

Pentecostal Missions: Past 100 and Beyond

Jeffery Nelson*

Abstract

This paper identifies the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement since its inception on January 1, 1901 to the present. Particular focus is given to the Assemblies of God missions from its humble but audacious beginnings in 1914, to its growth as the largest Pentecostal and Protestant denomination in the world. Note that this paper was first presented to the Alaska Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God at the Network Conference in April 2017.

Introduction

Three days before the 1901 New Year Rev. Charles Parham, Bible school leader, gave his students an inductive Bible assignment: study “the baptism in the Holy Spirit and determine its biblical evidence.”¹ On New Year’s Eve the “students concluded that speaking in tongues was the evidence of this baptism,”² and a prayer meeting began at Bethel Bible School at Stone’s Folly, Topeka, Kansas. While others throughout recent and ancient Christian history had experienced speaking in tongues, this was the birth of the Pentecostal movement with Pentecostal theology’s formation. After Midnight (January 1, 1901) Agnes Ozman, one of his students, was the first to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in another tongue.³

Many others were filled with the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal movement began to spread. Charles Parham faded from the scene, but the Azusa Street Revival, led by William J. Seymour, became the epicenter of Pentecostal activity in 1906. “Under his leadership...sinners repented, believers were sanctified, prayer was offered for the sick, and many received visions...an extremely important aspect of this revival is that many who received the Pentecostal baptism also felt a heightened concern for world evangelism.”⁴

The Assemblies of God was formed in 1914 and the second General Council, held in Chicago in November 1914, resolved to achieve “the greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen.”⁵ This was an audacious goal. Those in attendance may have been struck with the reality that Pentecostals were the despised stepchild of Christianity, but also with the awareness that the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-29) was God’s intention for his creation.

* Jeff and Janelle Nelson are missionaries to Kenya, Africa, currently serving as Missionaries-in-Residence at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri. The Nelsons have served as pastors for 16 years and in missions since 2000. They have a passion for unreached people groups, church planting, mobilizing missionaries, and higher Christian education. The Nelsons have four grown children and five grandchildren. Jeff and Janelle Nelson have a burden to live among unreached people groups, present the Good News to them, and see church planting movements begun among them.

Many missionaries traveled from their Pentecostal experience to remote parts of the world sensing the missionary zeal to fulfill the Great Commission before Jesus' return. Among the early pioneers were Charles and Florence Personeus, the first Pentecostal missionaries to Alaska. They were married in 1916 and landed in Juneau in 1917. While others were staking their claim for gold, the Personeus' staked a claim "to introduce people to the love and grace of God."⁶



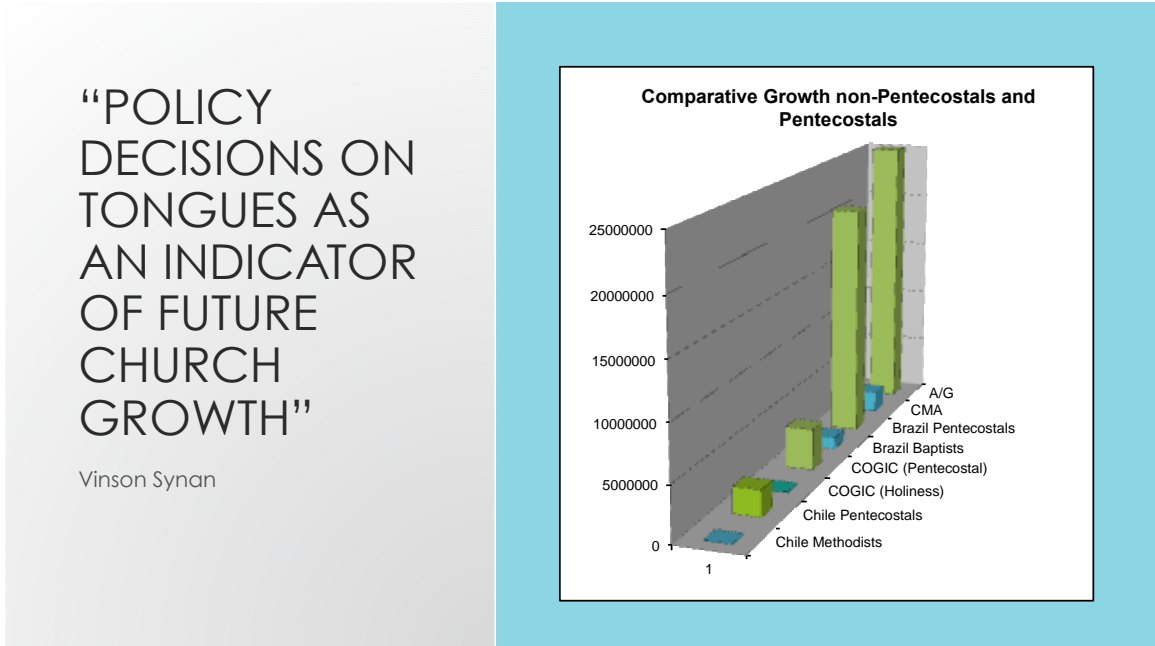
7

Could the Assemblies of God be a part of the "greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen?"⁸

Fastest Growing Phenomenon

What has happened since those early days of the twentieth century are nothing short of miraculous. "The AG was founded just over a century ago, in April 1914...Pentecostal and Charismatic movements make up about 25% of the world Christian population, a massive expansion that has taken place within a little over a century."⁹ "Charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history."¹⁰ What proof is there that this movement is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history?

Vinson Synan conducted an exhaustive study comparing similar non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal churches around the world over the past century. Vinson Synan demonstrates the contrast between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal mission efforts in the twentieth century.¹¹ Here are some examples from his study: In Chile, the Methodists grew to approximately 5,000 members, while the Pentecostals grew to 2,371,000. In Brazil, the Baptists grew to 1,050,000, while the Pentecostals grew to over 21 million. Worldwide, the Christian and Missionary Alliance grew to 1.9 million, while the Assemblies of God has surpassed 25 million. These statistics are illustrated in the figure.



12

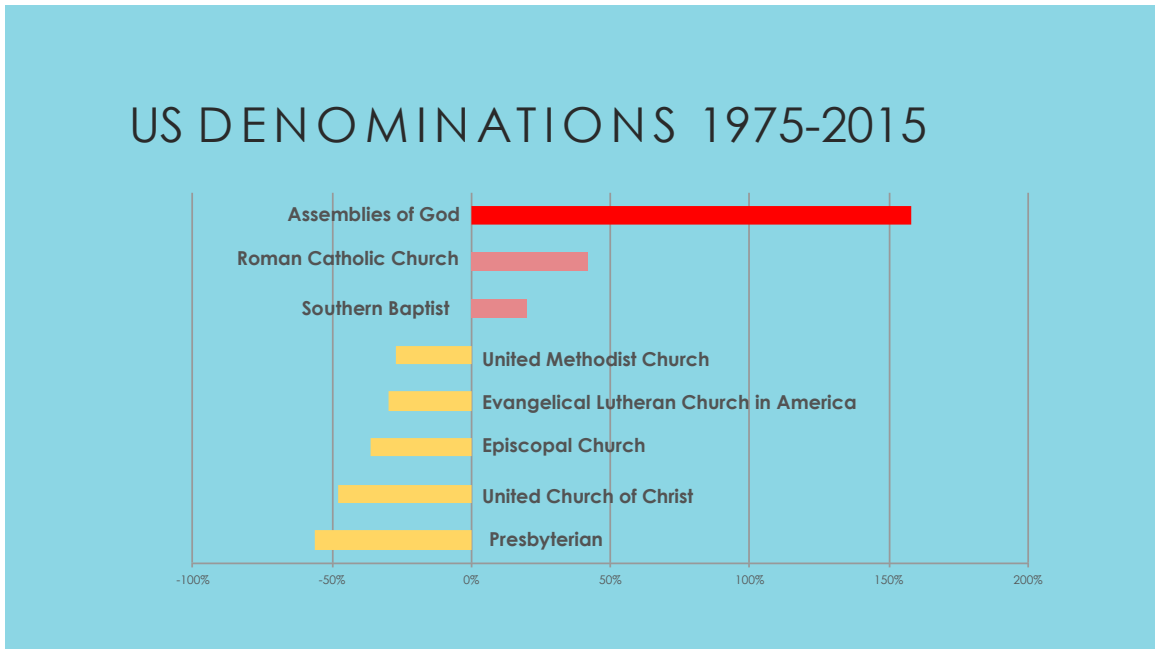
Figure 1. Comparative Growth non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals

This figure demonstrates that in every example, similar churches with similar doctrine except for Pentecostalism, those that were Pentecostal grew much greater than those that were not.

The audacious vision of the members of the 1914 General Council is becoming a reality around the world.

Assemblies of God and U.S. Denominations

The Assemblies of God saw growth from the beginning. This is contrasted especially in the last forty years in the United States when compared to other Protestant and Catholic churches. The figure illustrates that of the eight major denominations identified, five have lost membership since 1975 (Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and United Methodist Church) and three have sustained growth (Southern Baptist Convention at 20%, Roman Catholic Church at 42%, and the Assemblies of God at 158%).

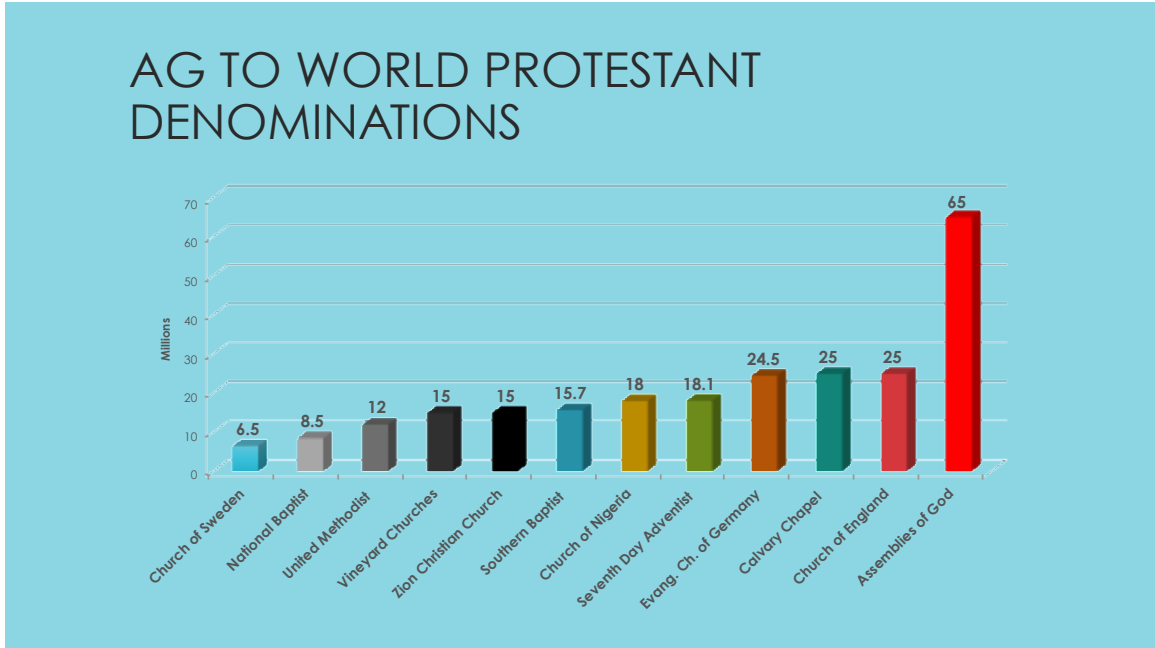


13

The audacious vision of the members of the 1914 General Council is becoming a reality in the United States. The growth of the Assemblies of God in the U.S. gives evidence that this movement is the fastest-growing phenomenon in world religious history.

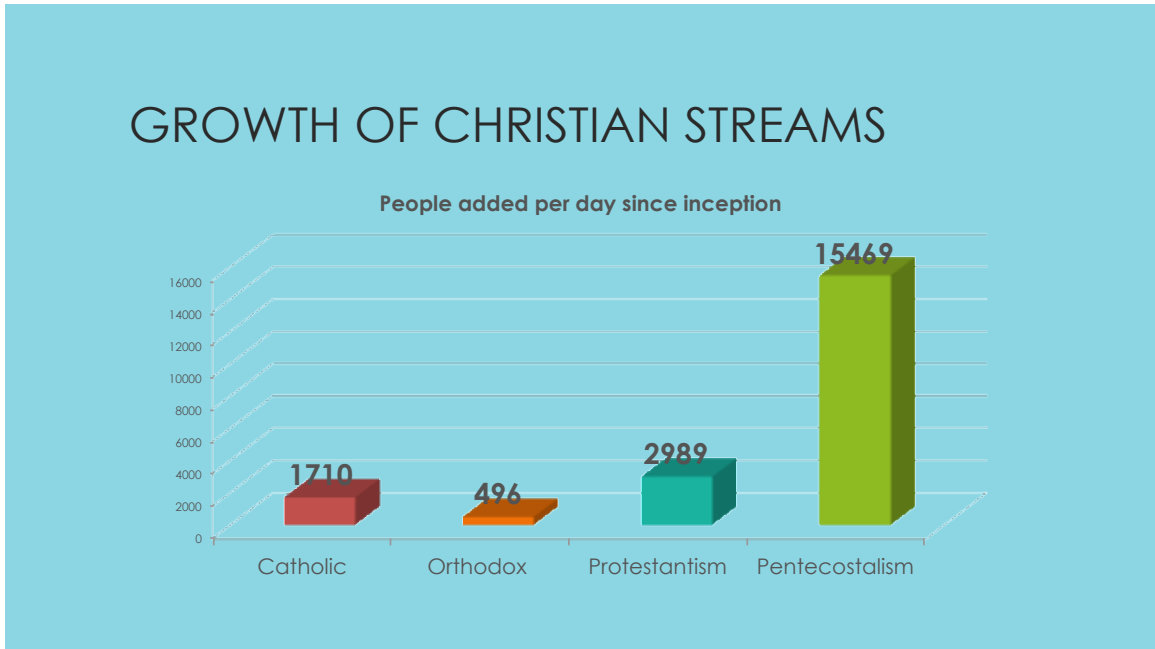
AG and Pentecostal to World Christian Denominations

But one could ask, “Is this growth phenomenal compared to other world-wide Christian churches?” When compared to world Protestant denominations, the next figure illustrates twelve of the largest. Beginning with the Church of Sweden at 6.5 million members to United Methodists at 12 million, Southern Baptist Convention at 15.7 million, to Calvary Chapel and the Church of England at 25 million, the largest Protestant denominations in the world are presented. The Assemblies of God worldwide now has more than 65 million adherents, which is more than two and one-half times larger than the next largest Protestant denomination.



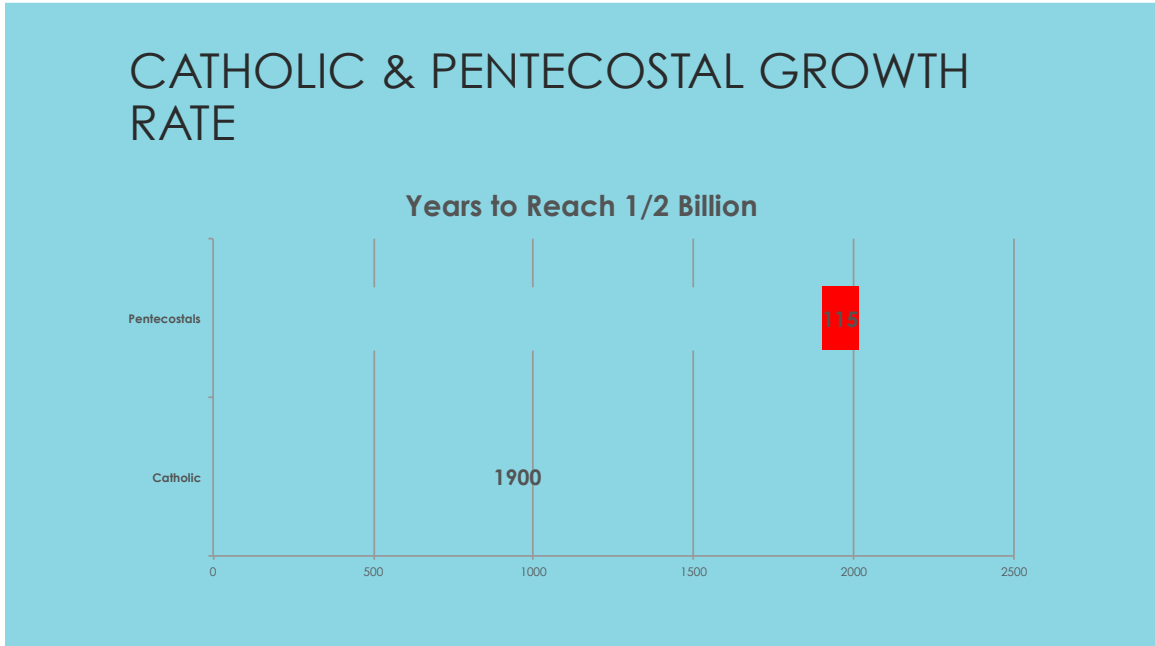
14

When the four great streams of Christianity are compared, the Roman Catholic Church is the largest, but the Pentecostal stream has now taken second place, followed by Protestantism and Orthodox Churches. When one considers the growth of these streams since inception, the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal stream is evident: Roman Catholic (AD 30) 1,710 people per day; Orthodox (AD 451) 496 people per day; Protestantism (AD 1517) 2,989 people per day; and Pentecostalism (AD 1901) 15,469 people per day.



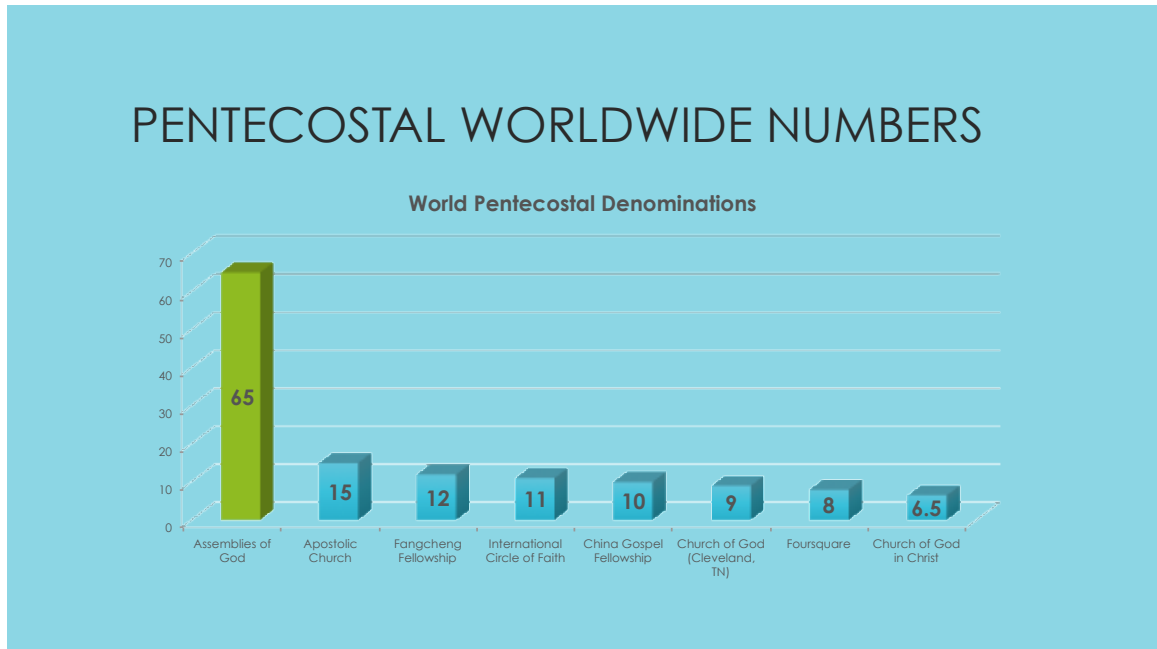
15

What one may find fascinating is the rapid growth of Pentecostalism. “The major strands of Pentecostalism now represent at least one quarter of all Christians, according to the *World Christian Database*, ranking second only to Catholicism in the number of followers. In direct and indirect ways, Pentecostal beliefs and practices are remaking the face of world Christianity.”¹⁶ The Roman Catholic Church grew from its first members (AD 30) to one-half billion members over 1,900 years. The Pentecostal movement grew from its first members (1901) to one-half billion members in just 115 years.



17

The rapid growth of Pentecostalism around the world gives evidence that this movement is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history. The Assemblies of God leads all Pentecostal denominations. The eight largest Pentecostal denominations around the world range from the Church of God in Christ at 6.5 million adherents, Foursquare at 8 million, Church of God (Cleveland, TN) at 9 million, China Gospel Church at 10 million, and the Apostolic Church at 15 million to the Assemblies of God, at 65 million adherents worldwide.

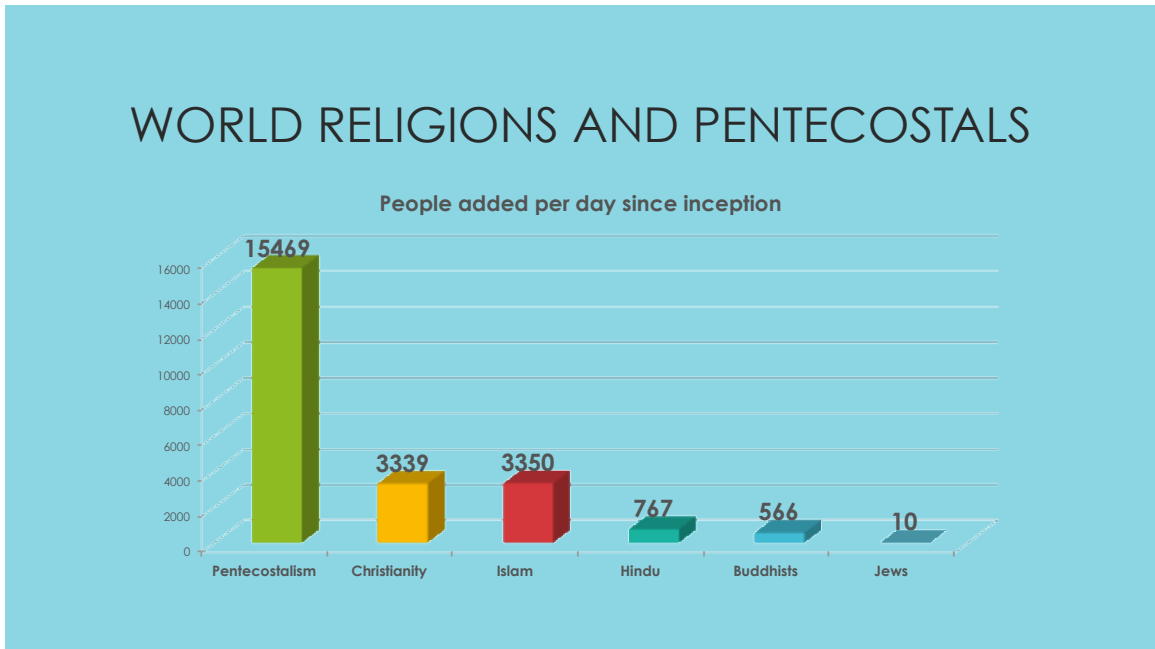


18

This is more evidence toward the statement that Pentecostalism is the greatest phenomenon in religion this world has ever seen. But how does Pentecostalism fare against religions outside of Christianity?

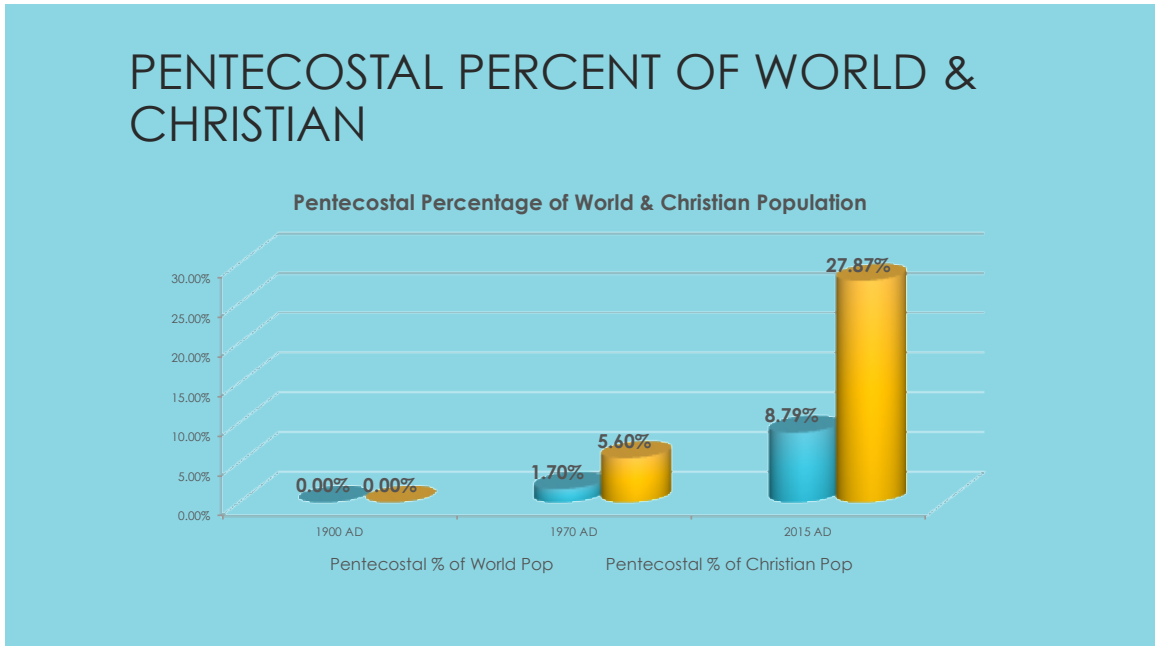
Pentecostals and World Religions

But one could ask, “Is this growth phenomenal compared to world-wide religions?” When one looks at the growth of each religion since inception Islam (AD 622) has added 3,350 people per day, Hinduism (1500 BC) has added 767 people per day, Buddhism (500 BC) has added 566 people per day, and Judaism (1812 BC) has added 10 people per day. Christianity (AD 30) as a whole has added 3,339 people per day. But in stark contrast to these religions, Pentecostalism (AD 1901) has added 15,469 people per day.



19

Pentecostalism had no members and zero percent of the world population in AD 1900. By 1970 it had grown to 1.7% of the world population and 5.6% of Christianity. By AD 2015 it had grown to 8.8% of the world population and 27.9% of Christianity.

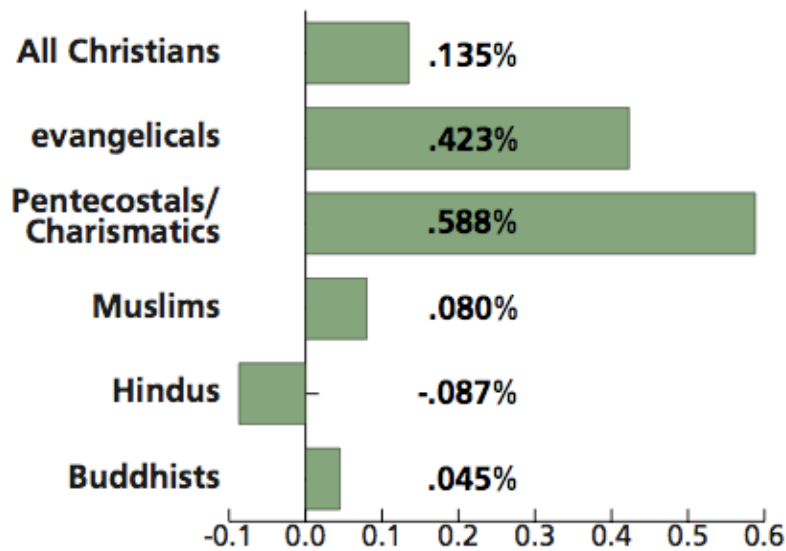


20

More than one quarter of the world's Christians was Pentecostal within only 115 years since Pentecostalism began.

It is often stated, “Islam is the world's fastest growing religion.”²¹ While this is true in comparison to Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc., there are two factors concerning Pentecostalism that are remarkable. First, when you compare growth by conversion, Christianity in general and Pentecostalism in particular, are growing faster than Islam. Islam grows most rapidly by birth. When the religious culture allows up to four wives and encourages multiple children, this is not surprising.

**Annual Conversion Growth in
The Largest World Religions
Avg. Annual %, 1990-2000
Figure 3**



22

Second, Pentecostalism as a subgroup of Christianity is growing faster than Islam as a whole. This has already been demonstrated in the figure above.

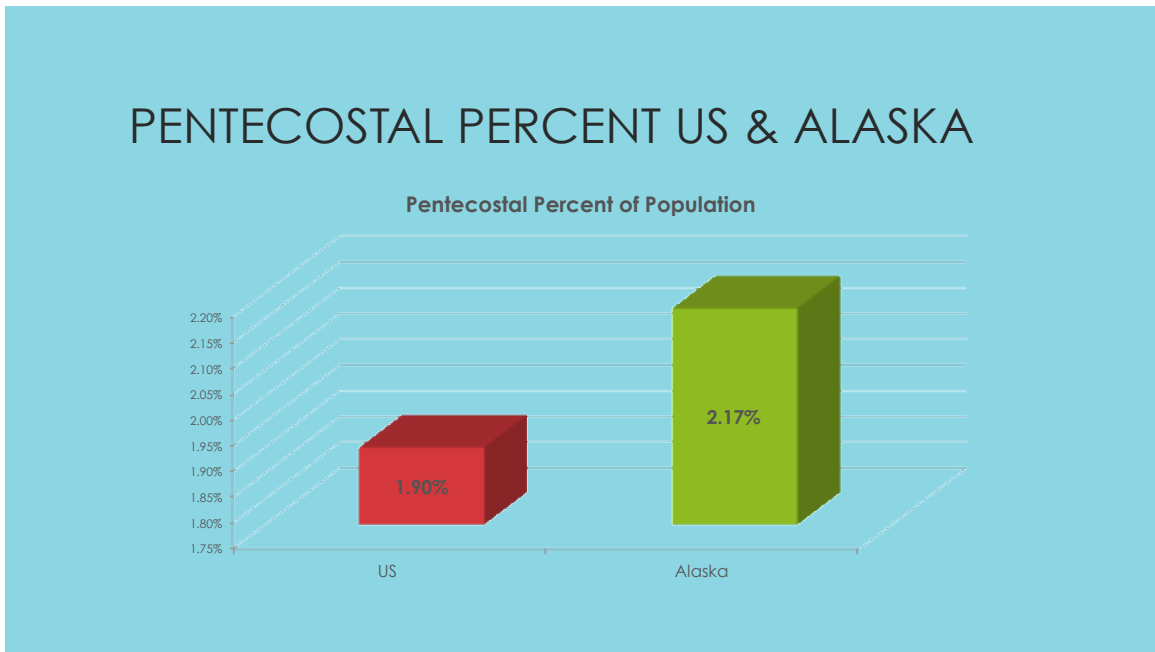
Pentecostals in Alaska and Kenya

Before concluding this section allow an indulgence to the author’s two connections: Alaska, the church that sent us out, and Kenya, the land of our missionary service.

Alaska and Kenya both have a significant animistic background population and a strong Christian presence. However, both have a significant group of hidden peoples.²³ In Alaska there are more than 100 communities without a church.²⁴ In Kenya there are still tribes that do not yet have a church strong enough to reach their own people in their own language.²⁵

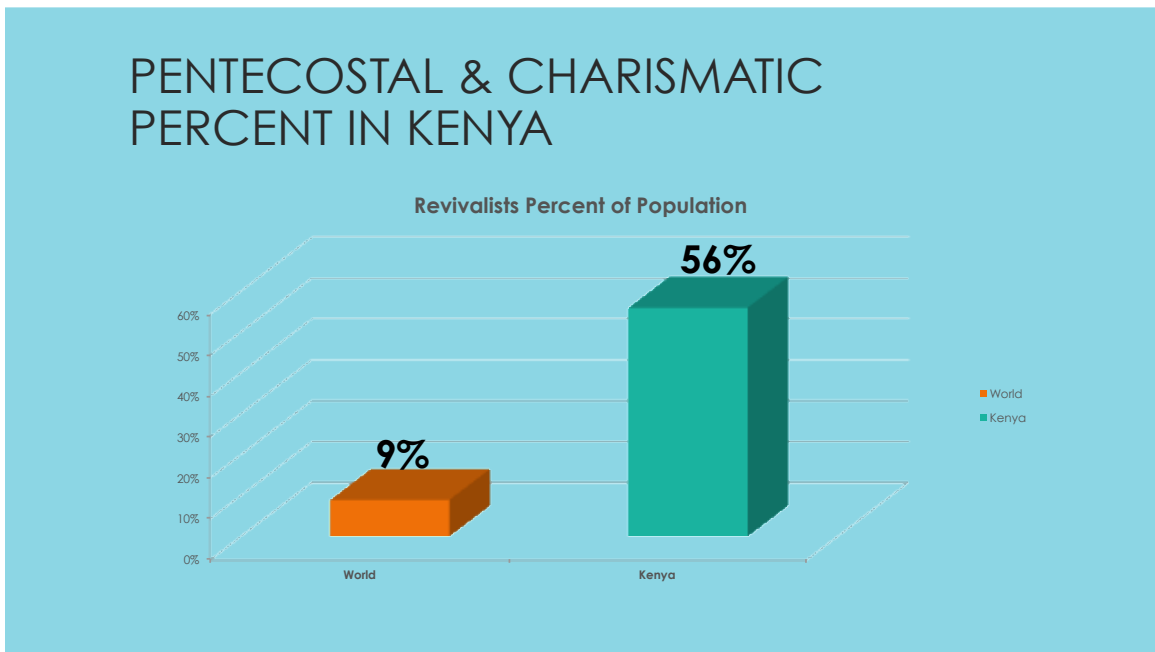
Alaska has experienced a greater Pentecostal growth than the U.S. as a whole. The Alaska Pentecostal population is about 14% higher than the average for the United States. There

is still a great work to be done, however, in order to reach the 100 communities without a church, the small towns, and the metropolitan areas.



26

Kenya has one of the highest Revivalist (Charismatic/Pentecostal) percentages in the world at 56% of the population and the highest Pentecostal percentage in the world.²⁷



28

The Kenya Assemblies of God, established as an indigenous church by the American Assemblies of God, would come to be the fastest growing denomination in Kenya in the 1990s at thirty-eight percent annual growth.²⁹ Peter Njiri became the first permanent Kenyan General Superintendent in 1982 when there were about 300 churches in the KAG. He is now the longest serving Assemblies of God superintendent in the world and has stewarded so that nearly 3,800 churches have been established.³⁰ But the work in Kenya is yet unfinished. There are many hidden people groups that do not yet have a church in their own language and culture strong enough to reach their own people.

The question was asked at the beginning, “What proof is there that this movement is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history?” The evidence is overwhelming. Pentecostalism is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history and the Assemblies of God leads the Pentecostal movement worldwide.

Reasons for Pentecostal Growth

The first section demonstrated the evidence that Pentecostalism is the fastest growing phenomenon in world religious history. This section looks at four reasons for this growth: doctrinal, missiological, spiritual, and sociological. Understanding and embracing these reasons will equip Pentecostal members, ministers, and missionaries to extend the victories of the past 100 years into the future.

Doctrinal

What makes Pentecostal doctrine distinct from other Christian doctrine? Two elements stand out. Both have connection to speaking in tongues, which was identified at that New Year’s Eve prayer meeting in Topeka, Kansas in 1901. The first reason is separability or subsequence. The second reason is evidential tongues. Because these are so integral to Pentecostalism, they deserve investigation here.

Classical Pentecostals believe that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience given by God is separate from and subsequent to the salvation experience. While this might seem obvious to us, it is not widely accepted in Christianity. For the students at the Bethel Bible School, when they read the Scripture, it was obvious that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit was a separate event from salvation. The believers were already born again, but they were told to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was the Holy Spirit. When Paul asked the believers in Ephesus, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed,” it seems obvious that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit follows the salvation experience. But for many, in fact most, Christian denominations define the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as an event that takes place at the moment of salvation.

The importance of separability/subsequence in Pentecostal doctrine should not be understated especially as it relates to missions. Acts 1:8 states that the purpose for the Father giving the Spirit is so the followers of Jesus would be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

“If...Pentecostals can no longer speak of an enabling of the Spirit that is distinct from conversion and available to every believer...nor can Pentecostals maintain that the principal purpose of this gift is to grant power for the task of mission.”³¹ The impetus that sent so many missionaries to the mission field including the Personeus in the early days to the twentieth century was the focus on fulfilling the Great Commission in the power of the Spirit. It was an outward focus embedded in this distinct Pentecostal doctrine. If Pentecostals believed like other churches believed that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit came at the moment of salvation, there would have been no need to seek for this empowerment for witness. Much more has been written on this subject, but this paper does not allow for full coverage.

A reduction in the importance of the doctrines of separability/subsequence and evidential tongues would produce disastrous results. The first would be a loss of the church planting and mission zeal and effectiveness of the church. A primary difference between the Pentecostals and other Christians is found in the result of their theology. Those who believe Spirit baptism is part of the conversion/initiation process then must conclude that spiritual gifts are primarily for operation within the body; they are for edification. The focus is therefore inward. Those who believe Spirit baptism is separate from the conversion/initiation process then conclude that God gave the Spirit baptism for power to witness. The focus is therefore outward. Losing the distinct doctrine of separability/subsequence threatens the missionary thrust of the church.

The second significant distinctive is evidential tongues. Evidential tongues are the doctrine that the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. The Bible school students also identified this distinguishing doctrine at the prayer meeting at Stone’s Folly on December 31, 1900. When asked what was the evidence that one was baptized in the Holy Spirit, they said that in the Bible, people who were filled in the Holy Spirit began to speak in an unknown tongue. This too seems obvious as one reads the Bible. But for those outside Pentecostal churches this is a battleground. Some say that speaking in tongues was only for the first generation of believers and it ceased when the last one died.³² Others argue that speaking in tongues is simply one gift among many, which is primarily for the edification of the body, and is not a sign intended for all believers.

Pentecostal authors encourage believers to retain the doctrinal distinctive of evidential tongues. “Whenever we...begin to let down on this particular point (evidential tongues), the fire dies out, the ardor and fervor begin to wane, the glory departs.”³³ “It is unthinkable that the Pentecostal movement could have developed as it did without the initial evidence position.”³⁴ And “I hope Pentecostals will increase their emphasis upon speaking in tongues. It would be an untold tragedy to back away from that part of our heritage that most directly gives evidence of God’s determination to bless all nations through Christ, the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16).”³⁵ To allow evidential tongues to fade from the theology or practice of Pentecostal believers would be a terrible mistake and millions of souls would be affected.

Missiological

Two related features of Pentecostalism that are missiological are the purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit for witness and the outward rather than inward focus that it brings. Early Pentecostals strongly believed that the infilling of the Spirit was given for believers to have bold witness. The outward posture was emphasized, rather than highlighting the inward edification of the church.

Luke wrote, “When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses...to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The focus is external. Paul wrote that the gifts were to edify the church (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26). The focus is internal. Both are scriptural. But the internal without the external focus results in deficit missiology. “Pentecostals maintain that the principal purpose of this gift is to grant power for the task of mission...this conviction, I would add, is integral to Pentecostalism’s continued sense of expectation and effectiveness in mission.”³⁶ The early missions focus of Pentecostals was built on a Pentecostal theology that emphasized going out with boldness to fulfill the Great Commission.

This Pentecostal missiology is slightly different from our closest theological cousins, the Charismatics. Charismatics stress the gifts (charisma means gift) for the edification of the believers. Charismatics embrace the gifts of the Spirit as described in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere in the Scripture, but they do not generally support the Pentecostal theologies of separability/subsequence or evidential tongues. To the Charismatic believer speaking in tongues is one gift among many, should not be expected for all believers, and is not the initial physical evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal theology makes an impact on Pentecostal missiology. Holy Spirit Baptism is for the purpose of witness and this brings an outward focus to the believers.

Spiritual

Pentecostals believe the spiritual power that was present in Jesus and His followers in the New Testament is available for His followers today. Healings, casting out demons, opening blind eyes, deaf hearing, lame walking, and dead-raising power are active through Pentecostal believers in this age. God wants to show Himself strong, and when He does, one should never waste a miracle. These two factors are important to Pentecostal missions.

God wants to show Himself strong where darkness is the darkest. In villages without a church, among people groups without a witness, and in the midst of the powerful world religions, God wants to demonstrate His love and power. When Pentecostal believers enter a new culture to share the love of Christ, God often provides opportunity to demonstrate His spiritual power. Like Elisha on Mount Carmel, a showdown takes place between the power of God and the power of Satan. God brings a dream or vision, He heals the sick, or He sets the demoniac free.

When this happens, it is the privilege of the Pentecostal missionary to proclaim the message: the Good News. If one remains silent after the miraculous demonstration of God’s power, the miracle is wasted. Every miracle creates curiosity in the people living in darkness.

When God stirs the curiosity through the miraculous preach the word. Never waste a miracle through silence.

This author led a team of Bible school students and a U.S. church team on a mission. God showed Himself strong by delivering a young boy. The miracle was not wasted as the Good News was proclaimed. The result was more than 150 people received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

As we were walking from hut to hut in the village of Oloiborototo, a Maasai mother, Nalari Molo Wiy came up to our group. She said through an interpreter, "I hear you are people of God. Would you please come and pray for my son, Rengoine Molo? He is sick with many diseases. He has been fainting daily. Last night was the worst incident we have had. We have taken him to the doctors, and they have taken many tests. They say that there is nothing wrong with him, yet when we take him home, he is still sick." We went to pray for him at her boma (homestead). As we were praying for his healing, I sensed the Spirit of Jesus say, "The boy is wearing charms. I want to heal him, but these must be removed." I stopped praying and opened my eyes. I asked the mother, "What are these items around Rengoine's neck?" She explained that they were given to him by the Maasai traditional healers to ward off diseases. I stated that we were praying to God. If God were to heal, we might not know if it was God or these charms that brought the healing. I asked if it would be all right if we took them off. She said it would be ok. We cut off the necklaces and prayed again. She and her son came to our services every day. I asked her on Friday, "How is your son?" She said, "He hasn't been sick at all since you prayed on Monday." She gave her testimony on Sunday before more than 300 community members at the first service in the new tabernacle. She said, "The preacher asked us to take off the charms if we believed God alone had the power to heal. We took them off. God has healed my son and he has not been sick once since we prayed."

Throughout the world the Pentecostal message has experienced phenomenal growth because missionaries have boldly believed, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). A fundamental reason for the growth is the belief and practice of the spiritual in the life of the believers.

Sociological

In addition to doctrinal, missiological, and spiritual reasons are sociological reasons. Two great holistic factors have influenced the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement. The first is the three-world view of animistic-based cultures. The second factor is the indigenous church principles. The world, especially Latin America, Africa, and Asia, has been receptive to the holistic approach of Pentecostal missions.

The Christians with a Western worldview see two worlds: the physical world and the spiritual world that is otherworldly. This spiritual world includes God and Satan, Heaven and Hell, salvation and damnation. The animistic worldview however includes a third world: the spiritual world that is this worldly. This spiritual world includes the spirit world that interacts

with this world. Causes for physical activity that are difficult to explain are attributed to the spirit world. This includes sickness, draught, and infertility.

Most of the Latin, African, and Asian world sees through these lenses. Pentecostals and Charismatics have a holistic view of God's power and believe that spiritual power is for today. They are therefore suited to answer the holistic worldview of the world. Other churches shy away from matters of the spirit world.

In practice, however, most churches do not take healing seriously. They have "room" for divine healing as a doctrine, but as a practice it is minimized or ignored completely. It is mainly Pentecostals and Charismatics who give divine healing an important position in church practice. The Catholic Church rarely uses the Rite of Anointing in the context of divine healing. Protestants talk about divine healing, but in practice they generally pray for the sick with the same kind of expectations they have when praying for a new roof on the church.³⁷

One sociological reason that Pentecostalism has grown so quickly is because Pentecostals are willing and able to address the spirit world that interacts with this world through healing the sick, casting out devils, etc.

The second sociological reason for the phenomenal growth is the indigenous church principles embraced by the Assemblies of God and many Pentecostal denominations. The three indigenous church principles articulated by Roland Allen are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating³⁸. This means that the local church planted on the mission field would be able to generate its own funds to pay the pastor, would select its own leadership, and would evangelize its own people. Other missionary work often retained leadership and funds from a foreign country.

Great missionary writers and thinkers who formed and fostered indigenous church principles were Anthony Groves, Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn, John Nevius, Hudson Taylor, and Roland Allen. Assemblies of God writers included Alice Luce and Melvin Hodges. David Bosch added the fourth element, self-theologizing, much later in 1981.

Pentecost arose toward the end of the colonial period during the era of the two great wars when people were throwing off the yoke of foreign powers and finding independence from political and ecclesiastical powers. Pentecostal missionaries offered freedom to govern themselves. Pentecostal missionaries trusted them to spread the Gospel to their own people and believed they could be missionaries themselves. Pentecostal missionaries trusted them to keep their own funds and use them as they saw fit. The churches became sisters rather than subordinates, partners rather than property. This religious social experiment result was the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal church around the world.

These two factors: three worlds and indigenous church principles, were the sociological factors that contributed to the spread of Pentecostal Christianity around the globe in one hundred years.

Four powerful factors contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement in the past 100 years, making it the most significant religious movement in religious history. Doctrinal factors included separability/subsequence and evidential tongues.

Missiological factors included the purpose of being a witness and the outward focus of Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Spiritual factors included God wanting to show how strong He is in the darkest areas and the missionary's effort to never waste a miracle. Finally, the sociological factors included the three worlds in the animistic-background worldview and the indigenous church principles embraced by Pentecostal missionaries.

The phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement has been documented. The four reasons for this growth have been surveyed. Finally, our attention turns to the next 100 years.

Pentecostal Missions in the Future

The great question before the Pentecostal church in this moment is this: If the phenomenal success of missions over the past 100 years has been through Pentecostal missions, how then should we do missions in the next 100 years? We will look at three sections briefly. First, what is the ratio of Pentecostal believers to the world population? Second, pancake and waffle missiology will be considered as methods to finish the task. Finally, how will knowing the history of the past one hundred years impact the church beyond today?

Pentecostal Believers to World Population

When Jesus left the Twelve and ascended into Heaven, there were approximately 300 million people. This was a ratio of one Apostle to 25 million people to reach for Jesus Christ. When the day of Pentecost came and 3,000 were added to the church, the ratio changed to 1 believer to 100,000 people. Today there are over 650 million Pentecostals in a world of 7 billion people. Today every Pentecostal believer is not responsible for 25 million lost souls like the Apostles, or 100,000 like those first believers at Pentecost. Today if every Pentecostal believer (650 million) would bring eleven people to Christ, the world (7 billion) would be won.

Let that statistic sink down into your being. If every Pentecostal believer alive today would win just eleven people to Christ, every person on earth would be won to Christ. Does that sound impossible or achievable? Maybe you are yet to lead your first disciple to Christ. Let us pray that this be the year.

Pancake or Waffle Missiology

However before concluding that the task is all but done, another missiological reality must be considered. J. Scott Holste illustrated this as Pancake or Waffle mission.³⁹ In years past we often believed that if a missionary went to a particular nation and planted churches there, the work was done. The people of that country would be able to evangelize the entire nation from the original churches planted. When the Personeus came to Alaska in 1917 and began the work, some might have believed that it would spread over the state of Alaska like syrup pours over a pancake. When missionary Dale Brown first went to Kenya in 1967,⁴⁰ some might have believed that the churches planted would automatically spread across that great nation like syrup spreads over a pancake. But the reality in Alaska, Kenya, and across the globe today is that there are still

hidden people that have not yet to hear a witness in their own language or culture of the love of Jesus Christ.

As mentioned before, there are more than 100 villages in Alaska that do not have a church. There are nearly 7,000 unreached people groups around the world that do not have a church in their language and culture that are strong enough to plant churches among them. These hidden individuals will not be reached through pouring syrup on a pancake, because the syrup stops at the walls of the village or tribe. Alaska and Kenya are more like a waffle than a pancake. How will the 1,600 people in Fritz Creek, Alaska hear of the Good News unless someone leaves their waffle square and goes to Fritz Creek? How will the 2.5 million Somalis in Kenya hear the gospel unless someone leaves their waffle square and goes to the Somalis to share with them the news that Jesus loves them and died for their sins? Every Pentecostal believer may only need to win eleven lost people to Christ, but many will have to leave home and enter a new culture in order for the lost, the hidden, and the unreached to be reached.

Today God is looking for some to leave their waffle square and go to a village without a church, to go to a city people group that has no relevant witness, to go to a university that needs to see what Jesus really looks like, to go to an unreached people group among the Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, or animists and show people the way, the truth, and the life. I challenge you today to say yes to God. Then ask Him what the question is.

Past 100 and Beyond

The growth of the Pentecostal movement has truly been the most phenomenal growth in religious world history. The reasons for the growth have been identified. The need for Pentecostal missionaries to win the lost is a given. But where and how to reach them is the challenge now set before us. During this great 100th anniversary of the first Pentecostal missionary to Alaska, and as we reflect on what God has done in Kenya, and around the world, we can rejoice in what God has done. But the challenge our Bishop Bill Welch has laid before us, indeed what God has laid before us is that this need is not to rest on our laurels.

If the phenomenal success of missions over the past 100 years has been through Pentecostal missions, how then should we do missions in the next 100 years? Do we have the vision of our early missionaries? Do we have the willingness to develop stamina, the fortitude to preserve, and the willingness to sacrifice? And equally important, do we have the doctrine, missiology, and spiritual life that they did?

If the greatest religious growth this world has ever seen has been as a result of Pentecostal missions through Spirit-filled, tongues-speaking, and demon-casting missionaries who have gone to the most difficult places and faced the most dangerous obstacles for Jesus, then how should missions be done in the next 100 years?

We are going to give God an opportunity to speak to us for a few minutes. Before we do, I want us all to say, “yes” to God. Just simply say, “yes”. Whatever He asks us to do, wherever He asks us to go, to whomever He asks us to speak, can we just say yes? Then, I want us to listen

to God. Let Him whisper to you. In this moment of “yes,” may we be sensitive to whatever God wants to do with us today and beyond.

Let us say “yes” together. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Now let us quietly sit in His presence as He whispers to us.

Bibliography

“Alaska: Religion.” Sterling’s Best Places. <http://www.bestplaces.net/religion/state/alaska> (accessed April 15, 2017).

Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962.

“An Overview of the World by Religious Adherents,” from the Mission Frontiers June 2000 edition. www.missionfrontiers.org.

Caldwell, Robert. “The Assemblies of God and the Worldwide Growth of Pentecostalism.” June 19, 2014, Theological Matters, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Accessed April 13, 2017).

“Christianity and Churches in Africa.” <http://pds95.cafe.daum.net/attach/15/cafe/2008/09/18/12/14/48d1c7b24e9d1> (accessed July 21, 2009).

Conti, Anna Lee. Blog. http://annaleeconti.blogspot.com/2015_08_01_archive.html (accessed April 13, 2017).

Escobedo, Tricia. CNN. “The World’s Fastest Growing Religion? Islam”, March 17, 2017, CNN.com (accessed April 13, 2017).

Garrard, D.J. "Kenya." In Burgess and van der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Henry, Rodney L. *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church*. Mandaluyong, Metro Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 1986.

Holste, J. Scott. *Finishing the Task* (323-339). Barnett, Ed. *Discovering the Mission of God*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2012.

Interact Ministries, Christian Pilots Association of Alaska, 108 Communities without a Church.

Johnson, Todd M. *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020: Society, Religion, and Mission*. Center for the Study of Global Christianity, South Hamilton, MA: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, June 2013.

“Kenya,” Joshua Project. Colorado Springs, CO: joshuaproject.net (accessed April 13, 2017). Currently Joshua Project lists 32 Unreached People Groups in Kenya.

Kerr, Daniel W. "The Bible Evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost." *Pentecostal Evangel*, August 11, 1923, 2, quoted in Gary B. McGee, "Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts," in *Initial Evidence*, edited by Gary B. McGee (Peabody: MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

"List of Christian Denominations by Number of Members." Omicsgroup. http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/List_of_Christian_denominations_by_number_of_members (accessed April 15, 2017).

McGee, Gary B. *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986.

——— and Darrin J. Rodgers. "The Assemblies of God: Our Heritage in Perspective." Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO: iphc.org (accessed April 13, 2017).

Menzies, William W. and Robert P. Menzies. "History: Understanding the New Context," in *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Miller, Denzil R. *Empowered for Global Mission: A Missionary Look at the Book of Acts*. Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2005.

Njiri, Peter G. W. *Kenya Harvest 2014: A Decade of the Holy Spirit*. Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Assemblies of God, 2014.

Piper, Keith. "Why Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge Ceased in the First Century AD." *Sola Scriptura*. <http://solascriptura-tt.org/Seitas/Pentecostalismo/WhyProphecyTonguesAndKnowledgeCeased1stCentury-Pipers.htm> (Accessed April 14, 2017).

Rodgers, Darrin J. "Assemblies of God 2015 Statistics Released," June 24, 2016, Springfield, MO: Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

"Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals." October 5, 2006, Washington, D.C: Pewforum.org (accessed April 13, 2017).

Synan, Vinson. "Policy Decisions on Tongues as an Indicator of Future Church Growth." address presented to the Evangelical Theological Society meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 20, 1998, quoted in General Council of the Assemblies of God, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Initial Experience and Continuing Evidences of the Spirit-Filled Life," AG Position Paper #4, adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, August 11, 2000.

———. "The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence." in *Conference Papers on the Theme "To the Ends of the Earth," Presented at the Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Society for*

Pentecostal Studies, November 11–13, 1993, 19, quoted in Miller, *Empowered for Global Mission*.

“The Largest Protestant Denominations,” US chart by amCharts, Worldwide 2015, (accessed April 5, 2017).

Weigel, George. “World Christianity by the Numbers.” February 25, 2015. First Things. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/world-christianity-by-the-numbers> (accessed April 13, 2017).

Welch, Bill. “Superintendent’s Article.” Fall 2016, The Journey: Alaska Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, Anchorage, AK.

Winter, Ralph. “The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism.” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, J. D. Douglas, ed. (Minneapolis: World Wide Publishers, 1975).

York, John V. *Missions in the Age of the Spirit*. Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2000.

¹ Gary B. McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986, 42.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 43-44.

⁵ Gary B. McGee and Darrin J. Rodgers, “The Assemblies of God: Our Heritage in Perspective,” Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO: iphc.org (accessed April 13, 2017).

⁶ Bill Welch, “Superintendent’s Article,” Fall 2016, The Journey: Alaska Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God, Anchorage, AK.

⁷ Anna Lee Conti, Blog, http://annaleeconti.blogspot.com/2015_08_01_archive.html (accessed April 13, 2017).

⁸ McGee and Rodgers.

⁹ Robert Caldwell, “The Assemblies of God & the Worldwide Growth of Pentecostalism,” June 19, 2014, Theological Matters, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Accessed April 13, 2017).

¹⁰ George Weigel, “World Christianity by the Numbers” February 25, 2015, First Things, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/world-christianity-by-the-numbers> (accessed April 13, 2017).

¹¹ Vinson Synan, “Policy Decisions on Tongues as an Indicator of Future Church Growth,” address presented to the Evangelical Theological Society meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 20, 1998, quoted in General Council of the Assemblies of God, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Initial Experience and Continuing Evidences of the Spirit-Filled Life,” AG Position Paper #4, adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, August 11, 2000. Miller also discusses this document. See Denzil R. Miller, *Empowered for Global Mission: A Missionary Look at the Book of Acts* (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2005), 331–333.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Darrin J. Rodgers, “Assemblies of God 2015 Statistics Released,” June 24, 2016, Springfield, MO: Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

¹⁴ “The Largest Protestant Denominations,” US chart by amCharts, Worldwide 2015, (accessed April 5, 2017).

¹⁵ Todd M. Johnson, *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020: Society, Religion, and Mission*, Center for the Study of Global Christianity, South Hamilton, MA: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, June 2013. The chart contains population statistics from Johnson compared with dates of the beginning of the stream.

¹⁶ “Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals,” October 5, 2006, Washington, D.C: Pewforum.org (accessed April 13, 2017).

¹⁷ Johnson.

¹⁸ “List of Christian denominations by number of members,” Omicsgroup. http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/List_of_Christian_denominations_by_number_of_members (accessed April 15, 2017).

¹⁹ Johnson.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Tricia Escobedo, CNN, “The world’s fastest growing religion? Islam, March 17, 2017, CNN.com (accessed April 13, 2017).

²² “An Overview of the World by Religious Adherents,” from the *Mission Frontiers* June 2000 edition. www.missionfrontiers.org.

²³ Ralph Winter, “The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism,” in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, J. D. Douglas, ed. (Minneapolis: World Wide Publishers, 1975), 221.

²⁴ Interact Ministries, Christian Pilots Association of Alaska, 108 communities without a church.

²⁵ “Kenya,” Joshua Project, Colorado Springs, CO: joshuaproject.net (accessed April 13, 2017). Currently Joshua Project lists 32 Unreached People Groups in Kenya.

²⁶ “Alaska: Religion,” Sterling’s Best Places, <http://www.bestplaces.net/religion/state/alaska> (accessed April 15, 2017).

²⁷ “Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals,” October 5, 2006, Washington, D.C: Pewforum.org (accessed April 13, 2017), 56. Only Guatemala has a higher percentage of revivalists with 60% and Kenya has 56%. Kenya’s Pentecostal percentage at 33% of the population is the highest of any country in the world.

²⁸ “Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals,” October 5, 2006, Washington, D.C: Pewforum.org (accessed April 13, 2017), 3.

²⁹ D.J. Garrard, “Kenya.” In Burgess and van der Maas *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 150 – 155.

³⁰ Peter G. W. Njiri, *Kenya Harvest 2014: A Decade of the Holy Spirit*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Assemblies of God, 2014), 1. “Thanks be to God for the 33 districts, 424 Sections, 3785 churches with 1,170 ordained ministers, 384 licensed ministers, 1194 students in Bible training, 2,231 exhorters ministers.”

³¹ William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 112.

³² Keith Piper, “Why Prophecy, Tongues and Knowledge Ceased in the First Century AD,” *Sola Scriptura*, <http://solascriptura-tt.org/Seitas/Pentecostalismo/WhyProphecyTonguesAndKnowledgeCeased1stCentury-Pipers.htm> (Accessed April 14, 2017).

³³ Daniel W. Kerr, “The Bible Evidence of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, August 11, 1923, 2, quoted in Gary B. McGee, “Early Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Tongues as Evidence in the Book of Acts,” in *Initial Evidence*, edited by Gary B. McGee (Peabody: MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 104.

³⁴ Vinson Synan, “The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence,” in *Conference Papers on the Theme “To the Ends of the Earth,” Presented at the Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, November 11–13, 1993, 19, quoted in Miller, *Empowered for Global Mission*, 335.

³⁵ John V. York, *Missions in the Age of the Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2000), 186.

³⁶ William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, “History: Understanding the New Context,” in *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 112.

³⁷ Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Mandaluyong, Metro Manila: OMF Literature Inc., 1986), 131.

³⁸ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962). This book was first published in 1912.

³⁹ J. Scott Holste, *Finishing the Task* (323-339) Barnett, Ed. *Discovering the Mission of God*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2012.

⁴⁰ “Christianity and Churches in Africa,” <http://pds95.cafe.daum.net/attach/15/cafe/2008/09/18/12/14/48d1c7b24e9d1> (accessed July 21, 2009).