

The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission^{*}

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The Growth of Global Pentecostalism

The growth of the modern Pentecostal movement is a remarkable story. During the century of its existence it has grown from a ‘fringe’ group congregating every day in a run-down warehouse in downtown Los Angeles whose members were branded as religious fanatics to spread throughout the world, and influence other church traditions. Although numbers vary,¹ there is a consensus that it now numbers around half a billion throughout the world in various forms and traditions, including ‘Charismatics’ well integrated in various existing church families.² This essay charts the growth of the movement and its developing missiology, demonstrating the complex interplay of Bible, experience and theology as it does so.

The significance of Pentecostal expansion was evident as the world church celebrated the centenary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. In its original 1910 conference, Pentecostals were in their infancy. The disappearance of the Azusa Street Mission in 1909, perhaps the most visible expression of Pentecostal Christianity, after a three-year controversial existence, may have been a relief to some Christian leaders who felt embarrassed by this ‘tongue-babbling cultish group’.³ So, the Edinburgh conference did not need to worry about them. They were already struggling with issues surrounding the Catholic Church. However, Pentecostals did not ‘die out’. In fact, the dramatic expansion of Christianity owes much to the exponential growth of Pentecostal churches and their variants.⁴ The African Independent Churches, most Chinese house church networks, and the majority of Latin American evangelicals are defined as Pentecostal in a broader sense.

By the time the world church came to celebrate the centenary of the Edinburgh conference in June 2010, the radical shift of the landscape of global Christianity was crystal clear. A hundred years ago, about 82% of all Christians lived in the global North, or the ‘West,’

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including Oceania. But today, over 60% of Christians live in the global South, the three major southern continents.⁵ A steady decline of western Christianity and a corresponding growth of Christianity in the global South occurred between the two conferences. As much of the new Christianity in the South is Pentecostal or its variation, it is also noteworthy that in the West, growing segments of the church are Pentecostal-Charismatic. For example, in the midst of a rapid decline of Christians in Great Britain, the annual New Wine conferences among Charismatic churches are refreshing. In the 2010 Somerset conference, I witnessed about 15,000 participants of all ages savoured expositions of the Word, praises and various seminars.

The expectation is that the growth of Christianity in the South will continue, and so will Pentecostal worship and spirituality. If the twentieth century was marked by the exponential growth of African Christianity, all eyes are now on Asia, where Christianity has reached only 8.5% of its vast population of 3.5 billion (more than half of the world's population). The main growth engine is going to be Chinese Christianity as it is moving toward a 10% goal of the national population.⁶ When and if Asia achieves a 15% mark it will add 8.5 million to the current number, making Christians exactly 1/3 level of the world population.⁷ The share of Pentecostals will be significant in this growth.

While evangelism and church expansion has been the focus of Pentecostal mission, it is also important to note that so-called 'mercy ministry' has been an integral part of Pentecostal mission practice if not, until recently, its official statements.⁸ Countless orphanages, various levels of educational institutions, relief works, and others have been deeply ingrained in 'soul-saving' activities. Often without any intentional and serious theological reflection, Pentecostals, perhaps as they are from lower social strata, have instinctive solidarity with the poor and suffering. Two recent publications may serve as useful illustrations. The first, *Not by Might, Nor by Power*,⁹ looks into the Latin American Child Care programme of the US Assemblies of God World Mission. It records the growth of the educational programme for poor families throughout Latin America and its impact on societies. From this success the author constructs a Pentecostal mission theology of social engagement. The second, *Global Pentecostalism* by Miller and Yamamori,¹⁰ is a summary of a four-year field study of growing congregations in the global South, who were intentionally engaging with issues that societies and communities are facing. It found that most of the congregations meeting these requirements were Pentecostal. This sociological study reveals that Pentecostal mission thinking and practice include care for the

suffering. The book, however, challenges Pentecostals on two fronts: to move beyond the evangelism-church planting dimension; and to construct appropriate theology to provide Pentecostals with a valid conceptual ground for social engagement.

Inquiry at Hand

This study probes the theological motivation for such exponential growth. Considering that such expansion requires the agency of Pentecostal believers, the study looks at hermeneutical roots and missional theology of Pentecostalism. This two-stage inquiry is appropriate for the 'grassroots' nature of Pentecostal theologization, a process which is often participatory and context-based: It is undertaken by people in the pews and responds to immediate human needs. The crux of this process, therefore, is not trained academic theologians, but preacher-pastors.¹¹ Consequently, Pentecostal theology is deeply imbedded in prayers, sermons, songs and non-verbal expressions of its spirituality. This makes a theologian's first work a description, articulation and analysis of imbedded theological assumptions and arguments.

Hermeneutical values are a set of orientations inherent in Pentecostal spirituality and theology. These characteristics have critically contributed to the identity of Pentecostal believers and to their theological framework, although implicitly expressed. These values also guide Pentecostals in interpreting the scriptures and their religious experiences. Although evolved throughout its history and expressed in various forms in different contexts, they still remain as constants among Pentecostal believers. They may provide clues to defining Pentecostalism.

Which Pentecostalism?

While Pentecostalism can be defined and characterized in various ways, for this reflection it seems to be convenient to limit to the first wave, denominational (or 'Classical') Pentecostals. They are more identifiable than Charismatics whose mission theology and action is shaped by their denominations. They are less 'messy' than the third category sometimes called indigenous Pentecostals or Neo-Charismatics. Strictly speaking, it is not a category, but a catch-all holding bay, for a great diversity of expressions which share Pentecostal core values including Chinese house church networks, African Independent Churches, and the Third Wave movement. Tentatively, therefore, we may be able to claim that the 'values' are more broadly owned by various Pentecostal families, whereas the 'theological threads' are more of the

classical Pentecostal families. The longer history of first wave Pentecostals makes them more doctrinally coherent and more articulate in their theology and spirituality than the others. However, even within this group the matter is not that simple. There is great theological diversity among classical Pentecostals particularly outside the western hemisphere. For example, the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea, the largest single congregation in the world is part of the global Assemblies of God family. However, some of its theological components and spiritual expressions are vastly different from its western cousins. In the global scene, it is also important to remember that the first category is the smallest among world Pentecostal families.

Pentecostal Hermeneutical Values

Any theological investigation needs to seriously consider hermeneutical strategies of a particular group. Pentecostal's hermeneutical strategy influences how to read the scriptures and interpret one's life towards their theological construct. Obviously much of Pentecostal's unique hermeneutical *ethos* was emerging in the nineteenth century. The following discussion is intended to be a brief presentation of key hermeneutical sources for Pentecostal mission theology.

'People of the Book': Scripture and Life

Pentecostals have been called the 'people of the book' for their unquestioned acceptance of the authority, and their literalistic reading of the Bible. The first characteristic is the non-critical reading of the Bible, or perhaps more accurately the post-critical reading by Pentecostal academics and the pre-critical reading by Pentecostals in the pew. Like their conservative evangelical cousins, early Pentecostals had a firm belief in the (almost mechanical) inspiration of the scripture. This was part of the general trend against the intellectual inquiries and the critical reading of the Bible, originating in nineteenth century German scholarship and gradually spreading to Europe and North America. Hence, any attempt to critically study the scriptures used to be viewed as a theologically 'liberal' practice. This attitude has been further reinforced among the majority of non-western Pentecostals who live in places where sacred scriptures are never questioned. They are objects of reverence and obedience, and this 'evangelical' attitude toward the Bible is believed to be the basis for the Christian dynamic of the global south.¹²

Pentecostals have maintained a notion that the more literally one takes the scripture, the more faithful he or she becomes to the word of God, thus the will of God. Triggered from their reading of narratives in the Gospels and Acts, the historicity of events contained in the narratives is never questioned. Furthermore, the inclusion of certain narratives in the scriptures was also taken as proof for a normative pattern. Speaking in tongues as 'the initial physical evidence' of baptism in the Holy Spirit is based on the recurrence of spirit-filled tongue-speaking in Acts. Naturally Pentecostals fully subscribe, therefore, to the historicity and authenticity of supernatural events recorded in the Scripture. Their unique view of Scripture and the Holy Spirit allows Pentecostals to collapse the time gap between biblical times and the present establishing a link between the early church and the Azusa Street Mission. They simply assume that miracles included in the biblical narratives are repeatable today. This comes with advantages as well as disadvantages. The Bible to the Pentecostals is not an ancient book at all.

The temporal truncation also collapses the distance between God and humans, or the sacred and the secular. The transcendental God is now immanent. They expect to 'hear the voice of God' from the book. Narratives have a particular appeal as the process of reading will soon become the process of participation: the readers find themselves in the midst of the story, be it of healing or of miracles. This ability to 'time travel' provides lively religious experiences. The God of Exodus, for example, is expected to appear here and now allowing the believers to have a similar experience of God's intervention. Thus the interplay of such a Bible reading and experience-oriented religious life creates a spiral effect to enhance a highly engaged Christian life with God's reality. A Pentecostal's 'pre-critical' reading of the Bible naturally results in a literal reading, leaving little room for spiritualizing or demythologizing any 'irrational' record of the Bible.

Restorational Impulse: Apostolic Vision

As the twentieth century approached, there was a heightened interest in eschatology. One stream was the expectation of the early church restored with the manifestation of the spiritual gifts of prophecy, healing and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts and 1 Corinthians. Camp meetings were a common annual feature for devout believers and their families to experience personal revival. One of the most popular words among the late nineteenth century Holiness and early twentieth century Pentecostal believers was 'apostolic', reflecting the

expectation and yearning for the restoration of church life as is recorded in the book of Acts. The dawning of the new century reinforced their eager expectation of the 'latter rain' to mark the end of the end time.

The modern Pentecostal movement has developed its unique mission-oriented theology of the Holy Spirit and Christian life. With their unique experiences such as baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues as its accompanying sign, early Pentecostals understood themselves as being people called for a specific task. Considering that the advent of the Spirit gave birth to the church, the very foundation of its existence is missional. Accordingly, spiritual baptism has been closely linked to witnessing (Acts 1:8), and some early Pentecostal leaders advocated tongues as a practical missionary tool.¹³ This unique theological understanding shaped a peculiar self-identity as people empowered for God's mission. Pentecostals were countercultural both in the church and in society, and courageously endured ridicule and marginalization. Yet throughout its history, Pentecostalism has flourished where Christian presence had been in existence, instead of 'virgin' Christian frontiers. In this sense, Pentecostalism is a revival and renewal movement, challenging and energizing the church to recover its 'apostolic' authority and call to witness for Christ to the ends of the earth. Evangelism and church planting have been at the core of Pentecostal mission, partly due to its eschatological orientation, and also as part of the early twentieth century evangelical Christianity.

Participatory Process: Place of Community

The role of community is the focal point of religious life and of the hermeneutical process. The work of the Holy Spirit in community formation is experienced at least in two fronts: bringing people around common spiritual experience, and breaking barriers that divide God's people. In the Azusa Street Mission the common experience of the Spirit baptism brought together people of different races, social strata and ecclesiastical affiliations. At the turn of the twentieth century, white and Afro-Americans worshipping together was a radical countercultural departure from the norm. The division of the movement along racial lines has become a stark reminder of human sinfulness and failure against the Spirit's intention and work. However, this amazing potential continued to appear throughout its history. In the Philippines in the 1980s, a sociologist discovered close relationships: between Pentecostals and Charismatic Catholics despite the hostility between Protestants and Catholics in the Philippines.¹⁴

At the centre of Pentecostal community formation is worship. It provides a space and time for religious experiences, theological formation and the shared process of theology-making. Worship is incredibly participatory in nature, often blurring the demarcation between the pulpit and the pews. One excellent example is the 'testimony' time, where anyone can be the 'main speaker'. By publicly sharing one's religious experience 'to praise the Lord' or 'to plea to the Lord', any member of the community contributes to the corporate deposit of theology and also for the community to exercise the 'gift' of discernment, evaluation and shared ownership of the presented experience and its interpretation. This 'democratic' nature of Pentecostal spirituality significantly enhances the community formation process. The exercise of spiritual gifts also takes place in a community setting, often a prophecy or a message in tongues ideally accompanied by an interpretation.

Even seemingly individualistic matters are experienced in the community context among Pentecostals. I recall that my own yearning for the baptism in the Spirit, as individualistic as it may seem, became the subject of a community prayer. I walked through this process together with many fellow Pentecostal believers. When I finally 'got it', we together celebrated in praise and worship. In Korea, it is common that a family's prayer becomes the prayer of the entire cell group and sometimes the cell leader will bring the family members to a prayer mountain for prayer and fasting for several days, while the entire cell member families are in prayer. The community-forming potential of the Holy Spirit is experienced in various dimensions.

Experience: Lived-out Spirituality

Another important aspect of restorational thinking is the recovery of religious experience. Flowing from the Pentecostal view of Scripture, Bible stories are read to experience an encounter with God and to show the miracles that contemporary readers can experience.¹⁵ Pentecostals never 'demythologize' the miracle stories of the Bible. The Pentecostal appropriation of the biblical narratives occurs in two ways: they transport the ancient stories to contemporary life (existentialization), they also 'slip' themselves into the ancient story of action (identification). The logic is simple: If the God of the Bible acted then, he can do the same today. For this reason, Pentecostals love to affirm that God is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever' (Heb 13:8).

This mindset promotes an expectation of having a tangible encounter with God through worship, prayer, sermons, Bible reading and the like. The nature of such encounters varies, but

Pentecostals expect to 'hear from the Lord'. Hearing from God is a common feature of Christianity. The distinctiveness of the Pentecostal experience of hearing is rather concrete and tangible, even if one can argue that tangibility is a subjective notion. Pentecostals are quite open to various channels of such revelation, including dreams, visions, audible or 'inner' voices, mental impressions, or a passage 'being lifted from the page'. Such 'voices' are not limited to matters of spirituality, but apply almost to any issue in life. The other area of encounter is the 'touch of the Lord'. This expression often refers to various experiences of God's reality, be it divine healing, an overwhelming sense of God's presence, relief from physical, emotional or circumstantial difficulties, a deep conviction of God's truth, and the like.

Unlike the Reformers' notion of the Holy Spirit as a shy member of the Trinity, Pentecostals, based on their reading in Luke-Acts, have re-profiled the Holy Spirit as the active player in the birth of the church, initiator of mission, and overseer of the spread of the gospel through empowerment.¹⁶ Many experiences, whether supernatural or circumstantial, are all carefully initiated by the Holy Spirit. This has led Pentecostals into two important theological conclusions: 1) The Holy Spirit interacts with God's people through a wide range of religious experiences, including prophecy (11:22-23; 19:6; 21:9), dreams and visions (9:10; 10:3), hearing voices (10:19; 16:9; 18:9), healings (3:1-8; 4:30), and the like; and 2) Such experiences embolden believers in their faith and lead them into opportunities to witness to the risen Lord. However, the role of experience in biblical interpretation is a controversial issue. Ideally the word should guide, inform and set a parameter to religious experience, while experience affirms the word. Pentecostals are called to guard themselves against the danger of placing experience over the word. Nonetheless, with their literalistic reading of the Bible, religious experiences have a definite role in strengthening their sense of call and commitment to sacred vocation, as baptism in the Spirit as stated below will illustrate so well.

People of the Spirit(s)

Pentecostals assume a worldview distinct from many contemporary western Christians, but closer to a non-western understanding of life and the world. For example, Pentecostals are conscious of spiritual beings, benevolent as well as malevolent, angels, spirits and demons, at work in human lives. For this reason, Pentecostals are the people of the S/spirit(s). With their

liberal reading of the Bible, their emphasis on the experiential dimension of religious life, Pentecostals gravitate to the unseen and yet active world of the supernatural.

Two particular areas may be noteworthy. The first is, as noted briefly above, the development of a dynamic theology of the Holy Spirit. Pneumatology that is born out of one's radical experience of the Holy Spirit – be it baptism in the Spirit, healing, exorcism, 'hearing' him or 'seeing' his work – will be explosive. The Holy Spirit has become a miracle-working member of the Trinity. He empowers the church to be victorious in the middle of a hostile world providing signs and wonders as part of Christian witness. This orientation gives a shape of empowerment theology that is unique to Pentecostalism. The second area is the similarity between the Pentecostal worldview and that of many non-western cultures where diverse spirits are perceived to operate on a daily basis generating a clash of the (super)natural. Only the most powerful spirit (or God) earns a right to be worshipped, and the contest of such spiritual forces has become the basis for mass conversions.¹⁷ The explosion of Pentecostal-type Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America is partly attributed to these worldview similarities¹⁸ and to common interests in life such as healings, blessings, and curses.¹⁹ Pentecostalism can supply functional substitutes to the felt and perceived religious needs because the worldviews have corresponding categories. This helps the missionary recognize the needs of the recipient.

Theological Resources for Pentecostal Mission

The mission implications of four theological beliefs unique to Pentecostalism will be discussed with reference to their historical development. The modern Pentecostal movement as an organized theological and spiritual tradition traces its origin to a conservative form of Protestantism found in the nineteenth century Holiness movement of North America.²⁰ Charles Parham and William J. Seymour, the two most renowned Pentecostal 'fathers,' were Holiness preachers. To illustrate beliefs and practices of early Pentecostals, reports will be used that were published in *The Apostolic Faith (TAF)* of the Azusa Street Mission of Los Angeles (1906-1909), the most representative Pentecostal periodical of its formative years. A number of key players, already mentioned, are involved in Pentecostal theological construction, including Scripture, the Holy Spirit interacting with Scripture, the community of believers,²¹ the Pentecostal experience

and the wider social context. Context has been recognized as significant as Pentecostals in the global South become more prominent in the movement.

Baptism in the Spirit

This cardinal doctrine makes (classical) Pentecostals distinct from the rest of Christianity. Understood as an experience distinct from and subsequent to regeneration, belief in baptism in the Holy Spirit has caused a continuing debate between Pentecostals and Evangelicals. Based on the post-resurrection promise of the Lord that his followers would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals took it as a sign of the restoration of early church spirituality, especially the experience on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).²² For the present discussion, three aspects of this belief will be explored with mission as proclamation in mind: experience, its interpretation and consequences.

As discussed above, Pentecostalism has brought back the significant role of religious experiences. Testimonies abound to the powerful impact of experiences loosely termed ‘the baptism in the Holy Spirit’. Various life-changing stories are shared, although most North American classical Pentecostal churches insist on speaking in tongues as ‘the physical and initial evidence’. The sense of God’s overwhelming presence is a common element of these experiences, as recorded in the first issue of *TAF*:

Proud, well-dressed preachers come in to ‘investigate’. Soon their high looks are replaced with wonder, then conviction comes, and very often you will find them in a short time wallowing on the dirty floor, asking God to forgive them and make them as little children. It would be impossible to state how many have been converted, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. They have been and are daily going out to all points of the compass to spread this wonderful gospel.²³

Speaking in tongues also brought tangible impact not only to the recipients of the Spirit baptism but also to those who witness them. It is no wonder that Pentecostalism spread like a wildfire. It is not only understood as a sign of the restoration of early church spirituality, it also shapes the self-identity of people who are called and commissioned to bring the news of salvation to the ends of the earth. It is also interpreted as the reception of power from above for witnessing in the context of Acts 1:8. The early Pentecostal literature made it clear that, “The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a work of grace but a gift of power.... The baptism with the Holy Ghost makes you a witness unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It gives you power to

speak in the languages of the nations."²⁴ Its biblical illustrations are often taken from Peter's bold preaching in Acts 2:14-40, and Stephen's courageous sermon in Acts 7:2-53. Last, especially at a popular level, baptism in the Spirit is understood to be the 'floodgate' of spiritual gifts including healing and miracles.

The consequences of this doctrine are evident in an unbending commitment to mission. With a strong sense of calling to be witnesses 'to the end of the earth', this revival movement quickly turned into a missionary movement. A catalogue of heroic missionary achievements, despite little or no training or support, is attributed to this sense of call. A zeal for preaching the 'full gospel' in which tongue-speaking often functions as a reinforcement is another consequence. Some early Pentecostals expected tongues to enable them to bypass laborious language-learning.²⁵ Third, after the pattern of Acts, signs and wonders are expected in the context of mission. This power-orientation makes Pentecostals bold witnesses with claims of healings and miracles, albeit with many controversies surrounding them. The net result is the fast spread of the Pentecostal message and the expansion of the Pentecostal movement globally. This pneumatologically-shaped missiology is well attested in a *TAF* report of an Azusa missionary in its early days:

A Pentecostal missionary has left for foreign lands, Bro. Thos. P. Mahler, a young man of German nationality. He has the gift of tongues besides the knowledge of several. He left here for San Bernardino. He may go by way of Alaska, Russia, Norway, Germany and to his destination in Africa. As our brother was leaving, Bro. Post spoke of his call and gave a message in tongues in regard to Bro. Mahler which he interpreted as follows: 'I have anointed this dear one with my Spirit, and he is a chosen vessel to me to preach the gospel to many, and to suffer martyrdom in Africa'.²⁶

Prophethood of All Believers

This is closely related to the previous discussion on baptism in the Spirit. However, because of its significance in Pentecostal mission, a separate discussion is deemed necessary. This is almost a natural and logical outgrowth of the belief in baptism in the Holy Spirit. Peter's interpretation of the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost is important. In the Old Testament period, only a handful of leaders experienced the coming of the Spirit of God, such as the seventy elders (Num 11), selected judges, the first two kings of United Israel, and selected prophets. However, an eschatological expectation of the Old Testament is to break this exclusivity of the Spirit: everyone in God's community will experience the coming of the Spirit.

This is the prophecy by Joel (2:28-29), which has its root in Moses' desire for the whole of Israel (Num 11:29). This democratization of the Spirit is the gist of Peter's sermon in presenting the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21).

If anyone in God's community is baptized in the Holy Spirit, regardless of age, gender and social status, the calling, empowerment and commission for God's work is for every believer, thus, 'prophethood of all believers'. This theological paradigm should be understood within the context of Christianity in the West at the turn of the twentieth century. In spite of various expressions of 'every believer's prophetic call', the dominant ministry paradigm among the established churches was clergy-oriented professionalism. Pentecostal theology was a powerful challenge to the established norm.

Of particular note is the significant contribution of women in Pentecostal mission. Later this is expressed in Korea through the mobilization of lay women leaders in David Yonggi Cho's well-known cell group system. Young people are also mobilized for mission in networks, such as Youth With A Mission. This liberates ministry from the exclusive hands of elite clergy. Often advocating short-term missionary service, YWAM and others have 'democratized' ministry and mission for every believer. Third, an extension of this radical mission-thinking is the establishment and empowerment of, and transfer to, national and local leadership at the earliest opportunity,²⁷ a practice which has made Pentecostalism the fastest growing religious movement in our day.

Eschatology

Early Pentecostals shared their eschatology with the late nineteenth century conservative pre-millennial orientation. The turn of the century provided a naïve expectation of the end of human history. Here is an example found in *TAF*:

All these 6,000 years, we have been fighting against sin and Satan. Soon we shall have a rest of 1,000 years.... We must go on to perfection and holiness, and get the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and not stop there, but go on to perfection and maturity.²⁸

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was taken as a sure sign for the end of the end time, the last opportunity for the greatest harvest of souls before the return of the Lord. This created an incongruent theological system for Pentecostals, adopting the dispensational scheme of human history. With the fast closure of the church age, or the age of grace, the church is to be taken to heaven, before the return of the age where Jews are dealt with through tribulation. This formed

the awareness of living at the 'five-to midnight' moment, giving an extremely small window of opportunity to save as many souls as possible. 'One-way ticket missionaries' were strongly motivated by the eschatological urgency. It was not unusual that engaged young women broke their engagements and left for their mission field.²⁹ This eschatological consciousness made them other-world oriented. Coupled with the religious consciousness of call and empowerment for witness they are the best ingredients for the significant mission movement we have seen in the last one hundred years.

In spite of the powerful and positive contribution of this form of pre-millennialism with the expectation of the imminent return of the Lord, such clock-setting eschatology must expire sooner or later. As the movement enters the third generation eschatological messages from Pentecostal pulpits have gradually disappeared to be replaced by this-worldly concerns, such as church growth, and the message of blessings and health.³⁰ Fortunately, the dynamic motive of Pentecostal mission lies in the pneumatological interpretation rather than its temporal eschatological expectation, as the global Pentecostal movement has continued its growth even after the waning of an imminent eschatology.

Primacy of 'Soul' Matter

Pentecostalism has all the crucial ingredients to become an unprecedented 'religion to travel', as well-evidenced in the exponential growth and spread all over the world in its wild diversity and creativity. Its evangelical heritage and the temporally oriented eschatology has focused Pentecostal missiology on evangelism and church planting. The rise of a social gospel in the middle of the twentieth century may have further encouraged the already narrowly focused attention. Mission impetus was also taken from the mission roadmap found in their favorite passage: "...from Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria and (finally) to the ends of the earth" (Act 1:8). Crossing geographical boundaries, therefore, has been part of Pentecostal mission paradigm. Many brilliant social programmes³¹ have soul winning as their ultimate goal.

This, however, may reveal the Pentecostal understanding of humans, sin and salvation. Every evil, be it personal or corporate, is traced to sin, and to Genesis 3 where separation from God resulted in spiritual damnation, physical suffering, broken society, and cursed environment. The Pentecostal view of restoration, therefore, reverses the order, beginning with the spiritual regeneration, and then personal (including the physical level, such as healing), communal

(social) and even environmental, if the notion is conceived in Pentecostal mission framework.³² The upward social mobility of Pentecostals has been attributed to this paradigm.³³

Naturally 'revival' or 'renewal' is an important concept in Pentecostal thinking. The Pentecostal movement itself is often classified as a revival movement. The January 1907 issue of *TAF* reveals a glimpse of the Azusa Street revival:

The meeting went on till morning and all the next day.... Pentecost first fell in Los Angeles on April 9th [of 1906]. Since then the good tidings has spread in two hemispheres.... Wherever the work goes, souls are saved, and not only saved from hell but through and through, and prepared to meet the Lord at His coming. Hundreds have been baptized with the Holy Ghost. Many of them are now out in the field, and some in foreign lands, and God is working with them, granting signs and wonders to follow the preaching of the full Gospel.³⁴

As Pentecostal missiology matures, an argument seems to gain ground that spiritual dynamism, evangelism, church growth and social service are not mutually exclusive.³⁵

Conclusion

If this short study in any way leaves an impression that Pentecostals have finally unlocked the secret of Christian mission, the reality is exactly its opposite. In the name of God's kingdom and renewal, church divisions were caused by this movement and unfortunately they have been part of its growth 'strategy'. Some of its serious blind spots, such as its eschatological expectation, are already presented. While they are praised for their creativity in contextualization Pentecostals are also criticized for the ugly 'prosperity gospel'³⁶ and their extremely 'western' outlook and *ethos*. All in all, there is much for further reflection and study.³⁷

In the next decades, the progress of Pentecostal mission will depend on how Pentecostals preserve and strengthen their unique spiritual values and understand their changing contexts so that their theological constructs will respond to their missional call and contextual needs. The Bible will continue to play an important role, especially as the movement spreads increasingly in the global South. Expectation of the supernatural dimension of Christianity, the role of community and experience, as well as a more holistic worldview, will continue to play critical roles in Pentecostal religious life. Serious challenges and new opportunities will rise on the theological front, and any good theology will need to be locally grounded and relevant. This requires conscious engagement of Pentecostal values and context. If frontline workers such as

pastors, evangelists and missionaries are to continue their critical role of popular theological construction, theological formation will be essential. Aided by Pentecostal theologians, frontline leaders can protect Pentecostal communities from consumerism-driven, self-serving popular religion, and relevant to their context. Pentecostal eschatology, as seen in the past, may not serve its earlier pivotal role, and so may be the way of the baptism in the Spirit. However, the latter's empowerment theology, incorporated in the prophethood of all believers, will remain high in Pentecostal theological agendas, if the theology is to remain 'Pentecostal'. The primary purpose of soul-winning is expected to continue, although the Pentecostal horizon in mission thinking and practice has become more holistic and inclusive. At the same time, more locally motivated theological agenda should surface, such as reconciliation in places where religious and racial conflicts raise tensions.

Classical Pentecostals have the most theological and institutional resources. In non-western lands they look radically different from their North American or European 'mothers', who are not necessarily growing. This is a serious challenge to their century-old theology and constantly institutionalizing *ethos*, yet they may also be empowering the rest of the Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Together they should continue their engagement in new frontiers of mission because to remain faithful to the scriptures, to Pentecostal spiritual heritage, and yet be relevant to the immediate context will pose a significant challenge to emerging Pentecostal mission communities throughout the world.

¹ Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). Henceforth *AGC*.

² Johnson and Ross, *AGC*, 103.

³ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 134.

⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 63.

⁵ Based on the figures found in 'Distribution of Christians, 1910-2010', *AGC*, 59.

⁶ 'Christianity in Eastern Asia, 1910-2010', *AGC*, 140-41.

⁷ 'Christianity's Centre of Gravity, AD 33-2100', *AGC*, 53.

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- ⁸ Article III, 'Constitution of the Assemblies of God', revised, Aug 8-11, 2007, Indianapolis, IN (http://agchurches.org/Sitefiles/Default/RSS/AG.org%20TOP/2007_Constitution_and_Bylaws.pdf), accessed, 21 July 2011.
- ⁹ Doug Petersen, *Not by Might, Nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996).
- ¹⁰ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
- ¹¹ Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 227-41 under the title 'Local Church, Worship, and Theological Formation'.
- ¹² Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- ¹³ James R. Goff, Jr., 'Initial Tongues in the Theology of Charles Fox Parham', in Gary B. McGee (ed.), *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 57-71.
- ¹⁴ Koichi Kitano, 'Socio-Religious Distance between Charismatics and Other Religious Group Members: A Case Study of the Philippines in the 1980s', *Journal of Asian Mission* 5:2 (2003): 231-242.
- ¹⁵ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T & T Clark, 2008).
- ¹⁶ Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984) and Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).
- ¹⁷ Alan P. Tippett, *People Movements in Southern Polynesia: A Study in Church Growth* (Chicago: Moody, 1971).
- ¹⁸ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 18-80.
- ¹⁹ Julie C. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Mission to an Animistic Tribe of the Northern Philippines* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000).
- ²⁰ I am aware of arguments on multiple 'springhead' of the movement. For this reason, I used the qualifier, 'organized' theological and spiritual tradition.
- ²¹ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutics for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 156-91.
- ²² Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).
- ²³ 'Pentecostal Has Come: Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts', *TAF* 1 (Sept 1906), 1, col. 1.
- ²⁴ 'The Enduement of Power', *TAF* 4 (Dec 1906), 2, col. 2.
- ²⁵ 'Russians Hear in Their Own Tongue', *TAF* 1 (Sept 1906), 4, col. 3.
- ²⁶ 'The Lord Sends Him', *TAF* 1 (Sept 1906), 4, col. 1.
- ²⁷ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1963).

²⁸ 'The Millenium [*sic!*]', *TAF* 1 (Sept 1906), 3, col. 3.

²⁹ One example is Lillian Trasher who cared for orphans and widows in Egypt until her death. See S. Shemeth, 'Trasher, Lillian Hunt', in Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (eds.), *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 1153.

³⁰ For example, Wonsuk Ma, 'Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean', Harold Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (eds.), *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway), 227-42.

³¹ See for example, Calcutta Mercy Ministries, 'History' (<http://www.buntain.org/about.html>), accessed on 15 March 2010.

³² *Teen Challenge*, the world-acclaimed Pentecostal drug rehabilitation programme with over 70% success rate is known for its emphasis on regeneration and baptism in the Spirit. David Batty and Ethan Campbell, 'Teen Challenge: 50 Years of Miracles', *Assemblies of God Heritage* 28 (2008), 14-21. the upward social mobility among Latin American Pentecostals to this paradigm: from an inner change to behavioural changes.

³³ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

³⁴ 'Beginning of World Wide Revival', *TAF* 5 (January 1907), 1, col. 1.

³⁵ Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009), 126-27.

³⁶ For various discussions, see Hwa Yung, 'The Missiological Challenge of David Yonggi Cho's Theology', in Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies, and Hyeon-sung Bae (eds.), *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 2004), 85-90; Wonsuk Ma, 'David Yonggi Cho's Theology of Blessing: Basis, Legitimacy and Limitations', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35:2 (April 2011), 140-159.

³⁷ Julie C. and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal-Charismatic Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010).