diasporic mission, the pastors involved in this ministry must have the conviction that God has called them to be missionaries in the diaspora. Walter Openda attributes his success to the fact that he sensed the call of God upon him to reach Romanians. This is what sustained him in times of tests and trials. Even when the official partnership with the host church ended, he stepped out to establish a CITAM church in Bucharest to continue the ministry in Romania. The call to minister in Romania has seen him go back to Bucharest to establish an independent congregation after his official engagement with CITAM recently ended. Sunday Adelaja, the pastor of the single largest congregation in Europe with a membership that comprises of



99.9 percent Ukrainians in Kiev, attributes his success to divine orchestration. “God plucked me from my small village in Africa; then brought me by a divine call to Ukraine and told me to start a church in Kiev.”<sup>49</sup> In Acts 13:1, the Spirit called Saul and Barnabas from the church in Antioch and sent them to do missionary work from city to city as He led them. What followed the act of their obedience to this divine call was the great expansion of the work of God in Asia Minor and Europe.

Finally, from the Afrodiasporic mission we learn that theological training and cross-cultural exposure are quintessential for building the capacity of the pastors engaged in this enterprise. This exposure will be more beneficial ideally if it is undertaken prior to the engagement with the host nation. For those who receive the divine call while engaged in the diaspora as professionals, it needs to be part of their preparation for ministry.

In this section, I have argued that CITAM’s global missiological approach offers some valuable lessons that can enhance diasporic outreach. We have discussed the need for partnerships and funding, the place of the divine call, and the cross-cultural exposure necessary for effective diasporic engagement. I shall now conclude our discussion.

## Conclusion

From this research, it is evident that the Afrodiasporic mission is having some impact among the immigrant communities and the host nations as well, the challenges notwithstanding. Although the experience in the host nations varies from region to region and in some cases country to country, CITAM’s success in Romania though still at a formative stage, offers a good model of engaging in missions out of Africa. It also confirms that the reverse flow of missions is happening on a scale that is clearly beyond the building of “immigrant sanctuaries” to impacting the host nations and thus offering hope that the shrinking demographics of Christianity in the North is not irreversible. Because Eastern Europe is much more receptive to Afrodiasporic missions and, for that matter, the gospel, it gives us reasons to be optimistic that in the coming decades, the once strongholds of communism might be the new center for re-evangelization of the post-modern Western World. While Paul Freston has argued that if “any Southern Christians stand a chance of influencing native Europeans, it is probably the Latin Americans more than the Africans and Asians,”<sup>50</sup> the reality is that the seed of the gospel is being replanted in European soil by

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<sup>49</sup> Adebibu, “Reverse Missions,” 405-423.

<sup>50</sup> Freston, “Reverse Mission,” 153-74.

the Afrodiasporic mission and it will grow and bear much fruit. God's ways are not always conventional. The Wind blows where it pleases!

Charles Morara Obara (oba147474@oru.edu) is a Regional Overseer in Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), a Pentecostal Church in Kenya established by Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, with church plants in East Timor, Romania, and Maryland, USA. He also serves as the Senior Pastor of CITAM Karen, a megachurch located in Nairobi's Karen area.

# Worship as a Lifestyle: An Exegetical Study of Ephesians 5:15-20 with a Special Reference to Contemporary Worship Practice

Thang San Mung

## Abstract:

Worship is often mistaken as just a one-and-half hour service routinely done on Sunday morning. This article mainly critiques this common misconception about Christian worship from a biblical point of view. However, to accommodate the limitation of the article of this kind, it will only focus on Paul's thinking of Christian worship, most evident in Ephesians 5:15-20. Therefore, this article is generally an exegetical reading of the said passage with a particular focus on what and how the passage (or Paul in the passage) defined Christian worship and discussed it for contemporary reflection. Moreover, some sporadic debates will occur on the famous "be filled" phrase of verse 18 to complement the whole discussion.

**Key words:** Pentecostal worship, contemporary worship, Paul's theology of worship

## Introduction

The so-called Genesis mandate that is said to be "to rule and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) was so many times exaggerated as the primary concern of God in creating human beings as the bearer of his own image.<sup>1</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup> For major publications, see Christopher Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004); Jonathan Burnside, *God, Justice, and Society* (Oxford University Press, 2011), xxv, 527; Dick Tripp, *The Biblical Mandate for Caring for Creation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 7-157. For commentaries, consult with such as Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1982); Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (New International Commentary on OT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990). For articles, Andrew Schmutzer and Alice Mathews, "Genesis 1-11 and Work," Theology of Work Project (2013) at <http://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/genesis-1-11-and-work/#the->

there is still much more than this to careful readers of the Bible, as clearly narrated in the following passages, i.e., Genesis 2:15-17. It is but to worship God by observing what He commanded, in other words, to trust and obey God. It is the true original creation-call of man and woman in the Garden. Of course, worship in the sense of faith and obedience to God is indeed the very original creation-commission that God put on the shoulders of his image-bearers forever.

With the rise of the Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century, the importance of this original call of worship has come to the church's front yard. The movement itself is sometimes even marked by it so far.<sup>2</sup> Of course, contemporary Pentecostal lively worship brings back the church to its biblical roots and helps find the true meaning of human existence—that is, to worship God. Moreover, in the late twentieth century, this free worship style was later met by pop music culture on the horizon. Their matrix combination has created a more exuberant worship environment which is another benefit brought forth to church life.<sup>3</sup>

However, as a critic once said, not all music forms are shaped for the purpose of Christian worship.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the genuineness of such hysteric emotion, probably created by the musical matrix in public worship,

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work-of-the-creation-mandate-genesis-128-215, accessed on May 27, 2015; and others. This misinterpretation of all comes from a careless study of the key verb of Genesis 1:28 “וַיִּבְרָךְ” According to the Genesis usages, this is not a divine command (*leamor* (לְאֹמַר)), which was employed in 2:16, but divine wish or blessing. Therefore, in terms of vocation, the true Genesis or cultural mandate should be understood as more than this divine wish of 1:28, but as a divine command of 2:16. In that sense, to observe what the Creator God commanded is the original creation call of all human beings.

<sup>2</sup> Also noted by writers such as Ligon Duncan and others, *Perspectives on Christian Worship: 5 Views* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 12; further, “Collectively Pentecostalism, the Charismatic, and Praise and Worship movements are grouped under the label Contemporary Worship” in Scott D. Harrison and Jessica O’Bryan, eds., *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century* (New York: Springer, 2014), 323. See also the article by former General Superintendent of the AOG, G. Raymond Carlson, “The Priority of Pentecostal Worship,” accessed May 27, 2015, [http://ag.org/top/church\\_workers/wrshp\\_gen\\_worship.cfm](http://ag.org/top/church_workers/wrshp_gen_worship.cfm).

<sup>3</sup> As observed by Donald E. Miller, in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7; and Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 129.

<sup>4</sup> See Ennis B. Edmonds and Michelle A. Gonzalez, *Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 210-214. A writer also once noted that music can be used for good or for bad too, cf., Charles T. Crabtree, “Pentecostal Music and the Pastor,” *Enrichment Journal*, online version, accessed May 30, 2015, [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200001/076\\_music.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200001/076_music.cfm).

should be tested without exception.<sup>5</sup> Is it pure spiritual enrichment from the Holy Spirit for one's growth? Or is it just a simple human emotional reaction to the sounding noise of music and no other meaning at all? More specifically, what benefits does such an exciting moment in the good name of worship bring to one's spiritual growth? It becomes difficult to discern such an atmosphere as contemporary music advancement and the Christian worship movement blended together. Accordingly, a firm biblical foundation for proper practice of worship, whether public or private, is ever a need. Therefore, for this purpose, a passage from the Ephesian epistle is chosen here to complement a little to what seems lacking in contemporary Pentecostal worship practices.

However, this article will not deal with every aspect of Christian worship in general. It will but focus on what the selected Bible passage teaches about worship so that one can view Christian worship from a biblical standpoint and make a fresh implication for the practice. Of course, to fellow Pentecostals, true worship is more than a weekly congregational gathering that we usually celebrate with an ear-breaking musical sounding. It is a lifestyle and even a life instead.

### **A Text for a Biblical Theology of Worship: Ephesians 5:15-20**

Historically, Ephesians 5:15-20 might be one of the least debated Pauline passages among scholars,<sup>6</sup> as the Ephesian epistle itself is a very confrontation-less and debate-silent letter compared to other Pauline epistles of the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> Most commentators and scholars, and preachers alike quoted this passage in an almost similar pose to figure out what was in Paul's mind concerning Christian living in the broader social context. However, all could not bypass the last sentence of the passage that mainly concerns Christian worship (cf., vs. 19-20).<sup>8</sup> No matter what

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<sup>5</sup> Cf., Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, 2003), 37; also see the observation of Bob Bayles in *Issues in Contemporary Pentecostalism* (R. Keith Whitt and French L. Arrington, eds.; Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2012), 224.

<sup>6</sup> However, this passage has not been left alone from such debates in recent days, though it is one of the least debated. Especially in relation to the divine dative and its preceding overflowing verb, it still receives the attention of modern scholars. For further reading, see Harold W. Hoener, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians has been given several titular names by scholars such as the "crown of Paulinism" by C. H. Dodd, "quintessence of Paulinism" by H. Hoehner, and "queen of his (Paul's) epistles" by Dan Wallace.

<sup>8</sup> Wallace has noted that by including verse 21, the Ephesian epistle is an extension of this worship in the Spirit passage; cf., Daniel B. Wallace, "Ephesians:

discussions they made, the controlling thought lies with this worship-related-*pericope* of the last part of our text.

Structurally, this passage is in the central part of the second major section of the epistle, so it was a part of the practical living guidance section (chapters 4-6) that was apparently marked with the call to live a life “worthy of calling” (4:1). However, a more in-depth reading will indicate that living a life worthy of calling does not happen all of a sudden. It instead requires one “to walk (or live)” out several practical truths. They are such as walking or living in “unity” (4:1-16), in “holiness” (4:17-32), in “love” (5:1-6), in “light” (5:7-14), in spiritual “wisdom” (5:15-6:9), and then to stand firm in “warfare” that is the final call (6:10-20).<sup>9</sup> In this light, our selected passage plays as an introductory comment for the upcoming “wisdom” living paragraph in the major “worthy of calling” section.

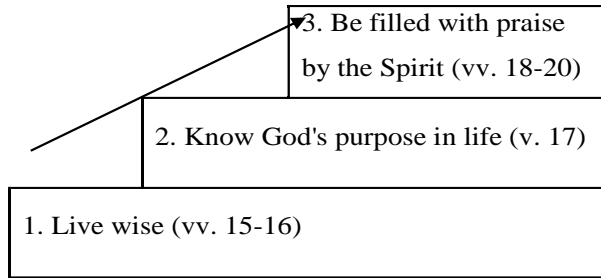
However, to make a little difference from the secular Hellenistic claim of wisdom, Paul arranges his thought-flow in this passage. He arranges all his thoughts and words like a ladder that leads his audience one step higher to the next.<sup>10</sup> For instance, his first exhortation to live (or walk) wisely (vs. 15-16) is not clear enough to distinguish what kind of wisdom that he is talking about here. At the second level, he calls to find out God's purpose in life (v. 17) which clarifies what he meant at the start. However, only in the last and final stage, the climax of his thought comes clear as he urges the church to live a life full of worship and praise by (or in) the Holy Spirit (vs. 18-20). It is indeed the high point of the whole scene that Paul tries to flash to his audience. In this way, wisdom living is appropriately defined in terms of a life lived to God's praising and glory by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the passage is better called a worship passage.

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Introduction, Argument, and Outline,” accessed May 27, 2015, <http://bible.org/seriespage/ephesians-introduction-argument-and-outline>.

<sup>9</sup> This outline was taken from Hoehner, vii-viii; also see Wallace's outline for comparison (Wallace, “Ephesians”).

<sup>10</sup> This kind of climatic parallel arrangement of thoughts is one of the special features of Hebraic wisdom and poetic literature in the Old Testament, cf., Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994); E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Moody, 1898), 311.



Furthermore, “life in the Spirit” is another primary concern of the epistles.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, a very close affinity between this climactic call to live a worshipful life in the Spirit (5:15-20) and the theme of a life “worthy of calling,” is found in the whole second section of the epistle (chs. 4-6), is very perceivable. We can see here a life worthy of calling in view of a life full of worship and praise in the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 5:15-20, then, plays a significant role in the whole epistle. By pinpointing Christian life in broader society and worshipping in the Spirit as defining each other correspondingly, this passage fulfills its crucial literary role in the whole epistle.

## Worship is a Lifestyle: Thematic Study of Ephesian 5:15-20

One of our contemporary misconceptions regarding worship is that “everything was done in one-and-half hour service” on Sunday morning.<sup>13</sup> However, the teaching of the Bible is totally in contrast to this thinking of a single Sunday morning ceremony. The Bible is clear enough in saying that

<sup>11</sup> There are no less than six times in the Ephesian epistle that mention life in the Spirit. For instance, sealed with the Spirit (1:13), inhabited by the Spirit (2:22), revealed by the Spirit (3:5), gifted by the Spirit (4:8-12), filled *with* the Holy Spirit (5:19), and be strong in the power of the Spirit (3:16; 6:10).

<sup>12</sup> See Wallace’s structural outline in which he reads the “believers’ relation to the Spirit” as the central theme of this subsection, 5:15-6:9; this relationship is the controlling force of believers’ social relationships in the wider society. However, there are still several commentators who claim this *pneumati* πνεύματι as human spirit not the Spirit (i.e., Alford, Abbott, Westcott, Lenski, and others). Taking the opposite view, Hoehner makes a fine argument for a divine dative (see Hoehner, 702-703).

<sup>13</sup> We have an honest confession of a so-called worship leader who said, “After being a pastor for 12 years . . . I began to see that my view of worship were focused almost entirely on the singing portion of Sunday mornings . . . [later] I understood that our worship of God not only extends beyond singing, but involves every moment of every day,” cf., Bob Kauflin, “Defining Worship: Worship as Everyday Life,” accessed May 27, 2015, <http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/defining-worship-worship-as-everyday-life-1223331.html>.

worship is a lifestyle.<sup>14</sup> That means our daily life and concerns, the way we live daily, are to be a lifelong commitment to worship. It is what Ephesians 5:15-20 clearly says. For a general overview, this passage is a combination of three further subdivisions as indicated by the three major imperatives. They are “be careful” (vs. 15-16), “comprehend” (v. 17), and “be filled with or full of” (vs. 19-20).<sup>15</sup>

However, as explained before, these three imperatives are not a separate idea but are chained together and built upon one another to bring a climactic call to action.

The first call is to walk wisely, “to be careful how one walks” (Βλέπετε...περιπατεῖτε, vs. 15-16). However, the walking verb “περιπατεῖτε” comprises a sense of imagery action more than a literal walk.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it might also mean the way one lives his or her daily life one step after another. Therefore, this walking is even about one's habitual behavior that he or she consciously or unconsciously practices on a daily basis. Accordingly, at the basic level of the ladder, to be careful about how they live their daily lives and choose to live wisely is what Paul wants to exhort the Ephesians. This first imperative then leads us to another question. What does it mean to live wisely? At this primary step, Paul does not give his clear answer nor define it. It must wait until the final cumulative thought of the whole discussion is reached in verse 18.

The second call is to know and do God's will: a step in the ladder of Paul's thought as the call to comprehend God's will in one's life (συνιέντες, v. 17).<sup>17</sup> It is then clearer what Paul means by referring previously to

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, refer to some Pauline passages such as Romans 12:1-2; Philipians 4:4-7; 2 Timothy 4:5-8; and Hebrews 13:12-16.

<sup>15</sup> Best comments on the integral position of these three imperatives in E. Best, *Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburg, England: T & T Clark, 1998), 502; and see W. L. Liefeld, *Ephesians* (IVPNTC; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1997), 131; and Hoehner, 689.

<sup>16</sup> We have at least three exegetical reasons to read this walking verb more as an attitude or behavior in the sense of imagery. First, the verb is a customary present tense that indicates a habitual action. Second, the particle **πῶς** that is an adverb of manner/behavior in this context affirms it (cf., Hoehner, 691; though Hoehner claims that this particle has the same equal use with **ὅτι**, he disagrees himself to translate this word in such a way but translated it as adverb of manner/mode instead). Third, the connecting particle **ὥς...ὥς** is an adverbial conjunction, commonly used to compare between contrastive or comparative manners or behaviors.

<sup>17</sup> The prepositional conceptual pronoun, **διὰ τοῦτο**, indicates the logical connection of the first imperative of verses 15-16 and the second imperative of verse 17 (cf., Best, 505-6; however, Hoehner has taken this prepositional phrase



wisdom living. What Paul means here by saying wisdom living is indeed more than what the secular Hellenistic culture would say is wisdom and wise. It is even knowing or becoming a well-informed person of God's will for every detailed step of life that one takes. In other words, knowing God's will for every step of life is what Paul says wisdom living or walking wise means. However, the next question that this second exhortation tickled out is, "What is God's will or his good purpose in life, and how can we fulfill it at every step of our lives?"

The third call is to be full of thanksgiving by the Spirit. The answer for the above consummative question is in reserve in the succeeding verses (ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν Πνεύματι, vs. 18-20). It is the third imperative, "to be full of or by the Spirit." To make it simple, to live a life of worship, full of praise and thanksgiving in everything, is precisely God's will and his good purpose for us to fulfill in one's daily life. However, considering the prepositional divine dative, ἐν Πνεύματι, this praising and thanksgiving lifestyle can only be attained and maintained by the Spirit alone. Therefore, to remain passive under his infilling (or his total control) is undoubtedly the silent expectation that Paul does not need to detail anymore.<sup>18</sup> Only by keeping oneself in the divine presence of the Spirit can one fulfill God's will that is praising and glorying Him in every step of life. It is what Paul says "to live or walk wisely" in the first imperative (vs. 15-16).

Therefore, to live wisely is to know and fulfill God's will at every step of life. However, one can fulfill God's purpose only by the divine help of the Holy Spirit alone, so to remain under his divine dictation is the only option for all these to be done in one's daily life. This Spirit-directed-life will then be expressed as the most joyous, cheerful, and jubilant lifestyle overall (cf., vs. 19-20). Accordingly, worship is not just a half-an-hour event. It is a kind of lifestyle that always manifests itself in the form of praising, thanksgiving, and glorifying God in the name of Jesus Christ, by the invoking of the Spirit.

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only as a simple conjunction that diminishes the grammatical significance of the phrase instead; cf., Hoehner, 695).

<sup>18</sup> There are at least three exegetical notes that signify the importance of staying or remaining passive under the control of the Holy Spirit. First, the imperative πληροῦσθε refers to a customary repeated action that means that something is already taking place continuously (cf., Willard H. Taylor, *Ephesians*, vol. IX [Beacon; Kansas, MO: Beacon, 1965], 235; Ralph P. Martin, *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon: Interpretation* [Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1991], 67). Second, this overflowing verb indicates the fullness of Christ that one cannot attain by himself or herself but only by the mediatory work of the Spirit of God, cf., Liefeld, 136. Third, this verb is in passive voice that refers to something that believers should allow in their lives.

## Worship or Mischief: Antithetical Comparisons in Ephesians 5:15-20

To live wisely is none other than fulfilling God's will in one's life and living accordingly a life full of worship and praise in the Holy Spirit—a very positive posture of life—in every situation of life. However, not to live this way is just to make mischief upon oneself instead. It is what Paul wants to make clear in the passage. Accordingly, a closer look at the passage shows some antithetical contrasts that Paul employs to emphasize what he means by saying live wisely. They are “wise” versus “foolish” (vs. 15-16), “meaningless” versus “meaningful” (v. 17), and “excessive life” by getting drunk versus “being filled with joy (or thankful life)” by the Spirit (vs. 18-20).

As the first contrastive comparison, the two different lifestyles, living wisely and living unwisely (foolish), are presented. As the first step of the ladder of thought, the first imperative “to walk” is provided with an optional choice by the first comparative parallel that is the unwise living versus the wise living, *μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι, ἀλλ’ ὡς σοφοί*. The positive contrast wise is the way one should pursue in life as a daily habit, and the negative parallel contrasts unwise or uninformed, which is, however, to avoid (vs. 15-16). Without any further explanation of what the wise or what the unwise is, Paul green-lighted why he would rather say to pursue living “wise” over unwise. The primary reason behind why to choose “wise living” is that good times are running out, and the present age is turning evil more than ever, *ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσι* (v. 7b).<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the good people of God have only to catch and even to make a profit of every moment of life for a better and higher cause, *ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν* (v. 17b).<sup>20</sup> It is the only reason Christians should rather live wisely by making every moment profit for a better cause. So then, what is that better cause for which we must do the best out of every moment and live wisely? It is what the second parallel answers as the next level of the ladder.

The second comparison is to contrast two different choices of life, namely becoming an aimless fool vs. learning a meaningful life. The second imperative, “to comprehend,” plays as the positive contrast here. It

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<sup>19</sup> However, when Paul says the days are evil, it more likely refers to moral bankruptcy than social evil, which is the outset of moral failures instead, cf., A. S. Wood, *Ephesians* (EBC Vol 11; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 71; also, in A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC Vol 42; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 342.

<sup>20</sup> The particle, “*ἐξαγοραζόμενοι*,” is language of the marketplace, referring to buying for one’s own possession or even marketing something for one’s own profit. In fact, this exhortation says that the people of God must make every effort, every single hour of a day, to glorying God.

contrasts the negative imperative, “not to become foolish,” μή γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου (v. 17). Therefore, the contrasting parallel is not only between the two entities like in the first contrast but between the two imperatives “to comprehend” and “not to become.”<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, the positive imperative “to comprehend” exhorts knowing God’s goodwill for one’s life, and the negative imperative, “to not become,” forbids a foolish lifestyle that refers more to meaningless, purposeless, aimless living.<sup>22</sup> For not to know God’s will nor fulfill his purpose in one’s daily life is truly to live an aimless and meaningless life. However, the one still remaining step on the ladder of thought is the most practical answer for living a life wisely and meaningfully even though it is in such an evil age.

The third comparison is a contrasted parallel between two stages of life that is being excessive by drinking wine vs. being worshipful by the Spirit. This striking comparison is the climax to all the comparative contrasts of 5:15-20. It gives the final concluding statement to the two previous quests. Again, in this final comparative parallel, the primary interest of contrast is not made between the two entities (the instrumental wine and the instrumental influence or agency of the Spirit, οἶνον...ἐν πνεύματι), that many scholars and commentators have mistaken.<sup>23</sup> The contrastive value that Paul would like to point out is certain behaviors or actions controlled by other forces than oneself. Namely, the excessive harmful behaviors (and even with a disastrous outcome) caused by drunkenness, μεθύσκεσθε (v. 18a), as the negative contrast is on the one hand. And on the other hand, the jubilant nature (customarily overflowing with joy and happiness) by the Spirit, πληροῦσθε, is the positive contrast (vs. 18b-20).<sup>24</sup> However, the prepositional divine dative *en pneumatī* (ἐν πνεύματι) indicates a profound

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<sup>21</sup> See Thang San Mung, “Walk not as Fool but as Wise: An Exegetical Study of Ephesians 5:15-20,” Torch Trinity University, Seoul, Korea, 2005: 8.

<sup>22</sup> Also, in Best, 506; Hoehner, 695.

<sup>23</sup> This is the unparalleled grammatical form of the two entities. For instance, the first entity, the dative, οἶνον, has no supportive preposition while the second entity, the divine dative, ἐν πνεύματι, has such in prefix. Further, the next reason to assume as such is the grammatical nature of the preceding genitive πληροῦσθε that does not need any prepositional suffix in all biblical occurrences as Hoehner has pointed out, cf., Hoener, 703-4. In fact, the preposition ἐν must be undoubtedly the head of divine dative “πνεύματι,” that was likely a parenthetical note.

<sup>24</sup> Cf., Best, 506-507. While agreeing with Best in this regard, however, in favor of the extended clauses of the contrast, he needs to extend his use of the word “conditions” here or even change to a more specific word to clearly point out as the natural outcome or product of the two exhilarative contrasts, namely “wine-drunkenness” and “Spirit-controlled states” (i.e., joyful worship).

truth for this overflowing joyous life. Indeed, this overflowing life can only be attained and can be maintained (and can become one's customary lifestyle) by staying under the Holy Spirit's total control (or influence).

Therefore, to live wisely is to know and fulfill God's very purpose in our daily lives. In other words, it is to make the best even out of the worst at every single moment of life. Further, this kind of lifestyle only can give us perfect happiness and complete satisfaction in life. Therefore, it is a life overflowing indeed. Further, this life overflowing with joy and happiness cannot be maintained only by the control of self but by remaining daily in the divine presence of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the joyous, jubilant, and even festive nature of Spirit-led Pentecostal worship should not be projected just for a half-and-hour Sunday morning. One's daily life should always be in perspective instead. Therefore, this half-and-hour jubilation should be taken from the church to our homes, to our workplaces, and even to our schools. Yes, worship in Spirit is indeed a lifestyle. Without this life of worship, all other efforts we make in life will turn out to be an unwise choice of life, meaningless gain, and even a foolish effort like that of a drunkard.

### **Life of Worship: Exegetical Clues from Ephesians 5:15-20**

What we call Spirit-led-worship (or Spirit-inspired-worship) is not meant only for Sunday, but it is also for the other days, from Monday to Sunday. To this point, it is good to explore how such Spirit-led worship and life should look, as evidenced in the last sentence of Ephesians 5:15-20. In its original text, this passage is a single literary unit and a combination of two sentences. Verses 15-16 are the first, and verses 17-20 are the second. Both sentences have some significant participles—one in the first sentence and three in the second. The first participle was already treated briefly.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the later three participles will only be discussed here in this section. In brief, the three participles of the second sentence are speaking in the sense of singing for each other (λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς ψαλμοῖς), singing and making merry in the sense of worshipping the Lord (ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες), and thanksgiving to the Father in the sense of confessing Jesus Christ (εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ).

As stated, these three adverbial participles are in a single sentence, which means they together bear a single concept by revolving around a single overflowing verb, πληροῦσθε (v. 18). In other words, those participles stand as subordinates to the main verb and support it instead. Besides, as made

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<sup>25</sup> See footnote #20 of this paper.

little discussion above,<sup>26</sup> this overflowing verb should primarily be treated as independent from its unusual succeeding preposition “in” (or with or by, ἐν). The preposition, ἐν, precedes the divine dative, πνεύματι. Therefore, the overflowing verb must be defined in light of its three participial subordinate clauses. So then, the next question comes: What is the content to be full of (or even overflowing with) if one treats the verb πληροῦσθε separately from the succeeding prepositional divine dative, ἐν πνεύματι?

In another sense, the prepositional divine dative, ἐν πνεύματι, is a parenthesis if to say in the modern writing system. It would then be clear that those participles stand here in direct support to the main verb πληροῦσθε. Therefore, the content “to be full of” is none other than what the subordinate participles are talking about consistently. They are “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”; secondly, “singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”; and thirdly, “always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father” (Ephesians 5:19 NASB). Apparently, these are in total contrast to the consequential excessive outcomes of the climactic negative parallel of verse.<sup>27</sup>

For an overview, the first participle is about being full of speaking praises (λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς ψαλμοῖς). The first subordinate participial clause is all about overflowing with words taken directly from canonical psalms, traditional hymns, and other additional songs at the Spirit's invoking in one's heart. In other words, it is all about the verbal expression of our joy and happiness to God both in public and private conversations.<sup>28</sup> It is the first content that Spirit-filled believers are supposed to be overflowing with.

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<sup>26</sup> The overflowing verb, πληροῦσθε, has no succeeding prepositional dative in all other biblical occurrences (Cf., Hoehner); therefore, there must be something else between this verb and the succeeding prepositional dative, or this prepositional phrase should be a parenthesis in modern terms, cf., footnote #23.

<sup>27</sup> This final contrastive statements between “being drunk with wine” and “being filled with by the Spirit” have some parallel accounts. For instance, both can be similarly understood in terms of control (cf., Liefeld, 137). When one is getting drunk, he or she is under the total control of such intoxicative power as it is when a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, he or she is under the total control of God's power (also see, Wood, 72; Hoehner, 704). However, each of both has its own differences also. In the case of being drunk, for example, intoxication with such drink ends up in excessive and even destructive outcomes, but the infilling with the Holy Spirit leads Christians to a peaceful and joyful lifestyle, which one would call “wise” (cf., Hodge, 302-3).

<sup>28</sup> λαλοῦντες refers to a verbal expression of what is in someone's heart and mind (consult with lexicons such as Danker). More than this, as the synonymous pronoun, ἑαυτοῖς, indicates, this verbal confession of our joy and thankfulness to

The second participle is all about being full of a joyful song in the heart (ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ). This second participle is a couplet of two jubilant words, “singing and making merry.” However, even this festive celebration type should be single-focused toward the Lord. This second participial clause seems to be more concerned about our attitude.<sup>29</sup> It is indeed the next content with which Spirit-filled believers are expected to be full of always.

The third participle is about being full of thanksgiving. (εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων), which is all about thanksgiving to God. Structurally, it is the climax of the whole concept of the first two participial clauses. This thanksgiving mainly concerns one's actions that reflect how much someone is genuinely thankful to God for his Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, this worshipful lifestyle—full of singing, making merry in one's heart, and thanking God—is the Spirit-inspired-life that one can maintain in every situation of ups and downs by continually staying in his presence. It is what Paul wants to bring out to the attention of his audience by invoking the Holy Spirit.

In general, a life overflowing with joy and happiness, which expresses itself in praising God by the Spirit's inspiration, is in total contrastive parallel to the excessive and destructive uncontrollable behavior caused by over-drinking wine. Therefore, to choose a life that stays under the influence of the Holy Spirit for believers is to overflow with joy and happiness continually. Despite whatever life brings, they will be happy and thank the Lord always, so we say that worship and praise is not just a one-and-a-half hour service done on Sunday morning. It is a lifestyle—even a life that is always full of heavenly joy and happiness in the Lord. A worshipful life indeed!

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God should be done in public “to each other.” In fact, it means even a praising conversation among believers.

<sup>29</sup> This couplet of participles should interpret each other. The participle, ᾄδοντες, itself is about singing verbally, ψάλλοντες is concerned more about attitude.

However, since we have the first participle λαλοῦντες, that is more about verbal expression, it is reasonable that the author of the epistle does not need to repeat it here. In fact, it is safe to read this couplet more as attitudinal.

<sup>30</sup> Being a combination of two Greek words εὐ and χαρις, “εὐχαριστοῦντες” refers to a kind of jubilant praise or even a joyous celebration in thankfulness to God. Besides, the frequency adverb πάντοτε and prepositional phrase ὑπὲρ πάντων, a reference to “every circumstance,” indicate this act as a continual and even one's way of life (cf., Hoehner, 714).

## Conclusion

Worship is the very creation call in the first place. No other greater job or commission was given in the Garden except to trust God and obey Him—that means to worship and adore Him above everything. However, to worship in the Garden, the first man and woman did not need any chapel nor musical band. All that they did in their Garden home to worship God was trusting Him and listening to what He said. It is all that they called worship. Yes, worship since the beginning is not just an hour-and-half ceremony but a lifelong commitment and a daily lifestyle.

If this is the case, how can we build this worshipful life again for this hopeless generation, living and surviving in a broken society of this fallen world? There is no other way except to receive Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord. Then, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit (and remain in that spiritual infilling continually) as it is the promise of God in Jesus' name. One can attain and maintain this original design of a worshipful life only by the Holy Spirit, who is always at work in the name of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, for the Ephesians, a single encounter with the Spirit of Pentecost once by Paul's laying hands in the past was not enough for a lifelong run (Acts 19:1ff). They needed to stay in that spiritual climate continually. This worshipful life will be a natural outflow from the bottom of their hearts, not just a single Sunday morning, but the whole day, the whole following week, and even their entire life. As long as they stay there in the presence of God, wrought through by the Spirit of Pentecost, they will be strong enough to glorify God in all circumstances of life.

Worship is indeed more than a Sunday thing, more than a media advancement and musical expertise, but an everyday thing instead. Rather, it is a lifestyle full of singing praises, conversing with a joyful heart, and thanksgiving to the Father. It is what God wills for his children to maintain daily, no matter what the day brings. Accordingly, some discussion questions for personal reflection on such an important biblical theme and its modern practice are provided below.

1. How do you personally define worship? Do you use the words “worship and praise” in your church in general? What do you need to do in your church or community to develop a view that sees worship as a lifestyle?
2. If worship is a lifestyle, what is the meaning that we still gather together at church for worship once a week every Sunday morning at its best? How much can our two-hour-long Sunday morning service impact our daily lives or lifestyle? Are the two related to each other as such, or are they different life subjects instead?

3. For what purposes do you use contemporary music during your worship service? See one from the list, or feel free to add more if needed: to entertain youth; show off musical talents; wake up those sleepy old guys in the pew; adapt oneself to contemporary culture, and any other?
4. Find some ways that, by using contemporary music in your worship services, you can make the gathering meaningful for one's spiritual nourishment, full of power, inspirational, joyful, and inspiring for the whole week.

Thang San Mung ([Thangmung@oru.edu](mailto:Thangmung@oru.edu)) Thang San Mung is a Pentecostal pastor and evangelist, who founded the Tyrannus Gospel Ministry. As a teacher, he developed the Master of Arts in Pentecostal Studies program of Bethel Bible College, Myanmar. He is currently doing his PhD (Theology) at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK.



## Review

Daniela Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019. Pp. 272. \$49.99, paperback.

As Volf acknowledges in his foreword, Pentecostal spirituality has often been characterized as “otherworldly” and withdrawn on the one hand or overly worldly and politically aggressive on the other. Augustine, however, envisions a Pentecostalism concerned with the common good of creation, framing her project “as a theological ethic of the common good through distinctly pneumatological lenses.” A thoroughly interdisciplinary work, Augustine engages environmental studies, sociology, and political philosophy as part of her conversation.

Augustine’s work is divided into four chapters, the first entitled “From the Common Image to the Common Good.” In a corrective to some segments of Pentecostalism, she argues, “It is impossible to think about redemption as a socially disembodied personal experience . . . (but) the process of bringing all social relationships that comprise human identity within the presence of God.” Her description of the “Church as the Icon of the Trinity,” drawing on Eastern Orthodox iconography, depicts what this ought to look like. In Augustine’s view, that the church serves as an icon does not just mean that the church is a mirror of the divine image but also a community where God himself abides. The implications for how one treats the other are obvious; indeed, she makes the thought-provoking claim: “Human beings may recognize injustice when they see it yet remain completely blind to their contribution to injustice in the world.”

In chapter 2, Augustine explores several theories on the cause of violence, drawing on the political philosophies of Hobbes, Engels, Arendt, and others. She reminds her readers that the first violent act in Scripture—Cain’s murder of Abel—took place at an altar, a chilling example of how, at times, religion not only fails to guard against evil but presents an opportunity to justify it in God’s name. Yet, she also notes that “the militantly religious zeal of atheism” has not fared better; despite its harsh critiques of religion, the bloodshed in the name of secular ideologies demonstrates that they are not a remedy for religiously motivated violence. “The absence of God,” Augustine says, “relativizes the suffering or the extermination of the other until it becomes an acceptable part of human existence.” During the communist era in Eastern Europe, she notes, the

church stood as one of the few dissidents, testifying to the coming Kingdom of God through their love for one another.

Augustine's chapter 3 opens with a challenge to neoliberal economics, including the notion that the market is amoral. She argues that "the Eastern European experience has proven that neither socialism nor capitalism holds the answer to solving issues of economic justice and sustainability," given that neither is ultimately committed to the common good but individual interests. Thus, this chapter is framed as "a theological reflection on some potential building blocks toward a new Spirit-inspired political economy." Augustine looks to the Eucharist as a means by which believers may have their desires reshaped amid the prevailing consumerism of Western culture. The sacrament "teaches us to take responsibility for the hunger and poverty of others . . . starting with the most vulnerable in the community (the orphans and the widows, the children and the elderly, the disabled, the economic migrants) until the needs of all are met." This is an especially noteworthy discussion in her book as it frames an integral practice of local church life—the celebration of the Lord's Supper—in terms that might reshape how Christians understand its relationship with the culture. Though politically conservative readers might be wary of implied socialism here, given that Augustine begins her chapter with a strong critique of capitalism and socialism, particularly in reference to Eastern Europe, this is almost certainly not the intention. And, for the Christian, her claim that "economics is a spiritual matter and an external expression of the individual and communal inner life" is a much more theologically robust understanding than casting it as a morally neutral discipline.

Chapter 4 considers the eschatological goal of the Spirit's "World-Mending." In the context of a violent world, the Hebrew prophets envisioned an eternal shalom under God's rule with humanity "peacefully sharing the world in upholding the common good." Augustine admits this vision is often met "with the challenge of encountering crimes and atrocities that the broader society perceives as transcending the very limits of forgiveness," which leads her to address "forgiving the unforgivable." One must remember, Augustine argues, that in forgiving those who crucified him, the Son of God did just that. Repentance and forgiveness are works of the Spirit, the "perfector" of the "new creation." Addressing passages that seemingly link one's salvation with showing forgiveness, she grants such apparent "forced forgiveness" texts that could be taken advantage of to maintain injustice. Yet, she argues, they are "not driven by a thirst for vengeance and retributive justice at the great day of judgment but first and foremost by a longing for the healing of the cosmos." Their purpose is not to force forgiveness nor perpetuate injustice but to enlist the believer in the Spirit's healing of creation.

Augustine concludes with an epilogue documenting instances of “Christian peacebuilding” by Pentecostals in Eastern Slavonia, the site of horrific conflict in the 90s following the breakup of Yugoslavia. Pentecostals, unlike the Orthodox, Catholics, or Muslims, were frequently looked upon—if not with favor—at least not as enemies of any one demographic. Their pastors performed funerals for those of other faith traditions and even set up volunteer organizations to relieve the suffering of war victims. Augustine summarizes her accounts of such individuals by asserting that “the healing of the entire cosmos starts from within hallowed, Spirit-saturated humanity.” Though one might be tempted to skip an epilogue, in this case, it is quite helpful to the reader. Augustine’s book is thoroughly academic and technical, to be sure. However, including stories like these illustrate how Augustine’s vision might play out in the church’s life.

Augustine’s volume draws deeply and extensively from the Eastern Orthodox tradition, integrating discussions of human free will, iconography, and theosis. Notably, there is relatively little discussion of Pentecostal theologians and their work compared to those of the Orthodox tradition and beyond. Perhaps this is due to a history of sustained reflection in the Orthodox tradition on matters Augustine raises, while there has been an unfortunate lack of Pentecostal reflection on them thus far. Beyond academia, it would serve as a useful resource for Pentecostal theological students and pastors, particularly those who resonate with the concerns she addresses, like the rank individualism of Western society, an attribute the church all too often mirrors. Such audiences, however, tend to be—at least in the West—relatively unfamiliar with the Eastern Orthodox theology from which Augustine draws heavily. Therefore, classical Pentecostal readers might do well to familiarize themselves with the Orthodox concepts she employs in order to more fully appreciate her arguments. Perhaps Augustine’s work, on this front, might serve as a model for Pentecostal scholars to continue engaging more established theological traditions with the aim of enriching their own movement, a relative newcomer to the broader Christian faith. Finally, her vision of the church’s participation in the Spirit’s healing of the world may well lead to a more culturally aware, socially compassionate form of Pentecostalism on a global scale.

Geoffrey Butler ([geoffrey.butler@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:geoffrey.butler@mail.utoronto.ca))  
Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Sang Yun Lee, *A Theology of Hope: contextual perspectives in Korean Pentecostalism*. Baguio, Philippines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 2018. xiv + 271 pp.

Sang Yun Lee teaches at Hansei University in Korea, and this book is a published version of the Ph.D. dissertation he wrote for the University of Birmingham, UK. Lee's book offers unique insight into the social and cultural context in which Pastor David Yonggi Cho's teaching becomes a movement within Korea. Lee examines the Threefold Blessings taught by Pastor David Yonggi Cho: salvation, financial prosperity, and healing as a contextual hope in the Korean Pentecostal context. Lee argues that since this emerged in the middle of the twentieth century, it needs to be re-examined, recontextualized, and reapplied to be relevant to Korean Pentecostals in their contemporary context.

Lee first introduces the Threefold Blessings in the Korean context (Part one - Chapter one and two). He dedicates the next seven chapters as part two, the history of Korean Pentecostalism. After the Korean War, most Koreans suffered severe poverty and sickness, and Lee states that the message of Threefold Blessing became an effective contextualizational means of bringing Pentecostalism into Korea. As a result, Pentecostalism grew rapidly in Korea, both numerically and spiritually (69). These chapters provide some of the most beneficial discussions on the Threefold Blessings of the book. Lee argues that it is used to understand its contributions to church growth rather than as a contextual hope as Moltmann's theology of hope was also developed in Germany after the Second World War (109). Historically, Korea was one of the strongest Buddhist and Confucian countries in Asia. Lee states that due to Koreans disillusionment with Buddhism and Confucianism, "Christianity and Pentecostalism grew remarkably as a source of hope in desperate and confusing situations (155)." Finally, in part six, Lee concludes that the Threefold Blessing must continue to contextualize in order to survive in Korea's evolving society, politics, and economics (187).

*A Theology of Hope* wrestles with the issue of the contextual perspectives in Korean Pentecostalism in a way that successfully shifts the framing of the discussion from Western-centric to Korean theological dynamics, considering both the negative and the positive aspects of Threefold Blessing theology. Readers who are looking for a set of principles for the Threefold Blessing will not find easy answers in this book. Readers who will benefit from *A Theology of Hope* include those who want to better understand Korean Pentecostalism, those who are interested in contextual perspectives, and those who want to think about *A Theology of Hope* through an Eastern lens rather than exclusively on Western one.

One of the weaknesses of this book is that the data presented in this book represent a specific case study of Yonggi Cho and Yoido Full Gospel Church that does not correspond to all other ministries in Korea. Korean Pentecostalism is an extremely diverse enterprise for some are based on national denominations, while others prioritize the local church on self-governing and self-theologizing.

Overall, this book deserves serious and widespread attention, especially from the Western theological community, as it is a Korean theology of the Threefold Blessing, not only from the church growth perspective but as a theology of hope.

Robert S. Oh (oikosbishop@mac.com)

Visiting Scholar at Cambodia Presbyterian Theological Institute, Cambodia

Victor John with Dave Coles, *Bhojpuri Breakthrough: A Movement That Keeps Multiplying* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2019), pp. xviii+208. ISBN: 987-939124-20-3.

Victor John of North India is the leader of the Bhojpuri church planting movement. Beginning as a local pastor, his journey quest for a Bhojpuri breakthrough took him through a process of formation, including frustrations, a leave of absence (to Sweden), a return to India, a meeting with David Watson (an American Baptist missionary, later his ministry partner), and a training program he attended in Singapore (chs. 1-2). Dave Coles, an “encourager and resource” with Beyond, a North American mission organization, served as the writer of the book, which is based on the testimonies of the Bhojpuri movement team leaders, including John, its leader. He consciously stayed as a scribe, offering only editorial touches (xv-xviii).

The book is about the “breakthrough” in evangelism and church planting among the Bhojpuri people, numbering about 100 million. Known as the fundamentalist Hinduism and the stronghold of Buddhism (3-4), this people group had been known as one of the most gospel-resistant peoples. Twenty years ago, there were only 10,000 believers or 0.0001 percent. Now, primarily thanks to the Bhojpuri Church Planting Movement, there are about 12 million Christians, about 6 percent of the Bhojpuri people (xiii, 11), found in North India. This book has collected the history of the Bhojpuri breakthrough, the role of Victor John and his fellow leaders, many real-life testimonies, principles of multiplication strategy, and self-analysis of the movement. Thus, the book is a primary source for the critical research of this impressive movement.

The book is presented in thirteen chapters with a foreword and an introduction. The latter defines the role of the writer/editor, Dave Coles, and the book's structure. Chapter 1 introduces the general information of the Bhojpuri people found in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states of North India and John's quest for the solution toward the Bhojpuri breakthrough. Chapter 2, "Breakthrough Beginnings," describes the implementation of the plan with an ecumenical Bhojpuri consultation and training, followed by four testimonies. The next eight chapters feature various contexts in which the Bhojpuri movement took place. Chapter 3 is one of the most intriguing reports: Breakthrough in Caste. After a thoughtful discussion on the significance of the caste system, the chapter highlights the importance of language and divine healing (in the detailed testimony). Chapter 4 introduces the Community Learning Centers as the key strategy in reaching out to communities. The chapter includes the vision, structure, and operation of this grassroots evangelistic and discipleship program. Chapter 5 presents various approaches to community transformation. Longer than other chapters, the discussion exemplifies the ministry's holistic approach from literacy, education, and skills training among girls and women, and ministry to the physically challenged, to signs and wonders, and church planting. With ample testimonies, the chapter stresses local initiatives. Chapter 6 places the movement and Christian communities in the socio-religious context of persecution. As a religious minority in this Hindu stronghold, persecution is part of their daily lives. The practical response is "to just lay low and hold on until the persecution passes" (70). Considering that persecution is part of the Christian calling, the authors admonish one to expect the benefits from it. The chapter includes testimonies of victory and powerful witnessing, including the multiplication of believers and worshipping communities. Chapter 7 deals with ministry among railway children, a unique Indian challenge. They are "hundreds of thousands of children who have been kicked out of their homes, abandoned, and even thrown off trains by their families" from as young as three years old (85). This ministry resulted in working with local governments and police to rescue and house children and ultimately help them find their families. The "life at a railway station" discussion is eye-opening to the painful reality to outsiders like me. This ministry led to the establishment of children's homes and another ministry among the slums. As usual, there are encouraging testimonies. Chapter 8 records another leap in the breakthrough: reaching the large urban areas. Using Delhi as the movement's urban lab, the movement tried and modified their experiences gained through the ministry among the Bhojpuri. The chapter demonstrates the high level of adaptability of the movement in different contexts. A diagram (107) shows its church planting movement based on relationships, discipleship, and mentoring process. Its five guiding principles (or 5 Cs) in

their urban ministry are useful: context, character, connections, creativity, and custodianship (116-19). Chapter 9 continues the expansion of the movement beyond the Bhojpuri region to reach “different language groups, different geographic areas, multiple caste groups, and different religions,” and the spread now includes international outreaches (145). Chapter 10 describes another area of spread: among Muslims in a lawless area near Nepal. The movement’s typical approach proved to be effective: relationship building, especially with the community (thus, Muslim) leaders, and holistic service to the community. And the ultimate outcome was evangelism and church planting. The next three chapters deal with the program’s inner workings: leadership development (chapter 11), principles guiding the movement (chapter 12), and responses to the forty-one frequently asked questions about the movement (chapter 13).

The book presents a series of exceptional “breakthroughs,” beginning among the Bhojpuri people, gradually spreading geographically and strategically. This case serves as a brilliant example of the new paradigm of Christian mission by and in the Global South. The running theme throughout the book (and thus in the movement) is the multiplication of disciples, worshipping communities (churches), leaders, and teachings (e.g., 36). The movement’s approach is holistic, addressing the pressing social issues of the given community. The ultimate goal is the establishment of believing and worshipping communities, often in homes. Healing stands out in the movement as a key to new areas for evangelism and church planting (e.g., 49-51). The movement is also a learning community, evidenced by the Community Learning Centers as its centerpiece (e.g., ch. 4) and also the principles which the movement has established (especially ch. 12). With its agility and flexibility, the movement adapts to a new social context to adjust to its established methodology. The book convinces that the movement’s approach is scalable and replicable within Northern India beyond the Bhojpuri regions. The next test will be its adaptability across the national boundaries, which I tend to think positively.

The book may have been written primarily to serve the internal needs, for example, to provide historical, theological, and practical information of the movement to newly recruited leaders. At the same time, the book is also intended to let the world know what the Holy Spirit is doing through his servants in a challenging socio-religious context. This book, thus, invites outsiders to learn from the movement, critically investigate its underlying theology, methodology, and impact. The book could add strengthening to the background/demographic information for outside readers, but it also provides a wealth of valuable information for the world to know and learn.

Julie C. Ma (jma@oru.edu)  
Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA



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