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TOWARDS A PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY FOR THE MAJORITY WORLD[1]

Allan Anderson

Pentecostals have been around for only a hundred years,[2] but today are main role players in world missions, representing perhaps a quarter of the world's Christians and perhaps three quarters of them are in the Majority World.[3] According to Barrett and Johnson's statistics, there were 1,227 million Christians in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania in 2004, 62% of the world's Christians, while those of the two northern continents (including Russia) constituted only 38%, dramatic evidence of how rapidly the western share of world Christianity has decreased in the twentieth century. If present trends continue, by 2025 69% of the world's Christians will live in the South, with only 31% in the North.[4] But it is not only in terms of numbers that there have been fundamental changes. Christianity is growing most often in Pentecostal and Charismatic forms, and many of these are independent of western "mainline" Protestant and "classical Pentecostal" denominations and

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[1] This is a considerably modified version of "Structures and Patterns in Pentecostal Mission," a paper published in *Missionalia* 32:2 (August 2004), pp. 233-49. See also Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 206-17.

[2] The term "Pentecostals" in this paper includes a wide variety of movements where the emphasis is on receiving the Spirit and practicing spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healing and speaking in tongues. The term includes Pentecostal denominations, a wide range of independent churches (the majority in Barrett's statistics), and Charismatics in mainline denominations.

[3] The term "Majority World" is the term used throughout the *New Internationalist* magazine, and is used here to refer to Asia and the Pacific, Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

[4] David B. Barrett & Todd M. Johnson 2004, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28:1 (January 2004), pp. 24-5 (25).

missions. Pentecostal missiologists need to acknowledge and celebrate the tremendous diversity in Pentecostalism. The "southward swing of the Christian center of gravity" is possibly more evident in Pentecostalism than in other forms of Christianity.[5] Most of the dramatic church growth in the twentieth century has taken place in Pentecostal and independent Pentecostal-like churches. Classical Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God, the world's biggest Pentecostal denomination, have probably only some 8% of their world associate membership in North America, with at least 80% in the Majority World. One estimate put the total number of adherents of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship in 1997 at some thirty million, of which only about 2.5 million were in North America.[6] Larry Pate estimated in 1991 that the Majority World mission movement was growing at five times the rate of western missions.[7] Half the world's Christians today live in developing, poor countries. The forms of Christianity there are very different from western "classical Pentecostal" stereotypes. They have been profoundly affected by several factors, including the desire to have a more contextual and culturally relevant form of Christianity, the rise of nationalism, a reaction to what are perceived as "colonial" forms of Christianity, and the burgeoning Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal.

This paper traces six features of the structures and patterns of Pentecostal mission. However, no discernible formal organization or structures appeared in Pentecostal missions until comparatively recently, and Pentecostal missions have been known for their "creative chaos."[8]

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[5] Andrew F. Walls, "Of Ivory Towers and Ashrams: Some Reflections on Theological Scholarship in Africa," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 3:1 (June 2000), pp. 1-5 (1).

[6] Everett A. Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit: J Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide 1960-1990* (Carlisle: Regnum, 1997), pp. 3, 107, 183.

[7] Larry D. Pate, "Pentecostal Missions from the Two-Thirds World," in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, eds. M. A. Dempster, B. D. Klaus, and D. Petersen (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 242-58 (245).

[8] D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 213-22.

1. Pneumatocentric Mission

Pentecostals place primary emphasis on being "sent by the Spirit" and depend more on what is described as the Spirit's leading than on formal structures. People called "missionaries" are doing that job because the Spirit directed them to do it, often through some spiritual revelation like a prophecy, a dream or a vision, and even through an audible voice perceived to be that of God. In comparison to the *Missio Dei* of older Catholic and Protestant missions and the "obedience to the Great Commission" of Evangelical Christocentric missions, Pentecostal mission is grounded first and foremost in the conviction that the Holy Spirit is the motivating power behind all this activity. Back in 1908, American Pentecostal leader Roswell Flower wrote, "When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, the missionary spirit comes in with it; they are inseparable.… Carrying the gospel to hungry souls in this and other lands is but a natural result."[9] Pentecostal missionaries got on with the job in a hurry, believing that the time was short and the second coming of Christ was near. Reflection about the task was not as important as action in evangelism. Their mission theology was that of an "action-oriented missions movement,"[10] and Pentecostals have only recently begun to formulate a distinctive Pentecostal missiology.

Paul Pomerville's book *The Third Force in Missions* uses the Lukan account in Acts for a Pentecostal mission theology.[11] He states that obedience to the Great Commission (the emphasis of most Evangelicals) is not the main motivation for mission for Pentecostals. The Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost is a missionary Spirit, the church full of the Spirit is a missionary community, and the church's witness is "the release of an inward dynamic." But it was not only a collective experience of the Spirit; the individual experience that each Christian had with the Holy Spirit was also "the key to the expansion of the early church."[12] The

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[9] Quoted by Gary B. McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies for Global Mission: A Historical Assessment," in Dempster, Klaus & Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, pp. pp. 203-24 (206).

[10] M. A. Dempster, B. D. Klaus, & D. Petersen, "Section IV: Introduction", in Dempster, Klaus & Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, pp. 201-2 (201).

[11] Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985).

[12] Paul A. Pomerville, *Introduction to Missions: An Independent-study Textbook* (Irving, TX: ICI University Press, 1987), pp. 95-97.

centrality of the Spirit in mission has been a consistent theme in Pentecostal studies.[13] The Pentecostal movement from its commencement was a missionary movement, made possible by the Spirit's empowerment. Australian Pentecostal John Penney believes that the experience of the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 becomes a "normative paradigm for every Christian to preach the gospel," and that "Luke's primary and pervasive interest is the work of the Holy Spirit in initiating, empowering and directing the church in its eschatological worldwide mission."[14] Pomerville considers that the main causes for the growth of Pentecostal churches identified by church growth specialists can all be explained by reference to the experience of Spirit baptism. The Spirit is "the superintendent and administrator of missions," and we live in the age of the Spirit, "a time of worldwide outpouring of the Spirit," evidenced by the emergence of the Pentecostal movements.[15] Donald McGavran, foremost expositor of the church growth movement, wrote of the Pentecostal emphasis on "utter yieldedness to the Holy Spirit" and that God is "instantly available and powerful." He also listed other factors in the growth of Pentecostal movements: the Holy Spirit working powerfully through ordinary Christians; the "bridges of God" or the social connections with which the gospel spreads from one ordinary person to another; the message of deliverance from evil powers and demons; and the flexibility and adaptability of Pentecostals.[16] Peter Wagner, McGavran's successor at Fuller, did not miss this dimension: "The basic dynamic behind Pentecostal growth in Latin America is the power in the Holy Spirit."[17] McClung observes that whatever "outside observers have marked as good methodology" in the practices of

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[13] See for example, Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 122.

[14] Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, pp. 11, 15.

[15] Pomerville, *Introduction to Missions*, pp. 116-19.

[16] Donald A. McGavran, "What Makes Pentecostal Churches Grow?" in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. L. Grant McClung, Jr. (South Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1986), pp. 121-23 (122).

[17] Peter Wagner, *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming* (Carol Stream: Creation House, 1973), p. 29.

Pentecostals in their worldwide expansion, it is their primary "insistence upon the outpouring of the Holy Spirit personally into the life of each believer" that is the fundamental cause for their growth.[18]

Although Pentecostal missions may be described correctly as "pneumatocentric" in emphasis, this must not be construed as an overemphasis. Most Pentecostals throughout the world have a decidedly Christocentric emphasis in their proclamation and witness. The Spirit bears witness to the presence of Christ in the life of the missionary, and the message proclaimed by the power of the Spirit is of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ who sends gifts of ministry to humanity.

2. Dynamic Mission Praxis

Pentecostals believe that the coming of the Spirit brings an ability to do "signs and wonders" in the name of Jesus Christ to accompany and authenticate the gospel message. The role of "signs and wonders," particularly that of healing and miracles, is prominent in Pentecostal mission praxis. Pentecostals see the role of healing as good news for the poor and afflicted. Early twentieth-century Pentecostal newsletters and periodicals abounded with "thousands of testimonies to physical healings, exorcisms and deliverances."[19] Grant McClung points out that divine healing is an "evangelistic door-opener" for Pentecostals. He states that "signs and wonders" are the "evangelistic means whereby the message of the kingdom is actualized in person-centered deliverance."[20] Gary McGee takes up the issue of "signs and wonders" from an historical perspective. This "power from on high" he calls the "radical strategy in missions," which "new paradigm" has impacted Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in their mission endeavors. According to him, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was an expectation that signs and wonders would accompany an outpouring of the Spirit.[21] Early

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[18] L. Grant McClung, "Truth on Fire: Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology," in McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 47-54 (49).

[19] McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies," p. 206.

[20] L. Grant McClung, "Spontaneous Strategy of the Spirit: Pentecostal Missionary Practices," in McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 71-81 (74).

[21] Gary B. McGee, "Power from on High: A Historical Perspective on the Radical Strategy in Missions," in *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William*

Pentecostal missionaries like John G. Lake in South Africa and especially healing evangelists like William Branham, Oral Roberts and more recently, Reinhard Bonnke expected miracles to accompany their evangelism and "prioritized seeking for spectacular displays of celestial power—signs and wonders, healing, and deliverance from sinful habits and satanic bondage."[22] Penney states that "signs and wonders in Acts perform the dual function of authenticating the word and of leading to faith in the word."[23] The signs and wonders promoted by independent evangelists have led to the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches in many parts of the world, although have seldom been without controversy.[24] Pentecostal missiologists need to critically evaluate those "evangelistic ministries" that lead to the self-aggrandizement and financial gain of the preacher, often at the expense of those who have very little at all to give.

Pentecostals emphasize that these signs and wonders should accompany the preaching of the word in evangelism, and divine healing in particular is an indispensable part of their evangelistic methodology.[25] Indeed, in many cultures of the world, healing has been a major attraction for Pentecostalism. In these cultures, the religious specialist or "person of God" has power to heal the sick and ward off evil spirits and sorcery. This holistic function, which does not separate "physical" from "spiritual," is restored in Pentecostalism, and people see it as a "powerful" religion to meet human needs. For some Pentecostals, faith in God's power to heal directly through prayer results in a rejection of other methods of healing.

The numerous healings reported by Pentecostal missionaries confirmed that God's word was true, his power was evidently on their missionary efforts, and the result was that many were persuaded to become Christians. This emphasis on healing is so much part of Pentecostal evangelism, especially in the Majority World, that large public campaigns and tent meetings preceded by great publicity are frequently used in order to reach as many "unevangelized" people as

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W. Menzies, eds. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 317-36 (317, 324).

[22] McGee, "Power from on High," p. 329.

[23] Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, p. 66.

[24] McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies," p. 215.

[25] Willem A. Saayman, "Some Reflections on the Development of the Pentecostal Mission Model in South Africa," *Missionalia* 21:1 (1993), pp. 40-56 (46).

possible. McGee notes that this "confident belief that God had at last poured out his Spirit with miraculous power to empower Christians to bring closure to the Great Commission…has forced the larger church world to reassess the work of the Holy Spirit in mission."[26] Wagner believes that "probably the greatest contribution that Pentecostalism has made to Christianity in general is restoring the miracle power of the New Testament," for the purpose of drawing unbelievers to Christ.[27]

The central role given to healing is probably no longer a prominent feature of western Pentecostalism, but in the Majority World, where the problems of disease and evil affect the whole community and are not relegated to a private domain for individual pastoral care. These communities were, to a large extent, health-orientated communities and in their traditional religions, rituals for healing and protection are prominent. Indigenous Pentecostals responded to what they experienced as a void left by rationalistic western forms of Christianity that had unwittingly initiated what amounted to the destruction of ancient spiritual values. Pentecostals declared a message that reclaimed the biblical traditions of healing and protection from evil, they demonstrated the practical effects of these traditions, and by so doing became heralds of a Christianity that was really meaningful. Thus, Pentecostal movements went a long way towards meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people in the Majority World, offering solutions to life's problems and ways to cope in what was often a threatening and hostile world.[28] But sadly, this message of power has become in some instances an occasion for the exploitation of those who are at their weakest. Our theologies of power must also become theologies of the cross.

3. Evangelism: Central Missiological Thrust

Pentecostals are notorious for aggressive forms of evangelism, as from its beginning, Pentecostalism was characterized by an emphasis on

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[26] Gary McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology: Moving beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues," *Pneuma* 16:2 (1994), pp. 275-82 (278).

[27] C. Peter Wagner, "Characteristics of Pentecostal Church Growth," in McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 125-32 (129).

[28] Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Tshwane: University of South Africa Press, 2000), pp. 120-26.

evangelistic outreach. All Pentecostal mission strategy places evangelism as its highest priority. For Pentecostals, evangelism meant to go out and reach the "lost" for Christ in the power of the Spirit. The Azusa Street revival (1906-8) resulted in a category of ordinary but "called" people called "missionaries" fanning out to every corner of the globe within a remarkably short space of time. "Mission" was mainly understood as "foreign mission" (mostly from "white" to "other" peoples), and these missionaries were mostly untrained and inexperienced. Their only qualification was the baptism in the Spirit and a divine call, their motivation was to evangelize the world before the imminent coming of Christ, and so evangelism was more important than education or "civilization."[29]

McGee describes the first twenty years of Pentecostal missions as mostly "chaotic in operation."[30] Reports filtering back to the West to garnish newsletters would be full of optimistic and triumphalistic accounts of how many people were converted, healed and Spirit baptized, seldom mentioning any difficulties encountered or the inevitable cultural blunders made.[31] Like their Protestant and Catholic counterparts, early Pentecostal missionaries were mostly paternalistic, often creating dependency, and sometimes they were blatantly racist.[32] There were notable exceptions to the general chaos, however. As South African missiologist Willem Saayman has observed, most Pentecostal movements "came into being as missionary institutions" and their work was "not the result of some clearly thought out theological decision, and so policy and methods were formed mostly in the crucible of missionary praxis."[33] Pentecostal missionaries often have a sense of special calling and divine destiny, thrusting them out in the face of stiff opposition to steadfastly propagate their message.[34] But it must be acknowledged that,

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[29] Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), p. 34.

[30] McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies," p. 208.

[31] Allan Anderson, "Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at Home and Abroad in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Asian Mission* 2:2 (September 2000), pp. 193-210 (193).

[32] McGee, "Pentecostals and their Various Strategies," p. 211; see also Allan Anderson, "Christian Missionaries and Heathen Natives: The Cultural Ethics of Early Pentecostal Missionaries," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 22 (December 2002), pp. 4-29.

[33] Saayman, "Some Reflections," p. 42.

[34] McClung, "Truth on Fire," p. 52.

despite the seeming naiveté of many early missionaries, their evangelistic methods were flexible, pragmatic and astonishingly successful. Pentecostals claim that their rapid growth vindicates the apostle Paul's statement that God uses the weak and despised to confound the mighty.

Pentecostal evangelism was geared towards church planting, a central feature of all Pentecostal mission activity. Pentecostal churches were missionary by nature, and the dichotomy between "church" and "mission" that so long plagued other churches did not exist. This "central missiological thrust" was clearly a "strong point in Pentecostalism" and central to its existence.[35] Thriving Pentecostal "indigenous churches" were established in many parts of the world without the help of any foreign missionaries. These churches were founded in unprecedented and innovative mission initiatives, motivated by a compelling need to preach and even more significantly, to *experience* a new message of the power of the Spirit. The effectiveness of Pentecostal mission in the Majority World was based on this unique message, which was both the motivation for the thousands of grassroots emissaries and their source of attraction. All the widely differing Pentecostal movements have important common features: they proclaim and celebrate a salvation (or "healing") that encompasses all of life's experiences and afflictions, and offer an empowerment which provides a sense of dignity and a coping mechanism for life. Their mission was to share this all-embracing message with as many people as possible, and to accomplish this, indigenous Pentecostal evangelists went far and wide.

Unfortunately, the emphasis on self-propagation through evangelism and church growth through signs and wonders has sometimes resulted in Pentecostals being inward looking and seemingly unconcerned or oblivious to serious issues in the socio-political contexts, especially where there were oppressive governments.[36] David Bosch asked during South Africa's apartheid regime whether "the rush into signs and wonders is, in reality, a flight away from justice for the poor and the oppressed,"[37] and this question must be seriously faced by Pentecostal missiologists. José Míguez Bonino asks if the "global challenge of missions…can be ideologically diverted from a concern with the urgent challenges of situations at home," which could cause a failure in

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[35] Saayman, "Some Reflections," p. 51.

[36] Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost*, p. 108.

[37] David J. Bosch, "Church Growth Missiology," *Missionalia* 16:1 (1988), pp. 13-24 (23).

Christian testimony at home and a distortion of it abroad.[38] Pentecostals are beginning to recognize the social implications of the gospel and this failure in their mission strategy. The church not only has to evangelize the nations but also to love its neighbours. Steven Land points out that if we only do evangelism, we "deny the global care and providence of the Spirit" and fail to grasp "the personal, social and cosmic implications of Pentecost."[39] McGee observes that "many Pentecostals who survive in Third World poverty and oppression may long for a more forthright witness, one that presses for economic, social, and even political change."[40] It is also a characteristic of most forms of Pentecostal evangelism that the proclamation becomes a one-way affair, without sufficient consideration being given to the religious experience of the people to whom the "gospel" is proclaimed. The result is those innumerable opportunities to connect the Christian message with the world with which the "convert" is most familiar are lost, and the "Christianity" that results remains rather "foreign." There is an urgent need for Majority World missiologists to give special attention to the hitherto neglected area of the relationship between the Christian gospel and the ancient pre-Christian religions that continue to give meaning to people's understanding of their lives. Demonizing these religions (the legacy of many western Protestant missions) will not help the cause of evangelism and the healthy growth of the church today.

4. Contextualization of Leadership

Although missionaries from the West went out to the Majority World in independent and denominational Pentecostal missions, the overwhelming majority of Pentecostal missionaries have been national people "sent by the Spirit," often without formal training. This is a fundamental historical difference between Pentecostal and "mainline" missions. In Pentecostal practice, the Holy Spirit is given to every believer without preconditions. One of the results of this was, as Saayman observes, that "it ensured that a rigid dividing line between clergy and laity and between men and women did not develop early on in

[38] José Míguez Bonino, "Pentecostal Missions Is More Than What It Claims," *Pneuma* 16:2 (1997), pp. 283-88 (284).

[39] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 207.

[40] McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology," p. 280.

Pentecostal churches" and even more significantly, "there was little resistance to the ordination of indigenous pastors and evangelists to bear the brunt of the pastoral upbuilding of the congregations and their evangelistic outreach."[41] This was one of the reasons for the rapid transition from "foreign" to "indigenous" church that took place in many Pentecostal missions. Until recently, Pentecostals have not had a tradition of formal training for "ministers" as a class set apart. As Klaus and Triplett point out, the "general minimizing of the clergy/laity barrier" is because "the emphasis has been on the whole body as ministers supernaturally recruited and deployed. Since the Holy Spirit speaks to all believers equally, regardless of education, training or worldly rank, each member is capable of carrying out the task."[42] Leaders tended to come from the lower and uneducated strata of society, and were trained in apprentice-type training where their charismatic leadership abilities were encouraged.[43]

Pentecostal missions are quick to raise up national leaders who are financially self-supporting, and therefore the new churches are nationalized much quicker than older mission churches had been.[44] The pioneering work in this regard of the Assemblies of God missiologist Melvin Hodges and his widely influential book *The Indigenous Church* (1953) not only emphasized creating "indigenous churches," but it also stressed church planting—a fundamental principle of Pentecostal mission strategy.[45] Roland Allen's books on indigenous churches were already circulating in Pentecostal circles as early as 1921, when Alice Luce, an early Assemblies of God missionary, wrote a series of articles on Allen's teachings.[46] But the influence of Hodges on western Pentecostal (especially Assemblies of God) missions contributed towards the establishment of theological training institutes ("Bible schools") and in-

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[41] Saayman, "Some Reflections," p. 43.

[42] Byron D. Klaus and Loren O. Triplett, "National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions," in Dempster, Klaus & Petersen, *Called and Empowered*, pp. 225-41 (226).

[43] McClung, "Spontaneous Strategy," p. 76.

[44] McClung, "Spontaneous Strategy," p. 77.

[45] Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953); McClung, "Spontaneous Strategy," p. 78.

[46] McGee, "Pentecostals and Their Various Strategies," p. 212.

service training structures throughout the world,[47] and resulted in the much more rapid growth of indigenous Pentecostal churches. Through this commitment to indigenization, writes Bonino, Pentecostals have "tuned in with the language, concerns and hopes of the people." McGee states that Pentecostal "perspectives on the spiritual realm have proved unusually compatible with non-western worldviews—a spiritual vision that has contributed to the gradual Pentecostalization of Third World Christianity in life and worship."[48]

Contextualization has been a principle hotly debated and sometimes little understood, and it should not be confused with "indigenization." "Indigenization" assumes that the gospel message and Christian theology is the same in all cultures and contexts, and tends to relate the Christian message to traditional cultures. "Contextualization," on the other hand, assumes that every theology is influenced by its particular context, and must be so to be relevant. It relates the Christian message to all contexts and cultures, especially including those undergoing rapid social change. Hodges was a missionary in Central America, who articulated what had always been at the heart of Pentecostal growth in different cultural contexts. He believed that the aim of all mission activity was to build an "indigenous New Testament church" that followed "New Testament methods."[49] He emphasized that the church itself (and not the evangelist) is "God's agent for evangelism," and that the role of the cross-cultural missionary was to ensure that a church became self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.[50] He thus enthusiastically embraced and enlarged Anderson and Venn's "three self" policy of church planting, the main theme of this book, but he introduces an emphasis on "indigenization" that was lacking in the earlier works on the subject. The foundation for this to happen was the Holy Spirit, as he wrote:

> There is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church. The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another. To proceed on the assumption that the infant church in any land must always be cared for and provided for by the mother mission is an unconscious insult to the people that we

[47] Klaus & Triplett, "National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions," pp. 227-29.

[48] McGee, " Power from on High ," p. 334.

[49] Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, pp. 10-11.

[50] Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, pp. 12, 22.

> endeavour to serve, and is evidence of a lack of faith in God and in the power of the gospel.[51]

This has had a profound impact on the subsequent growth of the Assemblies of God, for whose future missionaries Hodges book has been required reading. For churches to become really contextual, however, attaining "three selfhood" does not guarantee that contextualization unless the "three selfs" are no longer patterned on foreign forms of being church, and unless those churches are grounded in the thought patterns and symbolism of popular culture. Pentecostalism's religious creativity and spontaneously contextual character were characteristics held as ideals by missionaries and missiologists for over a century. The "three self" formula for indigenization was automatically and effortlessly achieved by many Pentecostal churches long before this goal was realized by older ones. Hodges was able to tap into that fact. For him, the foundation for Pentecostal mission and the reason for its continued expansion is the "personal filling of the Holy Spirit" who gives gifts of ministry to untold thousands of "common people," creating active, vibrantly expanding and "indigenous churches" all over the world.

Unfortunately, Hodges was still a product of his own context, seeing "missions" as primarily from North America (or elsewhere in the western world) to the rest of the "foreign" world. This view of Pentecostal "missions" as from a western "home" to a Third World "abroad" is also reflected in American Pentecostal missiological writing up to the present. Pentecostal missiological reflection sometimes does not go further than an adapted reproduction of the old McGavran/Wagner church growth ideology that sometimes sees the mission enterprise in terms of procedures and strategies that succeed in the USA. Fortunately, there have been recent exceptions. Hodges, in spite of his remarkable insights, could not escape the concept of "missionaries" ("us") being expatriate, white people who had left "home" for "abroad," in contrast to the "nationals" ("them") who must (eventually) take over the "missionaries" work when the ideal of an "indigenous church" is reached. Hodges sees "mission" as "the outreach of the church in foreign lands."[52] In these and similar writings, the "objects" of mission, now the great majority of Pentecostals in the world, remain marginalized. They do not set the mission agenda; the rich and powerful West does that. It is high time for the Majority World church to produce theologians and missiologists who

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[51] Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, p. 14.

[52] Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, p. 9.

will challenge the presuppositions of the past and not be content to follow foreign mission ideologies and strategies blindly.

5. Mobilization in Mission

The remarkable growth of Pentecostal movements in the twentieth century cannot be isolated from the fact that these are often "people movements," a massive turning of different people to Christianity from other religions on an unprecedented scale, set in motion by a multitude of factors for which western missions were unprepared. Charismatic leaders tapped into this phenomenon, and became catalysts in what has been called in the African context a "primary movement of mass conversion."[53] Adrian Hastings reminds us that these movements did not proliferate because of the many secessions that occurred but because of mass conversions to Christianity through the tireless efforts of African missionaries, both men and women. Throughout the world, these early initiators were followed by a new generation of missionaries, learning from and to some extent patterning their mission on those who had gone before. The use of women with charismatic gifts was widespread throughout the Pentecostal movement. This resulted in a much higher proportion of women in Pentecostal ministry than in any other form of Christianity at the time. This accorded well with the prominence of women in many indigenous religious rituals, contrasting again with the prevailing practice of older churches which barred women from entering the ministry or even from taking any part in public worship. Pentecostals, especially those most influenced by American Evangelicalism, need to beware of limiting and quenching this most important ministry of women, who form the large majority of the church worldwide.

The growth of Pentecostalism was not the result of the efforts of a few charismatic leaders or "missionaries." The proliferation of the movement would not have taken place without the tireless efforts of a vast number of ordinary and virtually now unknown women and men. These networked across regional and even national boundaries, proclaiming the same message they had heard others proclaim which had sufficiently altered their lives to make it worth sharing wherever they went. Most forms of Pentecostalism teach that every member is a minister and should be involved in mission and evangelism wherever

[53] Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 530-31.

they find themselves. Although increasing institutionalization often causes a reappearance of the clergy/laity divide, the mass involvement of the "laity" in the Pentecostal movement was one of the reasons for its success. A theologically articulate clergy was not the priority, because cerebral and clerical Christianity had, in the minds of many people, already failed them. What was needed was a demonstration of power by people to whom ordinary people could easily relate. This was the democratization of Christianity, for henceforth the mystery of the gospel would no longer be reserved for a select privileged and educated few, but would be revealed to whoever was willing to receive it and pass it on.

6. A Contextual Missiology

The style of "freedom in the Spirit" that characterizes Pentecostal liturgy has contributed to the appeal of the movement in many different contexts. This spontaneous liturgy, which is mainly oral and narrative with an emphasis on a direct experience of God through his Spirit, results in the possibility of ordinary people being lifted out of their mundane daily experiences into a new realm of ecstasy, aided by the emphases on speaking in tongues, loud and emotional simultaneous prayer and joyful singing, clapping, raising hands and dancing in the presence of God—all common Pentecostal liturgical accoutrements. These practices made Pentecostal worship easily assimilated into different contexts, especially where a sense of divine immediacy was taken for granted, and they contrasted sharply with rationalistic and written liturgies presided over by a clergy that was the main feature of most other forms of Christianity. Furthermore, this was available for everyone, and the involvement of the laity became the most important feature of Pentecostal worship, again contrasting with the dominant role played by the priest or minister in older churches.[54] McClung points out, "Pentecostal worship allows the participant to be involved in a personal and direct way with the manifestation of God among His people in the congregation."[55] Pentecostalism's emphasis on "freedom in the Spirit" rendered it inherently flexible in different cultural and social contexts. All this made the transplanting of its central tenets in the Two-Thirds World more easily assimilated.

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[54] Saayman, "Some Reflections," p. 47.

[55] McClung, "Spontaneous Strategy," p. 73.

Chilean Pentecostal scholar Juan Sepúlveda writes that the reasons for the "dynamic expansion" of Chilean Pentecostalism are to be found in its ability "to translate the Protestant message into the forms of expression of the local popular culture."[56] Harvey Cox observes that "the great strength of the pentecostal impulse" lies in "its power to combine, its aptitude for the language, the music, the cultural artefacts, the religious tropes... of the setting in which it lives."[57] Many older missionary churches arose in western historical contexts, with set liturgies, theologies, well-educated clergy, and patterns of church and leadership with strongly centralized control. This often contributed to the feeling that these churches were "foreign" and that one first had to become a westerner before becoming a Christian. In contrast, Pentecostalism emphasised an immediate personal experience of God's power by his Spirit, it was more intuitive and emotional, and it recognized charismatic leadership and national church patterns wherever they arose. In most cases, leadership was not kept long in the hands of foreign missionaries and the proportion of missionaries to church members was usually much lower than that of older missions. As Pentecostal preachers proclaim a message that promised solutions for present felt needs like sickness and the fear of evil spirits, they (who were most often local people) were heeded and their "full gospel" was readily accepted by ordinary people. Churches were rapidly planted in different cultures, and each culture took on its own particular expression of Pentecostalism.

Sepúlveda points out that Chilean Pentecostalism should be understood as "the emergence of a search for an indigenous Christianity." He describes the "cultural clash" first between the foreign religiosity of "objective" dogma versus the indigenous religiosity giving "primacy to the subjective experience of God"; and second, between a religion mediated through "specialists of the cultured classes" (clergy) and a religion with direct access to God for simple people that is communicated through the feelings in the indigenous culture. He describes Chilean Pentecostalism's ability "to translate the Protestant message into the

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[56] Juan Sepúlveda, "Indigenous Pentecostalism and the Chilean Experience," in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, eds. Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 111-34 (128).

[57] Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 259.

forms of expression of the local popular culture," by the use of nationals in leadership and ministry, and by a "dynamic of rejection and continuity" with popular culture. He shows that both popular forms and meanings are preserved in Pentecostalism, and this way it has become an "incarnation" of the gospel in the culture of the *mestizo* lower classes.[58]

The appropriation and proclamation of the gospel by indigenous preachers was couched in thought forms and religious experiences with which ordinary people were already familiar. Some of the largest "Spirit" churches in Africa, such as the Kimbanguists in the Congo and the Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria, rejected key indigenous beliefs and practices like polygamy and the use of power-laden charms. The syncretizing tendencies are seen in the rituals and symbols adapted from both the western Christian and the indigenous religious traditions (and sometimes completely new ones) that are introduced in Majority World Pentecostal churches. Usually these have local relevance and include enthusiastic participation by members and lively worship. Sepúlveda sees the ability of Pentecostalism to inculturate Christianity as a process of its incarnation in local cultures:

> The rediscovery of pneumatology by modern Pentecostalism has to do mainly with the spiritual freedom to "incarnate" the gospel anew into the diverse cultures: to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit is to believe that God can and wants to speak to peoples today through cultural mediations other than those of Western Christianity. Being pentecostal would mean to affirm such spiritual freedom.[59]

Elsewhere, he writes that what he calls "Creole Pentecostalism" is "very much rooted in the *mestizo* culture of the peasants and the poorest inhabitants of the cities," and that this fact differentiates this form of Pentecostalism from "historical Protestantism" as well as from other Pentecostal churches "of missionary origin, which show a major cultural dependence on their countries of origin."[60] Pentecostal missions from the West are not exempt from this danger. But throughout the world, Pentecostal movements create new voluntary organisations, often multiethnic, to replace traditional kinship groups. Many Pentecostal

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[58] Sepúlveda, "Indigenous Pentecostalism," pp. 116-17,120-24,128-29,132.

[59] Sepúlveda, "Indigenous Pentecostalism," pp. 133-34.

[60] Juan Sepùlveda, "To Overcome the Fear of Syncretism: A Latin American Perspective," in *Mission Matters*, eds. L. Price, J. Sepúlveda, and G. Smith (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 157-68 (158).

churches have programs for recruiting new members that transcend national and ethnic divisions, and this belief in the movement's universality and message for the whole world is a radical departure from ethnically based traditional religions.

This is the positive side. But Klaus and Triplett remind us that Pentecostals in the West "have a tendency toward triumphalist affirmation of missionary effectiveness."[61] This is often bolstered by statistics proclaiming that Pentecostals/Charismatics are now second only to Catholics as the world's largest Christian grouping.[62] When this is assumed implicitly to be largely the work of "white" missions, the scenario becomes even more incredulous. The truth is a little more sobering. There can be little doubt that many of the secessions that took place early on in western Pentecostal mission efforts in Africa and elsewhere were at least partly the result of cultural and social blunders on the part of missionaries. Early Pentecostal missionaries frequently referred in their newsletters to their "objects" of mission as "the heathen,"[63] and were slow to recognize national leadership. Missionary paternalism was widely practiced, even if it was "benevolent" paternalism. In Africa, white Pentecostal missionaries followed the example of other expatriate missionaries and kept control of the churches and their indigenous founders, and especially of the finances they raised in Western Europe and North America. Most wrote home as if they were mainly (if not solely) responsible for the progress of the Pentecostal work there.

In Conclusion

Pentecostals proclaim a pragmatic gospel and seek to address practical needs like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery. In varying degrees, Pentecostals in their many and varied forms, and precisely because of their inherent flexibility, attain a contextual character which enables them to offer answers to some of the fundamental questions asked by people. A sympathetic approach to local life and culture and the retention of certain indigenous religious practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction, especially for those

[61] Klaus & Triplett, "National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions," p. 232.

[62] McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology," p. 276.

[63] Anderson, "Signs and Blunders," p. 205.

overwhelmed by urbanization with its transition from a personal rural society to an impersonal urban one. At the same time, these Pentecostals confront old views by declaring what they are convinced is a more powerful protection against sorcery and a more effective healing from sickness than either the existing churches or the traditional rituals had offered. Healing, guidance, protection from evil, and success and prosperity are some of the practical benefits offered to faithful members of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. All this does not state that Pentecostals provide all the right answers, a pattern to be emulated in all respects, nor to contend that they have nothing to learn from other Christians. But the enormous and unparalleled contribution made by Pentecostals independently has altered the face of world Christianity irrevocably and has enriched the universal church in its ongoing task of proclaiming the gospel of Christ by proclamation and demonstration.