The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association

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Foreword

This edition of JEPTA includes a collection of papers relating to ethical issues concerning Pentecostalism, all of which were offered at the Conference of the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association, held in the University of Leuven, Belgium in 2001. With regard to written material, it would appear that ethical issues have not been of major significance to Pentecostals for much of the past century. One of my Pentecostal friends, some years ago, aptly coined the phrase "Glossolalic ostrich" to describe the Pentecostal approach to things ethical. However, recent years, in particular, have seen something of a development in this arena and this volume hopes to provide a springboard for further discussion.

Ethical dimensions impacting mission, eschatology, prosperity, empowerment, peace issues as well other social dimensions are explored by the authors concerned and reflect a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, including North America, Europe and Africa. At the same time, lessons from history are offered as well as the contemporary Church.

The next Journal will be dedicated to issues of Spirituality in Pentecostalism.

Keith Warrington
Editor
Christian Missionaries and ‘Heathen Natives’:
The Cultural Ethics of Early Pentecostal Missionaries

Allan Anderson

‘Creative Chaos’
The first two decades of the Pentecostal movement were certainly giddy ones, marked by feverish and often sacrificial mission activities. By 1910, only four years after the commencement of the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostal missionaries from Europe and North America were reported in over fifty nations of the world. From its beginning, Pentecostalism was characterized by an emphasis on evangelistic outreach, and all Pentecostal missionary strategy placed evangelism at the top of its priorities. Evangelism meant to go out and reach the ‘lost’ for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal revival 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. Harvey Cox suggests that the rapid spread of the movement was because of its heady and spontaneous spirituality, ‘like the spread of a salubrious contagion’. It touched people emotionally, and its emphasis on experience was spread through testimony and personal contact. Faupel chronicles the fanning out of workers from Azusa Street, the role of Azusa Street as a magnet to which Christian leaders were drawn, the creation of new Pentecostal centres, and the spread to the nations of the world. In these various activities, a lack of central organization resulted in ‘creative chaos’. McGee describes the first twenty years of Pentecostal missions as mostly ‘chaotic in operation’.

1Paper presented at the 10th EPCRA conference in Leuven, Belgium. Allan Anderson (Centre for Missiology and World Christianity, University of Birmingham).
4Faupel, 213-222.
There were notable exceptions to the general chaos, however. Most Pentecostal movements came into being as missionary institutions and their mission 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’. Pentecostal missionaries had a sense of special calling and divine destiny, thrusting them out in the face of stiff opposition to steadfastly propagate their message. Despite the seeming naiveté of many early missionaries, their evangelistic methods were flexible, pragmatic and astonishingly successful. Pentecostal churches were missionary by nature, and the dichotomy between ‘church’ and ‘mission’ that for so long plagued other Christian churches did not exist. This ‘central missiological thrust’ was clearly a ‘strong point in Pentecostalism’ and central to its existence.2

This paper will attempt to show that the chaos was certainly there, but was not always creative, particularly in the realm of cultural and religious ethics. These reflections are based on reports and letters to the West written by early Pentecostal missionaries, and in particular by missionaries of the Pentecostal Missionary Union of Great Britain and Ireland (PMU), an interdenominational organisation founded in 1909 by former China Inland Mission worker Cecil Polhill and Anglican Charismatic vicar Alexander Boddy (among others). The PMU is chosen as representative because it was the earliest Pentecostal mission society, and the missionary reports were extensively published in the early English Pentecostal periodicals, especially in Boddy’s Confidence and Polhill’s Flames of Fire, the PMU mouthpiece.3 The PMU concentrated mainly on the Chinese borders of Tibet in its early years, Polhill’s old field,4 but in 1909, the first PMU missionaries, Kathleen Miller and Lucy James, left for India. Miller and James were followed by four others a year later going to China, one of whom, John Beruldsen, spent 35 years in North China.5 The PMU was a small organisation: by 1916 they reported a total of 26 missionaries, of which seventeen were in China, six in India, two in Japan and only one in Africa.6 Nine years later, just before their takeover by the British Assemblies of God, there were 27 missionaries, of which eighteen were in China (all in Yunnan), six in the Congo, and three in Brazil.1 There was a high fall-out of missionaries; many died on the field from diseases, but others disappear from the pages of the newsletters without explanation.

The first missionaries that went out from Azusa Street were self-supporting (although mostly with irregular and meagre finances), and a remarkable number were women. Some of the first North American missionaries set sail for China and India, arriving in China as early as August 1907,7 and African American missionaries went to Liberia in the same year. Canadian evangelist and former elder in John Alexander Dowie’s Zion City, John G. Lake, arrived in South Africa in 1908 and established the Apostolic Faith Mission, working with both Afrikaner and indigenous African workers.3 Others left for the Bahamas in 1910 and for British East Africa in 1911. Pentecostal phenomena broke out in a missionary convention in Taochow,4 China in 1912 when William Simpson (1869-1961), missionary in China and Tibet from 1892-1949, became a Pentecostal. Simpson travelled throughout China, much of the time by foot, assisted in the training of Chinese ministers, and became one of the best-known missionaries of Pentecostalism.5 Another pioneer Pentecostal missionary was H.A. Baker (1881-1971), missionary to Tibet and China from 1912-1950 and in Taiwan for 16 years until his death in 1971. He worked among tribal peoples in China and established an orphanage in Yunnan.6

The exploits of these and many other Western missionaries were certainly impressive. We can only greatly admire their sacrificial efforts and in most cases, their selfless dedication, as many even laid down their lives through the ravages of tropical disease. They were often very successful in adapting to extremely difficult circumstances; and many showed a servant heart and genuinely loved the people they worked with. They achieved much against what sometimes seemed overwhelming odds. But there were certain ethical issues raised by their frantic and enthusiastic activities. For

2Saayman, 51.
3I am indebted to the Donald Gee Research Centre, Mattersey, England, and its director David Gerard for access to the Pentecostal periodicals of the period 1908-25.
4Confidence, 2:1 (January, 1909) 13-5.
these and many other Pentecostal missionaries, ‘mission’ was understood as ‘foreign mission’ (mostly cross-cultural, 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 evangelise the world before the imminent coming of Christ, and so evangelism was more important than education or ‘civilization’.1

Pentecostals probably did not exhibit the same enslavement to rationalistic theological correctness and cerebral Christianity that plagued many of their contemporary Protestant missionaries. They were not as thoroughly immersed in western theology and ideology as their counterparts. The PMU provided rudimentary training for missionary candidates, but stated that their qualifications had simply to be ‘a fair knowledge of every Book in the Bible, and an accurate knowledge of the Doctrines of Salvation and Sanctification’, to which was added that candidates ‘must be from those who have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost themselves’. There was no shortage of applications, and entrance requirements subsequently became more difficult, including a required two-year training period.2 In less than a year PMU chairman Cecil Polhill referred to problems his organization had with new missionaries. He said that ‘some training was an absolute necessity’ as ‘previous experience’ had shown ‘the mistake and undesirability of immature workers, however zealous and spiritual, going forth to a heathen land’.3 We can only speculate at the mistakes early Pentecostal missionaries must have made. Reports filtering back to the West to garnish newsletters and motivate financial support would be full of optimistic and triumphal accounts of how many souls were converted, healed and Spirit baptized, seldom mentioning any difficulties encountered or the inevitable cultural blunders made.4

Pentecostal Missionaries and ‘Pagan’ Cultures
The first difficulty to be noted was that these early missionaries were ill prepared for the rigours of intercultural and inter-religious communication. Everything happened at great speed, for the early missionaries believed that these were the last days before the imminent return of Christ, and there was no time for proper preparation through such things as language learning and cultural and religious studies. Pentecostal workers from the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant world usually saw their mission in terms of from a civilized, Christian ‘home’ to a Satanic and pagan ‘foreign land’, where sometimes their own personal difficulties, prejudices (and possible failures) in adapting to a radically different culture, living conditions and religion were projected in their newsletters home. In 1911, one British missionary in India expressed this fear as she wrote home from western China to Confidence: “Please pray for us and the people here, who are living and dying in Satan’s kingdom. His reign here is no uncertain one, but a terrible, fearful, crushing rule, driving the people to wickedness and sin such as is not dreamt of in England. It is a force which can be felt everywhere, an awful living presence.”1

They went out, like many other Christian missionaries before them, with a fundamental conviction that the North Atlantic was a ‘Christian’ realm, that they were sent as ‘light’ to ‘darkness’ and that the ancient cultures and religions of the nations to which they were sent were ‘heathen’, ‘pagan’ and ‘demonic’, to be ‘conquered’ for Christ.2 Western culture was ‘Christian’ culture and all other cultures were dark problems to be solved by the light of the gospel, replacing the old ‘paganism’ with the new ‘Christianity’.3 Missionaries went out from the PMU Missionary Training Homes with the conviction that their ‘future labours’ would be among ‘the poor heathen in darkness’.4 Religious intolerance and bigoted ignorance was a common feature of some of these reports, illustrated by a lament from a British PMU missionary in India in 1914, Grace Elkington: “Oh, what a dark, sad land this seems to be, and the longer one lives in it, the more one feels the darkness all around. ... ‘What has Hinduism contributed to Christianity?’ was the subject under discussion [by other missionaries] one evening. ... it was a pity to see young missionaries occupying their time and thoughts with such things, instead of studying and pondering over the Word of God... Why, the best thing any Hindu can do is to die to all his Hinduism and all its distinct lines of thought, and to be baptised into Jesus Christ.”5

Almost four years later, she wrote of Hindu temples as ‘the works of the devil’, and that ‘Ram’ (perhaps she meant Rama) was a ‘favourite god of the Hindus’, and ‘supposed to be an incarnation of the second person of the

2Confidence, 2:6 (June, 1909) 129.
3Cecil Polhill, Confidence, 2:11 (November 1909), 253.
5Skarratt, C., “PMU, India”, Confidence, 4:9 (September, 1911) 214.
9Elkington, G., “Partabgarth”, Confidence, 7:12 (December, 1914) 238.
Hindu Trinity'. Another missionary discussed Hinduism, quoting Paul: 'they sacrifice to devils, and not to God' and said that 'The Devil' was 'at the bottom of all their worship'. At a missionary convention in London in 1924, Walter Clifford, on furlough from India, described Hinduism as 'a religion of fear, not a religion of love' and that many of the Indian holy men were 'demon possessed', because 'you can see the devil shining out of their eyes. They have given themselves over to him'. In north-west India, A.L. Slocum complained about the opposition of Muslims, using pejorative terms: 'Satan seems so entrenched in these Mussalmans that my men were 'demon possessed', because 'you can see the devil shining out of their eyes. They have given themselves over to him'. In north-west India, A.L. Slocum complained about the opposition of Muslims, using pejorative terms: 'Satan seems so entrenched in these Mussalmans that my efforts seem only a drop in the bucket'. Young PMU worker Frank Trevitt (who died in China in 1916) sent back this report from 'dark China', obviously identifying a treasured Chinese national symbol with the devil: 'This is heathendom truly, without light or love, not even as much as a dumb beast would have. Well, we have seen much of this spirit, which truly is the 'Dragon's' spirit, which is as you know, China's ensign... Oh, how one's heart longs and sighs for the coming of Christ's glorious Ensign, to be placed where the Dragon holds such sway.'

Later on, Trevitt referred to Tibetan Lama priests as Satan's 'wicked messengers', and that 'Satan through them hates Christ in us'. John Beruldsen reported on a visit to a Mongolian 'Lama Temple' in Beijing and describes a priest worshipping 'a large idol from 90 to 100 English feet high'. He comments, 'One could almost smell and feel the atmosphere of hell in these places. Poor benighted people! The power of God could save them from it all, if only they knew it.' Fanny Jenner, observing religious rituals in Yunnan, China wrote, 'the heathen spent one whole day in worshipping the graves of relatives—burning incense and weeping and wailing. Oh the mockery of it all. How Satan blinds their minds!' Elizabeth Biggs reports from Likiang on a visit to a Tibetan Buddhist lamasery that 'the seat of Satan might be a good name for such a place', because 'the demonic power was keenly felt, and the wicked faces of these lamas haunted us for many days after. Miss Agar tells of the 'tortures of the Buddhist Purgatory' and how she was 'anew impressed with the strong resemblance between Roman Catholicism and Buddhism'.

In Africa, the situation was perhaps worse. British Pentecostal missionary Norman Burley gives graphic illustrations of his confrontations with the 'powers of darkness'. He wrote in 1921 of his encounter with 'three of Swaziland's greatest witch doctors, dressed in the most fearsome costume (?) of their devilish trade'. He describes them 'chanting a weird lewd song' and that 'a word from Heaven's Court assailed and broke down the arrayed power and splendour (?) of Satan's assembly' so that they 'had to disband'. Later, he describes a 'large heathen Kraal' with a family gathering for a traditional ritual killing, where 'all are called by the father to lay their hands on the sacrifice, while he calls upon Satan and his demons to behold their devotion, begging that sickness be kept from the Kraal. In yet another report, he describes 'all their demon and ancestral worship paraphernalia', which include a big drum, a 'demon designed and a demon-looking headgear', spears and axes, 'several bundles of “muti” (charm medicines), dishes on which food was wont to be offered to demons and to Satan himself', baskets and clothes that were used 'at no other time and for no other purpose than in such devil worship, and by no other than a fully initiated medium'. There followed a baptismal service in which nineteen converts 'stripped themselves of their heathen ornaments and charms', and cast them into the river of baptism. The fact that so many inaccurate, confrontational and tendentious comments were published in leading British Pentecostal periodicals not only displays the ignorance and prejudices of these missionaries, but also is in itself a reflection of the prevailing cultural and religious ethos of early Pentecostals. This is a far cry from the strategy of Paul, who used existing religious concepts to proclaim his message and was even commended for not blasphemying the goddess Artemis.

Early Pentecostal missionaries were mostly paternalistic, often creating dependency, and sometimes were overtly racist. The attitudes of some of them left much to be desired, to put it mildly. In one shocking report, Fred Johnstone, a missionary writing to Confidence from the Congo in 1915 speaks of the 'practically nude natives' who were 'very raw and superstitious'. The missionaries had carriers, who not only bore their heavy luggage for many days on end, but also piggybacked the missionaries across streams and swamps. Some of the carriers became drunk and violent, and the missionaries' solution was to give them 'a thrashing with a club'. These are only a few examples of the pervasive cultural and religious racism displayed by some early Pentecostal missionaries.
Johnstone reports, 'The natives came to meet their new "mukelenge" (or white chief) for fully a mile from the mission station'. Two months later, Confidence published another report from Johnstone from 'the wilds of darkest Africa', where he describes the Lulua as a 'very raw, superstitious, and indolent race' who were 'gradually becoming a little more accustomed to the white man and his ways and, praise God, His message of love'. But fortunately, this missionary was still on a learning curve. Two years later, as he left his mission for furlough in England he wrote: 'It was very hard to say good-bye to the dear natives whom I had learned to love so much, especially the young teachers in training."

But racism was too frequent in missionary reports. The conference address published in Confidence an address by a missionary from Africa, Miss Doeking, 'Leopard's Spots or God's masterpiece, which?', referring to African people as follows: "The savage is God's opportunity, the masterpiece of our common creator, who delights in tackling impossibilities... unless the superior races are ready to humble themselves, we may yet witness such an awakening of the despised races as will put to shame the pride of their superiors."

The so-called 'superior races' of Europe were at that very time engaged in such a horrible and dehumanising war that the rest of the world could be forgiven for wondering who were actually the 'savages'. The incriminations went on. In South Africa, the Apostolic Faith Mission had by 1917 separated the 'white' churches from the others, and declared, 'we do not teach or encourage social equality between Whites and Natives'. An English worker in India described her visit to a 'low caste village' with a 'little organ' singing hymns, and commented, 'They are so dull and ignorant and have to be taught like children in the K.G. classes', but added patronizingly, 'They followed intelligently, as was shown by their remarks'. Her companion missionary obviously felt the same way, speaking of 'these village women of India', and 'how dull they are, and how slow to grasp anything new'.

The missionaries in China had better relationships with the people and were generally not as disparaging in their comments. Whether this was because of the influence and experience of Cecil Polhill or the fact that China, unlike India and Africa, was never colonised, is an interesting question. Nevertheless, by 1916 the missionaries were leaving the organising of a Christmas conference in Likiang to the Chinese, with whom they shared meetings, meals and accommodation; and the missionaries declared that they were 'indeed a happy family'. However, these reports continued to carry innuendos, as a few sentences further, the same report quipped, 'The Chinese are not renowned for their truthfulness!' A particularly interesting account of missionary identification was provided for his home church in 1923 by Alfred Lewer, who dressed Lisu garb and ate as a Lisu in the presence of the Chinese Official at New Year festivities. Lewer had obviously made cultural decisions, forbidding the wearing of pigtails for Christians, and saying 'we have taught our Christians that they must not bow down to anyone'—a contravention of Chinese custom, especially for the Lisu, a subjugated people. His comments mix insight with innuendo:

From a Chinese point of view it was awful for me, a foreigner, to eat with slaves, but through the grace of God we are all of one family, Hallelujah!... One has to think Yellow out here, and I assure you it is a queer way of thinking at times. The above incident is one of the greatest victories we could have had.... Do not think it meant any sacrifice to me, it was all enjoyment. Yet I do think love changes things, for a lover will do anything for the one he loves, and I believe we need a real love for our work at home and abroad.

The Missionary Purpose of Tongues

Another cultural insensitivity emanating from the early Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism resulted in a failure to engage in serious language study. Charles Parham, William Seymour and many of the first Pentecostals believed that through Spirit baptism, actual foreign languages had been given them to preach the gospel throughout the world. As Gary McGee has recently shown, this was a widespread belief among 'radical evangelicals' at the end of the 19th Century. By 1906, the year of the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostals almost universally believed that when

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they spoke in tongues, they had spoken in known languages (xenolalia) by which they would preach the gospel to the ends of the earth in the last days. There would be no time for the indeterminable delays of language learning. Early Pentecostal publications were filled with these missionary expectations, and the gift of tongues was often referred to as the 'gift of languages'. In the first issue of Azusa Street's *The Apostolic Faith* (September 1906), the expectations of early North American Pentecostals were clear: "The gift of languages is given with the commission, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' The Lord has given languages to the unlearned Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu and languages of Africa, Hindu [sic] and Bengali and dialects of India, Chippewa and other languages of the Indians, Esquimaux, the deaf mute language and, in fact the Holy Ghost speaks all the languages of the world through His children".1

In the earliest issues of *The Apostolic Faith*, such accounts abound on every page. The first issue also reported that when Alfred and Lilian Garr received the Spirit, the first white pastors to do so at Azusa Street, they had 'received the gift of tongues, especially the language of India and dialects', they had both been able to speak in Bengali, and Lilian Garr had even spoken Tibetan and Chinese. They were among the earliest Pentecostal 'missionaries'. The Spirit had apparently not revealed at the time that there were well over a thousand Indian languages, but the undaunted missionaries went off to Calcutta in 1907 fully expecting to speak Bengali on their arrival. Although disillusioned about their language abilities once they got there, they persevered and were invited to conduct services in a Baptist church where a Pentecostal revival began. Unlike many others who returned home disheartened, the Garrs stayed for some time and later went to Hong Kong to study Chinese.3

The next issue of *Apostolic Faith* continued the theme of tongues as languages to preach the gospel, or *xenolalia*, and reported that Sister Hutchins had received the gifts of speaking 'Uganda' [sic] but surprisingly, she went to Liberia. A young girl receives 'the language of Africa', a preacher's wife begins to speak French, a missionary to Palestine testifies to speaking 'eleven or twelve languages', and a young woman speaks a 'dialect in Africa' with a 'perfect accent' as well as 'two Chinese dialects'.4 The following issues of *Apostolic Faith* in 1906 and 1907 still mention xenolalia,1 the December 1906 issue again linking the baptism in the Spirit with the ability to speak the languages of the nations. Spirit baptism not only 'makes you a witness unto the uttermost parts of the earth', it declared, but it also 'gives you power to speak in the languages of the nations'. Pentecostal apostle to Europe, T.B. Barratt, writes that he 'must have spoken seven or eight languages... one foreign tongue after another' when he received Spirit baptism in New York. G.W. Batman, writing en route to Liberia, believes he can 'speak in six foreign tongues given me at God's command'.2 The next issue of *The Apostolic Faith* carried a report from Liberia that one of the missionaries from Los Angeles 'had been able to speak to the people in the cri [sic] tongue'. The paper continues to give testimonies of people who spoke 'the languages of the nations', and there are reports of people speaking Syriac, Armenian, Chinese, Korean, English (in Norway), Italian, Hebrew, 'High German', Japanese, Spanish and Latin, among others.3

As the first reports from Pentecostal missionaries in the field begin to be published in *The Apostolic Faith, xenolalia* was noticeably less frequent. The April 1907 issue carried reports from Liberia, Calcutta and Hawaii. A letter from Poona, India gives a firsthand account of the Mukti revival. A missionary, Albert Norton, speaks of hearing about the revival 'about six months ago' (about September 1906), and he describes 'illiterate Marathi women and girls' speaking idiomatic English. Significantly, this issue of *The Apostolic Faith* makes much more reference to 'unknown tongues' and tongues with interpretation than previous issues did.4

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1 There are five instances of xenolalia in the November 1906 issue of *The Apostolic Faith* (3). The first is 'a Swedish sister... given the gift of the English language with the understanding of the words' (p 2), and the testimonies of Ardell Mead, who received 'an African dialect' (p 3), Lucy Leatherman who spoke Arabic, Henry McLain who spoke 'the Mexican language', and a twelve year old girl who 'preaches and signs in the Indian language' (p 4).

2 *Apostolic Faith*, 4 (December, 1906) 1, 3, 4. This issue mentions a woman speaking 'many languages, one of them being that of the Kalamath Indians' and another woman speaking in 'Hindustani' (p 1), a man who testifies that the languages at revival 'are real languages', including languages of 'British India', another who speaks in Kru and Italian (p 3), a woman speaking Chinese and Japanese, and others speaking African dialects (p 4). The January 1906 issue speaks of a mother given 'the Hawaiian language' (p 1).

3 *Apostolic Faith*, 7 (April, 1907) 1, 2. There is one report from Florence Crawford about people speaking in 'the African tongue' and in Italian in meetings in Oakland (p 3), and one from Spokane where a businessman is reported to have spoken in 'Holland-Dutch, Chinese and other languages' (p 4). The eighth *Apostolic Faith* (May 1907, 1, 3) carries several testimonies of xenolalia and gives a report from Minneapolis of a woman who spoke successively in Polish, 'Bohemian', Chinese, Italian and Norwegian.

4 *Apostolic Faith*, 2, 1-3.
One wonders how the identification of these ‘languages’ was arrived at. Perhaps it was the sound that gave the particular clue. The ‘ends of the earth’ to which God’s people were to be witnesses surely meant China to North Americans and Europeans, and an analysis might reveal that Chinese was the most frequent language ‘spoken’ in these reports. But a closing paragraph in Apostolic Faith, quoting from Banner of Truth suggests that behind these evaluations was an implicit paternalism, ethnocentrism, and perhaps even racism: “There are 50,000 languages in the world. Some of them sound like jabber. The Eskimo [sic] can hardly be distinguished from a dog bark. The Lord lets smart people talk in these jabber-like languages. Then He has some child talk in the most beautiful Latin or Greek, just to confound professors and learned people.”

Reports of xenolalia continue well into the twenties, and this phenomenon was always regarded as the ultimate ‘tongues’. A missionary in China writes of a Bible woman who could not speak a tribal language but was understood in that language as she preached in Chinese. William Burton writes of Luba people in the Congo on whom ‘the Spirit fell’ resulting in them praising God ‘in beautiful English’.

A Catholic priest in India is reported as having heard someone’s tongues as ‘perfect Syriac’. But despite these sporadic and isolated instances, the ‘languages’ turned out for the most part to be unknown tongues. Reports from the field abound with hints of the frustrations these missionaries felt because they could not communicate in the languages of the people to whom they were so sure God had sent them. There are no accounts of what happened when they spoke in tongues to their bemused or astonished listeners. Some missionaries turned their frustrations against the very languages they were trying to learn. After berating the Catholic opposition to the Pentecostal mission in the Congo (‘we are praying God for victory against this erroneous doctrine of the Devil’), Fred Johnstone said that it was ‘so difficult to express deep spiritual things in this language, as it is so very poor’.

Many Pentecostal missionaries subsequently resorted to spending time with other missionaries and bringing them to Spirit baptism.

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Many Pentecostal missionaries subsequently resorted to spending time with other missionaries and bringing them to Spirit baptism.

1 Apostolic Faith, 7, 4.
2 Buckwalter, A., “Yunnan”, Confidence, 130 (July-September, 1922) 47.
6 Bays, Protestant Missionary Establishment, 61. The Garrr wrote: ‘Reaching the missionaries is laying the axe at the root of the tree, for they know all the customs of India and also the languages. The only way the nations can be reached is by getting the missionaries baptized with the Holy Ghost.’ Apostolic Faith, 9 (June-September, 1907) 1.

Allan Anderson: Christian Missionaries and ‘Heathen Natives': The Cultural Ethics of Early Pentecostal Missionaries

There was clearly a fundamental adjustment going on, and some missionaries were quite clear on their opinion of xenolalia. By 1912, Dutch Pentecostal missionary Arie Kok could write from Shantung province in China: “So-called Pentecostal people begin to declare that they alone have the Holy Spirit, and that all those who do not belong to them have Him not... Then they reject study of the language as being human, and are spending years in the field without result. They are speaking and shouting in Tongues until after midnight, and disturb the night rest of others, and, being told so, they answer that they have to obey the Holy Spirit.”

Missionaries like Kok, however, turned this seeming setback to their advantage as they began to rely more on indigenous helpers for the progress of the work. He later writes as follows: “One can imagine the difficulty which confronts the missionary in the language problem... I feel that if the natives themselves do not carry the good news to their own people, the task will be impossible for us foreigners... The Lord is teaching us more and more that the natives are the best evangelists to their own people. So we are praying and believing for a band of native witnesses, filled with the love and the Spirit of God, who are to carry the glad tidings to their own villages.”

Kok’s fellow worker Nellie Tyler shared his enthusiasm for ‘native workers’: “Perhaps the most encouraging work that the Lord is doing in our midst is the calling out of the native workers, and it rejoices our hearts as we realize and behold the way that He is working in them. This indeed is a great need, for one native worker filled with the Spirit of God and a burning desire for the salvation of his people is of greater value than many foreign missionaries, for it takes a Chinese to fully understand a Chinese with their many strange customs and creeds.”

Another missionary reflected, “One realises that there is not only language difficulties to be got over, but the study of the ways and thoughts of the people have also to be mastered in order to become really useful to them and to the Lord.” The inability to speak the languages and understand the culture was bearing lasting fruit after all. The missionaries were turning their attention to learning to be more sensitive to the cultures and languages of the people, and the churches were quickly turning indigenous.

4 Boyce, H., Confidence, 10:1 (January-February, 1917) 11.
The missionaries may not have foreseen or planned this result, but it was one that was to be of vital importance for the future. Missions like the Congo Evangelistic Mission rejected the use of interpreters and thus forced their workers to learn languages, for as James Salter rightly observed, 'To learn the language is the way to the hearts of the people'. But Burton's policy was clearly stated in 1925: 'The great needs are Spirit-filled native evangelists, and a few white workers to superintend and help them'.

Forty-five years after Burton had begun this mission in 1915, it was still directed by an all white Field Executive Council and had sixty-five missionaries working in fourteen mission compounds.

It seems that not all Pentecostal missionaries were convinced of the virtues of an indigenous church. Cecil Polhill had encouraged his PMU workers in this direction, and a woman in India replied that 'for India at least, it is quite a new thought that the churches should be in the hands of Indian Pastors and Elders', and added wistfully, 'but I am sure it is the Lord's plan'. Polhill wrote a significant article in *Flames of Fire* in May 1917: The following quotations emphasize the supreme fact that the natives themselves must be the chief factor in evangelization:

[CMS Review, March 1917] "The larger advance will come when we have discharged our function as foreign missionaries by establishing in the several non-Christian lands indigenous, self-propagating churches, and have committed to them—either with or without subordinate assistance from us—the completion of the work of evangelization."

With astonishing insight for this period, nurtured by his many years of association with the China Inland Mission, the English aristocrat Polhill went on to assert: "Is not that day far nearer in not a few of our fields of work in Asia and Africa than we as yet commonly recognize? The Christians are reckoned by their thousands and tens of thousands. In nature and temperament they are far better qualified than we to present the message to their fellow countrymen. Intellectually they are often fully our equals. Spiritually the power that works in us is also the power that works in them....These are things of high mission policy. Meanwhile the biggest service that the individual missionary can offer will over and over again be known and trusted as a true friend, quietly to live down antipathy and suspicion where it exists, watchfully and generously to seek for opportunities of surrendering to the native brother or sister a task which the foreigner could more easily fulfill himself."

There are signs that PMU missionaries took his advice seriously. Indigenous leadership was to become one of the strongest features of Pentecostalism throughout the world, and not only in the PMU. Burton's Congo Evangelistic Mission placed a high priority on the training of 'native evangelists' from the start. Clearly, the failure of the belief in the 'languages of the nations' given at Spirit baptism did not mean that all was lost. Frank Macchia points out: "Though the mistaken notion of tongues as divinely given human languages as an evangelistic tool was abandoned, the vision of dynamic empowerment for the global witness of the people of God... remains fundamental to a Pentecostal understanding of tongues."

It was for this reason that the Pentecostal mission activity continued at full strength. Alexander Boddy penned the prevalent optimism of Pentecostal leaders when he described the 'Hall-Marks' of Pentecostal baptism in August 1909. The fifth 'Hall-Mark' was what he called the 'Missionary Test': "In spite of what seemed to be a disappointment when they found they could not preach in the language of the people, and in spite of mistakes made chiefly through their zeal, God has blessed, and now more than ever the Pentecostal Movement is truly a Missionary Movement. With more training now an increasing band of missionaries is in the field or going out... to preach Christ and Him crucified to the heathen people, often in very hard places, amidst terrible difficulties."
However, although discarding the belief in xenolalia, Pentecostal missionaries from the West in later years continued to promote the dominance of European languages (especially English), and few took the trouble to learn to communicate in the languages of the heart, the mother tongues, preferring to use indigenous interpreters. This was a major disadvantage, for although it facilitated the expansion of indigenous churches over which the missionaries had little effective control, it created a barrier to effective communication and may have amounted to a failure in love.

**Historical Imperialism**

One of the greatest disservices done to the worldwide Pentecostal movement is to assume that this was a ‘made in the USA’ product. This is reflected in the debate about Pentecostal origins. Hollenweger and others correctly point to the significance of the Azusa Street revival as a centre of African American (and oral) Pentecostalism that profoundly affected its very nature. But when Los Angeles is assumed to be the ‘Jerusalem’ from which the ‘full gospel’ reaches out to the nations of earth, the truth is distorted and smacks of cultural imperialism. There were in fact many ‘Jerusalems’: Pyongyang, Beijing, Poona, Wakkerstroom, Lagos, Valparaiso, Belem, Oslo and Sunderland, among other centres. As Everett Wilson has observed, Pentecostalism has had many beginnings, and there are many ‘Pentecostalisms’. Azusa Street was certainly significant in reminding North American Pentecostals of their non-racial and ecumenical origins and ethos. A choice between Parham and Seymour is an important theological decision to make in defining the essence of Pentecostalism. The Azusa Street revival has given inspiration to many Black South African Pentecostals, for many decades denied basic human dignities by their white counterparts in the same Pentecostal denominations, some founded by Azusa Street missionaries.

1. This theme is repeated in a footnote to a recent article by L. Grant McClung, Jr., “Try to Get People Saved: Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology”, Dempster, Klaus & Petersen, *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 49, n11.


3. Anderson, A., ‘Dangerous Memories for South African Pentecostals’, Allan Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 105; Anderson, Bazilwane, 23; Anderson, Zion and Pentecost, 58, 85. Emissaries from Azusa Street and Zion City, Tom Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake, who reported back to Seymour, founded the first Pentecostal church in South Africa, the Apostolic Faith Mission, in 1908. Henry M. Turney, who went to South Africa in 1909 and was associated with the formation of the Assemblies of God there, was an Azusa Street product.

But there were places in the world where Pentecostal revival broke out quite independently of the Azusa Street revival and in some cases even predated it. The ‘Korean Pentecost’ began among missionaries in Pyongyang in 1903. This revival seemed to have been unaffected by the 19th Century ‘Evangelical awakenings’; it predated the 1904 Welsh Revival, and it quickly took on an indigenous character of its own. The Korean revival affected other revivals like the Manchurian Revival of 1908, and irrevocably changed the face of East Asian Christianity. In this context, it is important to note which movement preceded which. Korean Pentecostals are unanimous in acknowledging the contribution of the earlier revival to their own movement. The revival greatly influenced the present dominance of the Charismatic movement in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches there, many of whose characteristic practices have been absorbed by the ‘classical’ Pentecostal churches (like Yonggi Cho’s Yoido Full Gospel Church) that came much later. Furthermore, in spite of North American missionary participation, early Korean revival leaders in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches were much more ‘Pentecostal’ than the missionaries would have wanted them to be.

Daniel Bays has shown that the influence of Pentecostalism in China ‘accelerated the development of indigenous churches’, particularly because Pentecostals were closer to the ‘traditional folk religiosity’ with its ‘lively sense of the supernatural’ than other churches were. Most of the Chinese indigenous churches today are Pentecostal ‘in explicit identity or in orientation’. Bays says that Pentecostalism in China, ‘especially its egalitarian style and its provision of direct revelation to all’, also facilitated the development of churches independent of foreign missions. This was equally true of Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America—something the early Pentecostal missionaries from the West could not have anticipated and perhaps would not have encouraged.

Similarly in India, the 1905-1907 revival at Pandita Ramabai’s Mukti Mission in Poona, in which young women baptized by the Spirit had seen visions, fallen into trances and spoken in tongues, was understood by Ramabai herself to be the means by which the Holy Spirit was creating an


indigenous form of Indian Christianity.\(^1\) The Apostolic Faith greeted news of the Indian revival in its November 1906 issue with ‘Hallelujah! God is sending the Pentecost to India. He is no respecter of persons’. There is no mention of missionaries or of Ramabai’s mission, but it suggests that there, ‘natives... simply taught of God’ were responsible for the outpouring of the Spirit, and that the gifts of the Spirit were given to ‘simple, unlearned members of the body of Christ’.\(^2\) Pentecostal missionaries worked with the Mukti Mission for many years and Ramabai received support from the fledgling Pentecostal movement in Britain.\(^3\) However, as Satyavrata has pointed out, ‘the original Pentecostal outpouring’ in India took place much earlier than Mukti, in Tamil Nadu in 1860 under the Tamil evangelist Aroolappan.\(^4\) Although the Mukti revival itself may not have resulted directly in the formation of Pentecostal denominations, it had other far-reaching consequences that penetrated parts of the world untouched by Azusa Street. By 1912, American Pentecostal missionary George Berg exulted about his ‘native workers’: ‘God has given me a noble band of workers in South India, second to none other in any foreign field’.\(^5\)

In 1907, North American revivalist Willis Hoover, Methodist Episcopal minister in Valparaíso, Chile, heard of the revival in Ramabai’s orphanage through a pamphlet by his wife’s former classmate Minnie Abrams. Later he enquired about the Pentecostal revivals in other places, especially those in Venezuela, Norway and India among his fellow Methodists.\(^6\) The revival in his church in 1909 resulted in Hoover’s expulsion directly in the formation of Pentecostal denominations, it had other far-reaching consequences that penetrated parts of the world untouched by Azusa Street. By 1912, American Pentecostal missionary George Berg exulted about his ‘native workers’: ‘God has given me a noble band of workers in South India, second to none other in any foreign field’.\(^5\)

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This may be one of the most important reconstructions necessary in Pentecostal historiography. An obscure history of Pentecostalism has been taken for granted for so long that the multitudes of nameless ones responsible for the grassroots expansion of the movement have passed into history unremembered, and their memory is now very difficult to retrieve. Everett Wilson’s essay on Pentecostal historiography warns us of the futility of expecting either ‘to find a homogeneous Pentecostal type at the beginning’ or ‘to assume that the experience of the first set of Pentecostals provides a model for the future’. He says that it is the ordinary people, those ‘who were not at all certain where they were going’ who carried the movement through its various stages to make an impact. He points out that the future of Pentecostalism lies not with the North Americans but with the autonomous churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, whose origins often predate those of the ‘classical Pentecostals’ in the West.\(^4\) Klaus and Triplett remind us that Pentecostals in the West ‘have a tendency toward

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\(^2\) Apostolic Faith, 3, 1. Another report on the revival in India is printed in The Apostolic Faith the following month: Apostolic Faith 4, 4. A report in The Apostolic Faith in September 1907 (10, 4) from Ceylon suggests that the Mukti revival did not experience tongues until December 1906, after receiving reports from Los Angeles, but this appears to be inaccurate.

\(^3\) Confidence, 1:6 (September, 1908) 10.


\(^1\) Wagner, 23-5.


\(^3\) Bays, ‘Protestant Missionary Establishment’, 54.

\(^4\) Wilson, 103-4, 106, 109.
triumphalistic affirmation of missionary effectiveness. This is often bolstered by statistics proclaiming that ‘Pentecostals/Charismatics’ are now second only to Catholics as the world’s largest Christian grouping. When this is assumed implicitly to be largely the work of ‘white’ missions, the scenario becomes even more incredulous. Despite the undeniably courageous work of the early Pentecostal missionaries from the West, the more important contribution of indigenous evangelists and pastors must be properly recognized. A hankering after a ‘conquest of the heathen’ that has tended to dominate Pentecostal missions from the West creates more problems than it attempts to solve, particularly in those parts of the world where Christianity has been linked with colonial expansionism. Most of Pentecostalism’s rapid expansion in the 20th Century was not mainly the result of the labours of missionaries from North America and western Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was rather the result of the spontaneous indigenisation of the Pentecostal message by thousands of preachers who traversed the continents with a new message of the power of the Spirit, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

Cultural Insensitivities
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 insensitivities on the part of the missionaries, many of which have been already illustrated. Early Pentecostal missionaries frequently referred in their newsletters to the ‘objects’ of mission as ‘the heathen’, and were slow to recognize indigenous leadership. Missionary paternalism, even if it was ‘benevolent’ paternalism, was widely practised. Polhill in the first issue of Flames of Fire referred approvingly to China’s planned annexation of Tibet, because this would open up access to this country for missionaries. In Africa, in country after country white Pentecostals followed the example of other expatriate missionaries and kept control of 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. The truth was often that the churches grew in spite of (and not because of) these

missionaries. As Gary McGee has remarked, “Historically, most Pentecostal missionaries paternalistically guided their converts and mission churches until after World War II (for some to the present). Ironically, in their zeal to encourage converts to seek spiritual gifts...they actually denied them the gifts of administration and leadership.”

Early in the formation of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, African pastors were given only nominal and local leadership opportunities, the races were almost immediately separated in baptisms and church gatherings, and apartheid became the accepted practice of the church. Although African pastors and evangelists were largely responsible for the growth of the movement in South Africa, they have been written out of history—with the exception of Nicholas Bhengu, whose enormous contribution to the development of the South African Assemblies of God was impossible to ignore. It cannot be wondered that the schisms that occurred within the Apostolic Faith movement from 1910 onwards resulted in hundreds of other denominations and the creation of the largest church in South Africa today, the Zion Christian Church. These African Pentecostal churches, although perhaps not ‘classical Pentecostals’ in the usual sense of the word, now represent almost half of the African population.

There are also examples from later Pentecostal mission history. In Africa’s most populous nation Nigeria, the Christ Apostolic Church was founded in 1941 by Pentecostal evangelist Joseph Babalola, after British Pentecostal missionaries objected to Africans using the ‘water of life’ (water that had been prayed for) in healing rituals. African Pentecostal churches in Nigeria today far outnumber those founded by European missionaries. The African leaders in turn found the missionaries’ use of quinine to prevent malaria inconsistent with their proclamation of healing. We can only wonder whether water or quinine had the upper hand in the exercise of faith in this instance. It was not a light decision for the missionaries to take, however. The biggest killers of Pentecostal missionaries who preached divine healing were malaria and other tropical diseases. William Burton struggled hard with this issue and finally decided that the facts were against him. He needed to stay alive to do what God had called him to do in the Congo and for him, this meant taking quinine. At about the same time in Ghana, British Apostolic missionaries found a large African church wanting to work with them, but the Europeans insisted that they substitute their calabash rattles used in worship (part of a well established African

3Satyavrata, 212.
5Flames of Fire, 1 (October, 1911) 1.

2Anderson, Zion and Pentecost, 60-70.
3Anderson, Zion and Pentecost, 13, 41.
Christian tradition) for tambourines. The Africans apparently thought that the missionaries wanted to deprive them of their power to ward off evil spirits. The same missionaries later fell out with the Africans over the use of quinine. Many of these and similar struggles were evidence of cultural misunderstandings and insensitivity that could have been avoided.

Sometimes Pentecostal missionaries found conditions in the 'field' quite intolerable, including the people they were meeting. A missionary writing from Berbera, Somaliland to his British supporters in 1908, probably expressed the pent-up feelings of many: "The great majority of the people here are Mahomedans [sic], and very ignorant and superstitious, and poverty reigns supreme among thousands of them. Lying, stealing, and begging are the principal occupations of the poor class, and they do not think it any disgrace to have it known."

It seems that this particular missionary didn't send any further letters after this picture of hopelessness; perhaps he gave up. Other missionaries were patronizing and impolite. One woman, writing from Mbabane, Swaziland in 1911, spoke of the work among 'the native boys', quickly explaining that 'all [African males] are called "boys"—from infancy to grey hairs'. Another Pentecostal missionary in Johannesburg writes of the 'Holy Spirit coming down on these black boys [mine workers] in such power'. The use of 'boys' to refer to grown African men was a common practice among Pentecostal missionaries.

Accommodation was also found to be intolerable, as missionaries sought to recreate the comforts of 'home'. Two British missionary women in India wrote home in 1912 to complain about the fact that no Europeans lived in that district and that 'there are only native mud houses here, and these are most unhealthy for Europeans to live in', although conceding, 'We could perhaps (with God's grace) manage for a short time in one'. But not all had this attitude, for twelve years later a Scottish Pentecostal missionary in West Africa, Matthew Sinclair, did 'manage' for much longer to live in a small room of an African house without windows and filled with smoke. He was looking forward to getting 'my little mud hut put up before the rainy season comes on'. A PMU missionary in Tibet, Amos Williams, described Tibetan food, of which 'only those who know anything about Tibetan life will fully understand how unpleasant it really is'. His partner Frank Trevitt reported that they had 'only wild Tibetans about us continually', and spoke of Tibet as 'this dark, priest-ridden country'. Because Melvin Hodges in his *The Indigenous Church* was writing primarily for North American 'missionaries', he often struggles with the limits of identification with the culture of the receiving people. McGee quotes an Assemblies of God missionary in Burkina Faso who said that although the Mossi people were 'mentally inferior to other tribes', they could 'be trained to a very satisfactory degree'. Although not all missionaries could be credited with such blatant racism, up until the last decade of the 20th Century, 'Missionary Field Fellowships' and other closed clubs of expatriate Pentecostal missionaries have so controlled financial resources, buildings and educational institutions that they have estranged themselves from and created untold resentment among the people they are seeking to serve.

The Pentecostal experience of the power of the Spirit should constitute a unifying factor in a deeply divided church and world, the motivation for social and political engagement, and the catalyst for change in the emergence of a new and better world. The divine Paraclete is also a gentle dove who comes alongside to help, and brings peace and sensitivity to those who are filled with the Spirit. Such an infusion of the Spirit has ethical consequences. The coming of the Spirit was also the reason for an unprecedented flexibility on the part of its emissaries to the various cultures into which the Pentecostal message was taken. But the remaining task of the church to be done in the 21st Century must be defined, not by mission strategists and policy makers in the powerful and wealthy nations of the world, but by the people living in the world's most marginalized parts. Only by 'listening to the margins', by allowing the hitherto voiceless to speak, and by recognizing the contribution of those unsung Pentecostal labourers of the past who have been overlooked in our histories and hagiographies, will we together come to a honest appraisal of

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1Slingerland, S. S., "Berbera, British Somaliland", *Confidence*, 1:3 (June, 1908) 23.
4Clark, M., & Skarratt, C., Savda, E., "Khaudesh, India", *Flames of Fire*, 5 (April, 1912) 4; *Confidence*, 5:2 (February, 1912) 47.

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5Hodges, 121-2.
6McGee, 'Pentecostals and their Various Strategies', 211.
our world’s needs and be able to suggest solutions in the power of the Spirit and in the humility of the Cross.

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Several experiences made me think. On a visit to South India, I was taken to visit a rest home for the elderly of an Indian denomination who had no family to care for them. The houses were simple. It was, for me, a very hot day. It was 40 degrees Celsius and the humidity hovered at 100%. The Bishop had accompanied us on the trip and the people took advantage of my presence to importune the bishop for a blanket for each person. He agreed. Then a truck arrived with about 1000 kilo of manioc roots contributed by a farmer who could not sell them and everyone who was able sat around the pile of roots peeling them so that they could be dried for the winter.

A few months later I sat in a church in Guadalajara and listened as people prayed that one of the body might receive a job, even for only one day. A few weeks later, in a slum in Sao Paolo, I sat with a family while their son’s arm was repaired. He had been roughly robbed of his newly given New Testament that he had been given after learning to read at a shanty school sponsored by the congregation.

Then I returned to the USA and at my institution there was a conference on “Christian Social Ethics.” I listened to well known theologians discussing the various developments in thinking about social ethics and to impassioned pleas for the churches to take seriously their responsibilities to the world about them. There were snide remarks about the eschatological escapism of the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. I sat wondering how my friends in India, Mexico and Brazil would understand these statements. After all, about nineteen million Pentecostals in the world are part of congregations and also live barely at a subsistence level. How does the church of the poor develop a social ethic?

Not being a member of such a congregation, I would not presume to tell them how or why they might develop such. After all, it is my observation that they have already done so and I will return to the stories of my friends in Kottayam, Sao Paolo and Guadalajara a little later.

So, instead of beginning with the theological or programmatic questions, I will begin with historical concerns. How did two Pentecostal church leaders in Scandinavia, Thomas Ball Barratt and Lewi Pethrus, approach social ethics during a time when the Norwegian and Pentecostal churches were not comparatively wealthy.
The Case of Thomas Ball Barratt

Thomas Ball Barratt (22 July 1862-21 January 1940), the founder of Pentecostalism in Europe, began his career as a Methodist Episcopal pastor. The talented son of an expatriate British mining engineer, who had studied music with Edvard Grieg and art with O. Dahl, he experienced “sanctification” in a Methodist Episcopal Church in Bergen and entered the Methodist ministry. He quickly moved up the ecclesiastical ladder. He served as a local pastor (1886-1889), was ordained deacon (1889), pastored Third Methodist Church, Christiania [Oslo] (1889-1892), and was ordained elder (1891). From 1898-1902, he served as presiding elder of the Christiania [Oslo] district which made him even more essential to the Americans.

Each stage of his ministry was characterized by frenetic activity. Driven by his holiness theology to transform his world, he established a national youth program for the church and in his congregations. He was active nationally in the temperance movement. He created (with his sister Mary) an orphanage and a home for unwed mothers. He worked for civil rights for religious dissenters, fought for national independence from Sweden, and was elected a number of times to the city council in Kristiania/Oslo.

The debt ridden congregation in Oslo to which he was assigned in August 1889 had marginal chance for survival unless it became self-supporting and had little hope of becoming self supporting because of the structures of the Methodist Episcopal Church and its mission program. It was a congregation of the poor that was being forced by the structures imposed by the Methodist Episcopal system to function like a congregation with money.

It is clear that already by 1890, Barratt was troubled by the ministry paradigm established in Norway on the American model and administered by the Bishop and the Missionary Society. He wrote extensively for the Norwegian Methodist periodical, Kristelig tidende on two subjects: ministry models and “Christian perfection.” The essays on William Taylor and James Hudson Taylor were more than historical essays. They reflected both the central themes of personal and social holiness, but also his appreciation for the radical ministerial styles of the two Taylors. It was also about this time that he discovered that if every church in Oslo was filled to capacity, only a small percentage of the population could be accommodated in a worship service. In a period that saw significant migration to the cities of those who were unable to survive in the rural areas, none of these churches were either welcoming or had significant success with the urban poor and working classes who had the most to lose by cutting the nominal membership in the state church. Engaging the larger non-church population in ways that they could hear the Gospel became a primary desideratum for Barratt’s ministry, and made the approaches of William Taylor and James Hudson Taylor all the more interesting to the struggling pastor.

Barratt began to examine other paradigms of ministry. He quickly realized that the established church of Norway and the mission churches that transported ecclesial and theological traditions of establishment from other nations (whether the USA, Germany or England) were not going to establish connections with people of Oslo. The onus of membership in these groups was too heavy to overcome. Therefore, the dream became the establishment of a form of the church that could allow for free voluntary association without the social problems posed by membership and that could minister among the poor. One successful ministry in Norway was the Salvation Army which eschewed the traditional trappings of church, and which was determinedly holiness in theology and praxis. He began to cooperate with the Salvation Army and to organize inter-denominational meetings. However, the Salvation Army had the drawback of being too rigid in ecclesiology and membership expectations.

During a visit to England (September 1890-May 1891), at the request of Bishop John Hurst, to raise money for the struggling Third Methodist Church of Christiania (Oslo), Barratt visited Methodist Central Hall in London. It matched precisely what Barratt had been attempting to accomplish in his ministry at Third Church. It offered a structure for a Wesleyan/Holiness ministry to the poor and the exploited working classes. On returning to Christiania (Oslo), he began to explore the possibility of a “Central Mission.” The concept was presented to Bishop M. Walden who ordained him elder in 1891 and Barratt reported in his journal: “it met to a certain extent with his approval. In fact he would endorse the scheme provided the means were forthcoming.”

1The chronology and documentation are established in Bundy, D., “Thomas Ball Barratt: From Methodist to Pentecostal,” EPTA Bulletin, 13 (1994) 19-49.
2Barratt, T. B., “Pintselofiet,” Kristelig tidende 18, 23 (7 Juni, 1889) 177-178 [about William Taylor and self-supporting missions]; idem, “Dikskop William Taylor,” Kristelig tidende, 18, 23 (7 Juni, 1889), 179; idem, “Uddrag af Hudson Taylors Foredrag,” Kristelig tidende, 18, 49 (6 December, 1889), 390.
4Barratt, When the Fire Fell, 67.
5Barratt, When the Fire Fell, 65.
not one to avoid a challenge and immediately reorganized his network of social and evangelistic ministries in Christiania (Oslo) into the Methodist Central Mission under the aegis of Central Methodist Church. Of course, being a Methodist he was soon assigned to another congregation, but refused to give up working with the mission project, and certainly no one else wanted the responsibility.

In 1902, Barratt was given one of his wishes. He was asked by Bishop McCabe to resign from First Methodist Episcopal Church in Christiania (Oslo) and become full time director of the Bymission (City Mission). This was accepted by the Conference only after an emotional appeal from the Bishop and a supportive address by his mentor Ole Olsen. However, the Conference did refuse to give him a furniture or salary! Barratt began his new ministry with neither furniture nor money to care for his family. Bishop McCabe personally took an offering to which he himself contributed significantly in order to get Barratt started in the project.1 The new endeavor began with Barratt renting Tivoli Theatre in central Kristiania (Oslo) where he conducted a series of meetings. These attracted considerable attention in both the religious and secular press with some writers commenting on the “American” aspects of the Bymission. Through that first year, Barratt, his family and a few volunteers used social services, classical concerts and lectures as well as more traditional evangelistic means to reach the city. It was a ministry that offered both sophisticated classical culture at a reasonable price and that offered food, clothing, legal counsel, and shelter to those who needed it. He organized and did prison ministry, organized evangelistic work among the young women who poured from the villages into the Kristiania factories. He published religious literature that offered heroes as well as advice on self-help and holiness. By the end of the first year, the Methodist Conference was ready to give more willing approval, albeit not funding, to the Bymission. They accepted Barratt’s analysis: “Some were afraid that the Mission would weaken the other churches, but this has not been the case. It has strengthened them.”2

After a year of Bymission work, Barratt was still without furniture or decent housing. At the suggestion of the Bishop he wrote to the Missionary Society requesting assistance. The response from the Society was: “You know that it is expected on the Protestant mission field that the people will provide whatever is necessary in the way of property, parsonages and furniture”.3 At this same time, he was reading a biography of William Taylor written by the Swedish Wesleyan/Holiness Movement leader G. A. Gustafson.4 This biographical and missiological treatise brought the problems faced by Barratt into a larger framework.

In Byposten, the range of sources cited and the perspectives offered quickly moved beyond the range of traditional Methodist sources to include Scandinavian pietism, Reformation figures and American independent Wesleyan/Holiness Movement writers. The central foci of the articles were personal holiness, radical social ministry and self-supporting ministry. He was convinced that “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and the continued pursuit of holiness would transform the individual and then motivate and empower them to transform society. The periodical achieved a circulation of about 6,000 with about 1300 regularly paid subscriptions. Barratt was able to attract advertisements for the paper from Kristiania businesses and therefore able to support the paper on a self-supporting basis. Through the contributions provoked by the paper and the reputation of the ministry, he was able, barely, to keep the entire enterprise financially solvent.

At the instruction of the Methodist Episcopal Bishops who saw the potential for this ministry Barratt continued to request funding for the Bymission. Eventually he was asked by the Bishops to raise funding in the USA,5 but the Mission Board made it impossible for him to do so.6 In this crisis over ministry and money, Barratt, in an African American

1Carroll, H. K., to Barratt, T. B., 20 March 1903, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, 73-74, 1263-1-2:09 Letterbook 193 #483.
2Gustafson, G. A., En Apostlagestalt på missionsfält...eller Biskop William Tayloros lif och värksamhet (Falun: Författarens förlag, 1898).
3Much of the information about this period is to be found in Byposten, a periodical designed to inform his constituency and to raise money. There were also articles in numerous Oslo newspapers. The Methodist press was silent! On Byposten, see Bundy, D., “Thomas B. Barratt and Byposten: An Early European Pentecostal Leader and His Periodical,” in Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology. Festschrift in Honor of Professor Walter J. Hollenweger (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, 75; Frankfurt am Main, et al.: Peter Lang, 1992) 115-121.
4Barratt, When the Fire Fell, 98-99. The letters from the Bishops are preserved in the T. B. Barratt Collection, Universitetsbiblioteket, Oslo, Etterlate Papirer Ms. 40 3341, I: Dagboker 9,37. See the analysis of this struggle in Bundy, “Thomas Ball Barratt: From Methodist to Pentecostal.”
5Bundy, “Thomas Ball Barratt: From Methodist to Pentecostal,” 36-37.
congregation in New York, through the prayers of women, found a new religious experience of "baptism in the Holy Spirit".1

When Barratt returned to Kristiania, he was without money or ecclesiastical support. The newspapers of the city mocked this city councilman who spoke in tongues; the cartoonists developed classic images of anti-Pentecostal polemics. The Methodist Episcopal Church, embarrassed, withdrew from Barratt. He was urged not to participate in Methodist events and was eventually "read out" of the Methodist Episcopal Church although in reality the rupture happened in January 1907.2 The Bymission was given over to his assistant and was dismantled by the Methodists. The advertisements from Kristiania businesses disappeared. Barratt was left with his mailing list, the financially strapped periodical, Byposten and his penniless ministry to the poor.

Barratt was starting over. He could not afford the rent on the theatre but was given inexpensive room in a struggling Holiness church that also became Pentecostal. The laity of that congregation remained loyal to their own pastor, as Barratt would appear to have desired. Barratt brought a significant number of his congregants from the Bymission and others were converted. He conducted revival services every day, often at noon, and the building was consistently packed. The congregation moved to and from a number of sites. He was then provided space in a labor union hall where he ministered for several years. There, just down the street from his old Central Methodist Church, he developed a congregation and offered hospitality to hundreds of people from around the world who travelled to Kristiania to see how a Pentecostal personal spirituality, corporate worship, evangelism, and congregational care worked. By June 1907, he had named his congregation the "Filadelfia Church".3

Byposten reflects the financial difficulties of starting over in ministry as well as his new conviction about the centrality of the need for spiritual transformation as a prerequisite for the transformation for the rest of life. The periodical continued as a revival news bulletin. It focused on news of well as his new conviction about the centrality of the need for spiritual

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1Barratt, T. B., "De regelmessige møder i Kristiania," Korsets Seier, (5 Juni, 1910) 96.
2Barratt, T. B., "Grundlæggende sanheder, som forkyndes i denne vækkelse," Korsets Seier, 8. 1 (1 jan, 1911) 5.
3Barratt, T. B., Den evangeliske mission i Møllergatan (Kristiania: n.p., 1912). This was also printed in the May fascicle of Korsets Seier.
Sweden that went from 1878 to 1906. Pethrus knew of her ministry and owned a copy of her periodical, *Trons Hvila*. *En fridskelning från Hvita Bergen*. The ministries that Pethrus developed at the Filadelfia Church were quite like those fostered by Barratt in the context of the Bymission, and administered exactly like Barratt administered his projects. The documentation for the beginning of these ministries appears not to exist, but one can get a sense of them from the pages of *Evangelii Häröld*. There was an Orphanage (Barnhem), a Rescue Mission (Räddningsmission), as well as ministries to women and other exploited persons in the Stockholm area. These were written about in *Evangelii Häröld* and the lists of donations from 1916 onward indicate a steady flow of contributions of monies and goods in kind.\(^1\)

One contribution from Lewi Pethrus to the early Pentecostal Baptist Holiness periodical *Brudsamlings Röst* provides a sense of the scope of the activity of the Rescue Mission. Pethrus laments the economic conditions that plague the country, because of which multitudes are left destitute. The situation was complicated by the hard winter of 1915. Writing in October, Pethrus notes that the Filadelfia Church Räddningsmission had already served 3,669 persons a warm breakfast of warm milk and bread. For others they provided meals of sandwiches and coffee. Hot meals had been served, including 5,441 liters of potatoes and "untold tons of other food stuffs." The article is pleading with the readers to contribute money or food. The *Evangelii Häröld* faithfully reports the arrival of individual loaves of bread and single kilos of meat as well as larger donations of food and funds. Donations are primarily from members of the congregation, and sometimes from workplaces in which the members work. It was argued that this was not only a service opportunity given by God, but also an evangelistic tool for reaching the people of Stockholm.\(^2\) An effort to replicate this experience in Stockholm in Vienna during the dark days following World War I is worthy of attention.

The Swedish Pentecostal Mission to Austria

By late 1919, news of the terrible social conditions in Vienna had permeated Europe. These were due to a convergence of factors: (1) the immigrants and refugees from the East who came to Vienna because of the partitioning of the Austrian Empire after World War I; (2) a flood of the Danube which had destroyed crops and farms in some of the most fertile areas of the country; and, (3) the general social disintegration that developed as the old Hapsburg establishment was swept away after the War. Into this situation came three Swedish Pentecostals who surveyed the situation with a combination of horror and hope: Andrew Ek, Edvin Tallbacka and Alwin Christenson.\(^3\)

These visitors had interesting histories with the Swedish Pentecostal movement. Andrew Ek had visited the Azusa Street Mission in 1906, experienced Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit, and returned to Skövde, Sweden, where he became involved with a small Pentecostal group.\(^4\) He was then called by Lewi Pethrus to the Filadelfia Church in Stockholm to head up the mission program of the Stockholm Filadelfia Swedish Pentecostal church (and by extension that of the other fledgling Pentecostal congregations) during the "open years of 1914-1915."\(^5\) Edvin Tallbacka was an important assistant to Lewi Pethrus. He was the business manager for the Swedish Pentecostal periodical *Evangelii Häröld*, and it appears, for most of the enterprises of the Filadelfia Church. Alwin Christenson was the son of a German mother and a Swedish father. His family was well connected in the early Swedish Pentecostal movement.

Ek, Tallbacka and Christenson went to Vienna via Berlin where they consulted with German and Swiss Pentecostal leaders as to the physical and spiritual needs of the Austrians. Nothing however prepared them for what they encountered. As they walked through the crowded desperate city, they were horrified at the scene of human suffering, deprivation and


2. For example, these are the relevant articles from *Evangelii Häröld* for the year 1916:


degradation. Here they reckoned were a people in need of both the saving Gospel of God, but also of the basics of human existence.  

In addition, there was the encounter with the pervasive influence of the Catholic Church in Austrian government and society. No doubt this perception was reinforced by a visit to a Lutheran Church in Vienna. They spoke to the Sunday School and gave their testimonies in the service. Without doubt, there must have been culture shock on all sides! In a second missive to Stockholm published in Evangelii Hjärdel they told of this visit with the Lutherans, the repression by the Catholic church, the poverty, the low state of public morals, and the lack of care for the children. There were no resources, they reported, to care for the invalids, the homeless and the children.

The Swedish Pentecostal team observed that the Red Cross was undertaking relief efforts, but had no doubt that the crisis was greater than could be solved by that organization. Help from the USA, Switzerland and the Netherlands was useful, but there were still groups of people in dire need. On the return trip to Stockholm, Tallbacka and Ek decided to attempt to provide relief for 1,000 families. This social service, it was argued, would be a way to reach people with the Gospel. It was the logic that energized the Stockholm rescue mission. Acceptance of the idea was slow in Sweden. Most of the converts to Pentecostalism in Sweden came from backgrounds that did not understand social ministry as mission. The funds were slow to come in, however, for support of the people of Vienna. Tallbacka argued in an article in Evangelii Hjärdel that this was indeed “the Lord’s work”. “The Lord,” he averred, “has laid the needy of Vienna on the heart of Andrew Ek....”. He explained that even a modest contribution could make a significant difference in the desperate situations in Vienna.

Back in Vienna, Ek saw the situation in Sweden clearly. He appears to have understood the hesitancy of the Swedish Pentecostals to support relief work as missionary work in Vienna. Therefore, he weighed in with an article that did not mention Vienna, but asked for prayer for unsaved and needy people. Everything in the essay was supported by arguments of eschatological urgency. We are working, he argued, in end times and must use whatever means possible to communicate the Gospel to those who do not know Christ. He sought to motivate people to action by the assertion that “Jesus is coming soon”.

It is clear that support for the project grew over the summer, although it is unclear how many resources were available. The new crops and warmer weather in Vienna were not enough to solve the vast human need, however and more support was needed. Ek worked to provide Bibles and Bible portions for distribution in Vienna and received some funds in Sweden in support of that effort. In a contribution to Evangelii Hjärdel he lamented that the price of a regular meal was now prohibitively expensive due to the prices caused by shortages in Vienna and that this human need made evangelistic work difficult. He asked for prayer. In another letter published in Evangelii Hjärdel, Ek noted that meeting rooms were hard to find and expensive. They had been able to rent rooms in which to live and from which to operate the ministry. What was required was a place to host Bible studies and to organized worship. While there is no evidence that hospitality for Pentecostal worship services was extended to them by Lutherans, he suggested that it was important to find such places for worship because the Lutheran services did not have “freedom in the Spirit”. They needed their own space. He repeated the observation that food was exorbitantly priced, and observed that even obtaining scriptures for distribution were very expensive in Vienna as compared with what was available in Sweden.

For seven months, there had been no public statement on the mission in Vienna from either the mission leaders of the Pentecostal churches, including Tallbacka, or from Lewi Pethrus. From extant sources it is impossible to ascertain the discussions of mission theory and praxis during this period. There is no doubt that the situation in Vienna was different from that encountered by Swedish Pentecostal missionaries in other countries. Finally in December 1920, came a firm endorsement by Lewi Pethrus of the initiative of Ek and Tallbacka. After discussing the biblical model of care for the poor and downtrodden, he exclaimed, “Let us send strong and powerful assistance to the hungry in Vienna!” There was no doubt where the undisputed leader of the Swedish Pentecostal churches

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1 Andrew Ek, “Bedjen utan återvändol!” Evangelii Hjärdel, 5.25 (24 juni 1920), 97.
2 Andrew Ek, “Wien,” Evangelii Hjärdel, 5.36 (9 sept. 1920), 143.
stood on the matter! He had bought into the vision of social ministry, providing an entrée for evangelism within a mission context.\(^1\)

Ek confirmed the argument in an article published in the following fascicle of Evangelii Härold. After citing Matthew 25:40, "What ever you do to the least of these, you do it unto me," Ek again pointed out the pressing human need in Vienna. He reported the prices of basic commodities and told the readers that fuel for cooking and heating was as prohibitively expensive as food. He and Christenson, with the help of converts, were doing what they could to assist those in need. However, this need for basic goods and services was not the only need of the residents of Vienna. He allowed that there was also a pressing spiritual need that was related to the physical needs: "Only God can save them". He recognized that the problems of daily survival were not unrelated to human sinfulness. He made it clear that the primary goal of the team was to minister to the spiritual needs of the Viennese and that any social services provided were merely a means toward an end, not an end in themselves.\(^2\)

Thus began the first mission project in Europe officially supported by the Filadelfia Church in Stockholm. It is important to remember that only a year earlier, the first missionaries actually sent from the Filadelfia Church, the Samuel Nyström family, had gone to Brazil. The Pentecostals had been supporting foreign mission for most of the previous decade, beginning with the work of Daniel Berg in Brazil. However these earlier mission projects had been quite different, but still combining social and evangelistic ministry as they understood it. They had also been quite successful in soliciting nominally Catholic converts and in establishing a Pentecostal culture among the converts. The situation in Vienna was different. It was after all not the capital of an exploited colonial power. It was arguably a city that had been arguably the most cultured city of Europe. They were not seeking to evangelize their cultural inferiors, but their cultural equals or superiors. The fact of food and fuel shortages in Vienna did not detract from this fact. Many countries in Europe, including Sweden, had within recent memory suffered famine.

\(^1\)Petrus, L., "Till de nödlidande i Wien," Evangelii Härold, 5. 50 (16 dec, 1920) 208 [emphasis in original].


What was new was the combining of relief mission with evangelistic mission with the expectation that the people who came for assistance would hear the Gospel, might be converted and then discipled within a Pentecostal framework, and that from that basis, a new religious tradition in Austria could be born. To appreciate the significance of this approach on a more global scale, one has by to look at the narrative provided by William Hutchinson about North American mission theory during this same period. There the tendency was to separate the relief work from evangelistic work. The "conservatives" generally avoided the relief work; the "liberals" generally embraced relief work and educational mission.\(^1\)

The Swedish Pentecostals embraced the relief work both as a biblically founded imperative and as a tool for evangelism. It was an entrepreneurial decision, which sought to make the most of a difficult situation.

Support for the mission in Vienna began to pour into the Filadelfia Church in Stockholm. Lewi Petrus expressed his gratitude for the generosity of the Swedish Pentecostal churches. Their response to the solicitation promoted in the Evangelii Härold was clearly gratifying to him. He was certain, he said, that the efforts of the American relief agencies and the Red Cross would not be sufficient to get people through the hard winter.\(^2\)

Without doubt his personal approbation of the effort was instrumental in the response of the churches. Once he went on record as being in favour of the project, it received the support of the Pentecostal churches.

As the first officially supported Swedish Pentecostal mission effort in Europe, a lot was riding on the outcome of this project. It would either add to or seriously detract from the stature of its instigators and supporters. Leaving nothing to chance, Petrus decided to visit Vienna to examine the situation for himself. After the Pentecostal Leader's conference in Amsterdam, Petrus crossed Germany to visit Austria. In an important contribution to Evangelii Härold, Petrus reported back on both the economic and missional issues. He commented that the prices in Vienna for the basic necessities of life made it impossible to feed a family and that therefore even Ek needed more help than he was currently receiving. He argued that relief work was good in and of itself. The New Testament commanded Christians to minister to the poor and downtrodden. He expressed hope that a "New Testament" style assistance that might be given to the needy, especially the families, of Vienna. He maintained the conviction that with such assistance they might more easily consider

\(^1\)Hutchinson, W., Errand to the World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

conversion. Relief ministry was good and biblical, but it was not the only goal of missionary work. Help poured forth from the Swedish Pentecostal churches. Ek wrote to Evangelii Harald thanking the churches for the 2000 packets containing "wheat-flour, oil, grain, and other things were distributed." He and the other missionaries gave their testimonies before the waiting crowds. In the same letter, he pleaded for more assistance, "Help us... Jesus comes soon." He affirmed: "there is only one who can help people out of this need which is both spiritual and material, and that is the Lord alone."

After the harvests in 1922, the people stopped coming to the Pentecostal mission in Vienna. Most of the converts that had filled Sunday School classes were forced to leave Austria for Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, Australia and the USA because of persecution by the Catholic Church. The Pentecostal church in Austria remained small; the one in Brazil grew to be comprised of millions of believers. The mission to Austria is never discussed in Swedish Pentecostal sources, probably because of the ambiguities about mission and the desire not to allow a failure at church building detract from the efforts of the church to do relief work. Certain there was no second-guessing of the decision or blaming of the missioners as far as can be ascertained from the extant sources.

Conclusion
From these case studies, it is clear that these Scandinavian European Pentecostal leaders were concerned to develop a social ethic. For both Barratt and Pethrus, this was one aspect of Christian responsibility that continued from their Holiness pasts. For each theologian, the missional argument had to do with a combining of the Gospel imperatives to minister to the poor, and the eschatological drive to proclaim salvation to the world before the return of Christ. These case studies would suggest that the churches of the poor were willing to follow the advice of their leaders, pool resources and aid the poor. They would also suggest that their eschatology did not provide an escape from social responsibility, but rather gave it more energy. The disciplined generosity of the myriad Swedish Pentecostals bringing packets of food and clothing and then collecting funds to transport the contributions across Europe would be impressive today, especially given that the Rescue Mission effort in Stockholm continued unabated. Certainly there is enough evidence to question theories of eschatological escapism and to warrant a thorough study of the philanthropy of Scandinavian Pentecostalism.

And, to return to the experiences narrated at the beginning of this paper. My impression is that these churches in Kottayam, Guadalajara and Sao Paolo are doing what Barratt and Pethrus did. They are combining social services and evangelism, giving often of their own poverty, but pooling resources to make a significant difference in the suffering of people. And, yes, they are doing it because the Bible tells them to, and because they are convinced that Jesus is coming soon.

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1 Pethrus, L., "Det svitlände och frysande Wien," Evangelii Harald, 6. 6 (19 Feb, 1921) 21-22. In this article, he again praised the work of the Red Cross.
2 Ek, A., "Wien," Evangelii Harald, 6. 12 (24 mars, 1921) 56.
Some Ethical Implications of Pentecostal Eschatology

Harold D. Hunter

The Place of Eschatology

Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach by Thomas N. Finger proposed eschatology as an integrative motif. A defense for opening a new gate had come by a challenge from Jürgen Moltmann. This opening volume draws attention to eschatology, but then he directs his attention to revelation and closes with the work of Christ. The eschatological orientation of the NT message motivates Finger to begin his theology with last things. But with only a partial reversal, most find the order a disadvantage. A more substantive complaint is that he may not use eschatology as the integrative motif of his theology. Contrast this to classical Protestant theology that follows a trinitarian outline that begins and ends with God. Traditionally, God's work through Christ and the Holy Spirit is illuminated by the nature of God and the predicament of humanity.

When it comes to those matters that have been central to North American member churches of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF), I wish to say that the appropriation of dispensational schemes has been ill-advised. Berkouwer's Return of Christ essentially characterizes my position on matters of a millennium, the role of Israel, and the antichrist. Berkouwer argues, rightly in my estimation, that there are no biblical signs that allow us to work out some kind of historical chronology, but there is the perpetual battle of good and evil and we should always be watchful and remember that Christ is victor. Pentecostal creeds, periodicals, books and tracts that differ with this approach have spawned denominations that, nevertheless, echo my views in practice.

Post-Mortem Maturation

The Roman Catholic teaching on purgatory is a direct contradiction to the typical Protestant idea of passive existence in an intermediate state. It is also related to the conviction of most Protestants that one's eternal destiny is irrevocably decided at the moment of death—in obvious contrast to something like reincarnation. Whereas the Roman Catholic church affirms that upon death those, like the saints, who are ready for the Beatific vision enter into the rest of the blessed and the incorrigibly wicked, the reprobates

into the torments of hell, it also teaches the doctrine of Purgatory. The suffering of Purgatory is not penal but purgative. All those dying in a state of grace, yet tainted with the stain of sin, must undergo this catharsis.

Origen is the first to speak of the "salutary troubles" which the souls "in prison" endure, not as a retribution, but as a benefaction. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, was unambiguous about the heavenly destiny of heroic martyrs. He was equally clear on the definitive character of hell. His problem had to do with the fate of the well-intended Christians who had weakened under persecution. His pastoral problem was whether such basically good people were to be consigned to hell forever. The idea of a process of purification not only in this life but in the next as well seemed welcome to Cyprian. So the central plank of what eventually became the doctrine of purgatory was formulated by the middle of the third century. Augustine extends the purifying trials of death beyond this life and Gregory the Great interprets being saved "yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15) as a description of the pains of purgatory.

A more developed doctrine blossomed during the Middle Ages, particularly starting in the 12th century. The official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is contained in the Decree of the Council of Florence (AD 1429) that souls in the intermediate state "are purged after death by purgatorial or cathartic pains."

Clark Pinnock when reacting to an article on purgatory by a Roman Catholic scholar says, "I cannot deny that most believers end their earthly lives imperfectly sanctified and far from complete. I cannot deny the wisdom in possibly given them an opportunity to close that gap and grow to maturity after death. After all, most Evangelicals accept the position that babies dying in infancy end up in heaven. If so, do they live in heaven as babies or as grown persons? If we think they will be grown persons, where do we suppose that they grow to maturity?" Evangelicals would not think of purgatory as a place of punishment or atonement because of our view of the work of Christ, but we can think of it as an opportunity for maturation and growth.

Isaiah 5:14 which says that Sheol is a place of interaction and recognition and the story of Lazarus cautions one against being too dogmatic regarding


3Pinnock's response to "The Purgatorial View" by Zachary Hayes in Four Views of Hell, 129.

the nature of the intermediate state. Other sympathizers with purgatory include George MacDonald, J.B. Phillips, William Barclay, and C.S. Lewis. Bavinck says, "Gradation of punishment will be in accordance to the knowledge of God's will and law." At the August 23-27, 2000 ICCOWE conference in Prague, Fr. Hilarion Alfeyev, from the Department for External Church Relations at the Moscow Patriarchate, defended the Orthodox Church's position that the fate of a person after death can be changed through the prayers of the Church. During the discussion that followed, Fr. Alfeyev was surprised to learn that J.H. King, pioneer leader for the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), had advocated post-mortem spiritual growth.

**Eternal Punishment?**

Hill is a common translation of the Greek "Ge'henna," from the Hebrew, ge-hinnom, the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem where children were sacrificed in the fire to Molech (2 Chron 28:3, 33:6) and later served as a garbage dump. There are various problems such as reconciling the description as this being a place of darkness (Mt 25:30, 2 Pt 2:17) with statements that it is a place of fire (Mt 5:22; 13:30-50). This is a problem only for literalists. Some have thought that the wicked are annihilated. Such punishment is "eternal" in that those who are annihilated never get over it. Such proponents have to make sense of "eternal" fire (Matt. 18:8; 25:41), "eternal" punishment (Matt. 25:46), "eternal" destruction (2 Thess. 1:9), "eternal" judgment (Mark 3:29).

The lead article for the October 23, 2000 edition of Christianity Today was an open discussion on hell between annihilationists, conditionalists and traditionalists. Given the influence of the National Association of Evangelicals and this magazine in particular on North American Pentecostal ecclesiarchs, a subterranean shift may be underway. The same might be true of the impact of a related discussion at the Evangelical

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2. Alfeyev, H., "Christ the Conqueror of Hell," *International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization,* August 23-27, 2002 in Prague. Although the paper held out the possibility of salvation for those of other religions, less clear was the fate of Pentecostals in Russia. On the other hand, Roman Catholics have been roundly criticized about teaching purgatory by the Orthodox in formal dialogues.


4. In the personal materials of Bishop T. A. Melton at the IPHC Archives and Research Center is the booklet by W. B. Godbey titled *Annihilation* (Greensboro, NC: Apostolic Messenger Publishing Co.).

Group of the American Academy of Religion on professors at Pentecostal seminaries in the USA. When Pinnock published his position on this subject in *Christianity Today* in 1987, Adrian Rogers, then president of the Southern Baptist Convention, used this as proof that Pinnock was getting liberal. The same reception awaited John Stott after publically endorsing this teaching.

Pinnock’s 1992 contribution to the familiar format of InterVarsity Press in *Four Views of Hell*—which covers literal, metaphorical, purgatorial, and conditional—starts with his unabashed commitment to hell as an "unquestioned reality." Reminding Evangelicals that most of them have abandoned ancient doctrines like double predestination, infant baptism, and only one view of the millennium, he says there should be room to debate the nature of hell. Especially so since the eternal punishment of hell has often been portrayed as bringing delight to those in heaven who observe the miseries. Pinnock says that it is not a denial of the reality of hell to interpret its nature as destruction rather than endless torture. He says this view avoids portraying God as being a vindictive and sadistic punisher. Hell becomes the possibility that human beings may choose in their freedom. As he says, "How can God predestine the free response of love?" So again the question of how to understand election enters the fray. It shows that Pinnock is not a universalist.

Also spurning universalism, Finger puts it this way, "Those outside Christ will not be suddenly condemned by an alien, hitherto absent God. Instead the true character of Reality will be fit up ... Even within those who have never heard of Christ, their conscience will 'bear witness ...' (Rom 2:15-16)." Finger certainly finds this more satisfying than the idea of universal salvation which he thinks Evangelicals are taking up de facto. He finds everlasting torment in Tertullian, annihilation in the *Didache*, and universalism in Origen. We are reminded that some of the most graphic pictures of the anguish of hell come from the Apocrypha. Then there are ridiculous stories like how are those without teeth going to gnash their teeth to which a recension of a Gospel text quotes Jesus as saying "teeth will be provided." (Passages looking towards annihilation include: Psalm 37; Malachi 4:1f; Matt 10:28; Matt 3:10, 12; Matt 5:30; 2 Thess 1:9; Gal 6:8; 1 Cor 3:17; Phil 1:28; Rom 1:32; Rom 6:23; Phil 3:19; 2 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 2:1,3,6; Heb 10:39; Jude 7; Rev 20:14f.)
Pinnock is clearly impatient with the idea that this position challenges the authority of scripture since scripture is his recourse. He turns the tables saying that tradition—especially the hellenized immortal soul—has determined the mainstream view of everlasting conscious torment. Pinnock does not flatly rule out that God could give immortality to the wicked for everlasting torment, but asks why God would do so. He finds the idea of sin against an infinite God as insufficient grounds to warrant infinite punishment.

Now to a review by Pinnock of passages used by traditionalists. Mark 9:48 when interpreted in light of Isaiah 66:24 where fire and worms are destroying dead bodies does not require eternal torment of conscious persons. Pinnock finds Matthew 25:46 wanting because of the lack of definition regarding conscious punishment that is eternal. Annihilation has eternal consequences, but the person is not eternally conscious. The parable in Luke 16:23f refers to Hades—the intermediate state between death and resurrection—not to Gehenna—the final end of the wicked.

Pinnock sees Revelation 14:9-11 as the most compelling text. He goes on to say that while the smoke goes up forever, the text does not say the wicked are tormented forever. Finger stresses that eternal torment is aimed at the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. The text says the wicked have no relief from their suffering as long as the suffering lasts. Before oblivion, there may be a period of suffering, but not unendingly according to both Pinnock and Finger. Pinnock reacts to the idea of annihilationists softening the gospel message—by taking away a terror stick used by Dante, Jonathan Edwards, et. al.—by saying that although this makes hell less of a torture chamber, it does not lessen its extreme seriousness. To pass into oblivion and nonbeing while others enter into bliss is a terrifying possibility of misusing our freedom by losing God and destroying ourselves. It does mean they do not go to heaven.

For his part, J. Rodman Williams distances himself from the idea of annihilation. Williams finds support in the lexicon by Thayer and the claim that this position has never had "creedal or confessional status" in the church. Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield lower the population of hell by means of a postmillennial eschatology and the automatic salvation of babies who die in infancy. Classical Pentecostals have an oral tradition that infants, apparently regardless of water baptism or 'dedication', end up in heaven. Naturally this idea has been extended to foetuses, especially those who were aborted. Now are they going to say that the foetus or infants must be from Christian parents or at least a Christian mother? If not, does this say something about proxy faith among Pentecostals? It at least illustrates the Pentecostal preoccupation with actual sins rather than 'original sin.' Although no major Roman Catholic theologian known to me advocates annihilation—nor Orthodox I would imagine—Charles Parham taught annihilation. This teaching is more often associated with the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. All of this puts Pinnock in the heretical category for many North American Evangelicals especially when coupled with his probing of the concept of post-mortem conversion.

Pinnock also makes a great deal of this idea that no one goes to hell except those who choose it. Like Finger, this does not mean only those who have heard the name of Jesus. How different ultimately is Oden's position when Oden says that common grace will save the likes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? In fact "pious Jews of every generation who remain faithful to the covenant (Rom. 11). Gentiles who have not heard of God coming will be judged equitably according to the light given them (Rom. 12:6-16)."^4

There is insufficient scriptural-ecumenical authority for the debatable assertion that those who have not had a fair chance to hear the gospel are consigned peremptorily and immediately to eternal punishment, for all who miss the joy of heaven will have had plausible opportunity to have chosen a better life, yet wilfully refused it. The posturing of Pentecostal Zionists makes this kind of thing an ongoing debate in Pentecostal ranks.

Along with biblical passages that promote the wideness of God's mercy, one has to consider the eschatological implications of Amos 9:7 brought to

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2 There are, it would seem, Orthodox scholars who follow the Origenistic position and thus hold out for the ultimate redemption of the whole universe. This was evident in the paper by Hilarion Alfeyev titled "Christ the Conqueror of Hell" delivered at the International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization conference held August 23-27, 2002 in Prague. Fr. Alfeyev also equated Hades with Hell.
3 At the 1992 edition of American Academy of Religion in San Francisco, Pinnock probed the possibility of post-mortem conversion thus shifting from the position in the above quotation. Parham came to embrace annihilation after being persuaded by a relative of his wife to study these Biblical texts without reading commentaries.
4 Frodin, Oden, Life in the Spirit, 452.
5 ibid, 454.
my attention by an article on Asian theology. Amos challenges the conventional wisdom of the privileged class that had monopolized God and drastically reinterpretsthe Exodus tradition. Here the Ethiopians, the Philistines and Arameans have each in their own history experienced God's saving act. This is the flipside where earlier Amos so clearly utilizes geography in the two opening chapters to put a noose around his audience: 1:3 Damascus, 1:6 Gaza, 1:9 Tyre, 1:11 Edom, 1:13 Ammonites, 2:1 Moab, 2:4 Judah, 2:6 Israel. If Israel is unique—"You alone have I known" (Amos 3:2)—she will not be spared judgment.

Universalists, by contrast, suppose that finally all people will be restored to God's fellowship, for God's very nature is love. But retributive justice is by no means incompatible with love. There are some striking statements in the NT on the universal scope and efficacy of Christ's atoning work. The context, however, seems to place faith and obedience to Christ as requisite for saving benefits of his work. There is no warrant for understanding such universal statements of scripture as promising the salvation of those who wilfully rejected the claims of Christ and die in unbelief. To be sure, the redeemed host will number people from all nations. But this is not to say every individual. But, it is commonly objected, granted that God is not only loving but holy, it would be an intolerable miscarriage of justice that a person, who has sinned threescore years and ten, should suffer the consequences everlastingly.

Oden supporting eternal consequences quotes Augustine and others saying that rape and murder may take minutes, but the consequences go well beyond that. Does this imply that God's purpose has failed? No, but it shows the difference between God's antecedent will to save all and the consequence will of God to deal justly with the ramifications of free human choices.

It must be remembered that hell is not a place of passive suffering (as in some of Dante's visions), but rather a state of active rebellion. "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven," said Milton's Satan. And by the lives they have lived, the wicked have said, "Better to serve Satan than God" even if it be in hell. Eternal punishment means that the character which one chooses in this life is irrevocably confirmed in the life to come. Can they then justly complain of hell which is just that—life without God forever?

2Oden, Life in the Spirit, 456.

This is not to imply that those in hell will be happy with their lot. They neither will be happy in hell nor aspire to heaven. Hell, in other words, is frustration, the reality beyond the myth of Prometheus and the rolling stone.

Leading thinkers of the western world, from Plato to Kant, have regarded penal retribution as a necessary part of a moral universe. In the West from the time of Jeremy Bentham, people have increasingly stressed the remedial function of punishment. But if correction is the only function of punishment, then hell is impossible; for hell, in its essence, is not remedial. The doctrine is that those who sin against God without repentance, shall experience God's wrath without remedy. Eternal consequences which of itself does not demand continuous punishment to infinity.

Cosmic Transformation

In a 1990 issue of Transformation, an account is given of a conference where Peter Kuznic said that Moltmann and others deserve attention for their work on the relation of eschatology to ethics. Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope gave eschatology a centrality in christology. He also wanted to emphasize that the promises of God to humanity do not refer to some ethereal realm into which the soul may now blissfully escape at death, but to the historical future of humankind. God intends that promises for the future bear fruit in world-transforming activity in the present. This does not mean that Moltmann is a rosy optimistic. A few have tried to argue that the future state will be that of disembodiment, but that wholeness now in the present kingdom can bring wholeness to mind, body, society and environment. But this has not been a common position. Something like this is argued by Rodman Williams. Peter Kuznic has argued that affirming continuity "implies that all of our present work for a better world is of eternal significance." Similar arguments have come from Miroslav Volf and Murray Dempster. Then we are reminded of the arguments against cremation since it was said to affect the resurrection of the mind. Now one asks can the new earth come from the ashes of a planet destroyed by nuclear cremation?

So part of the debate concerns sorting out any differences between passages that refer to futuristic renewal or complete renovation. Rodman Williams sides with renovation. Miroslav Volf postures for eschatological

2Williams, Renewal Theology, 3:400f
transformation instead of annihilation of humans or creation. The biblical testimony to the earthly locale of the kingdom of God speaks indirectly in favor of the belief in the eschatological transformation of the world rather than its annihilation. Gundry argues that Revelation promises eternal life on the new earth, not ethereal life in the new heaven.

This corresponds not only to the earthly hopes of the Hebrew prophets, but most significantly to the Christian teaching of the resurrection of the body. Theologically it makes little sense to postulate a non-earthly eschatological existence while believing in the resurrection of the body.

Moltmann seems willing to concede that one can have a "this worldly" hope and expect that it will come about through the act of new creation ex nihilo. But more typical is the position of conservatives attached to the administration of the American President Ronald Reagan who reasoned that we should hurry and use up our natural resources for the benefit of wealthy Republicans before such things are burnt up in a decade or so by a cosmic cataclysm. One can postulate a logical connection between eschatological annihilation and social improvement, but are they theologically compatible? Miroslav Volf says no. Theologically there would be a tension between affirming the goodness of creation and at the same time expect its eschatological destruction. And there are NT statements explicitly supporting the idea of an eschatological transformation of the creation, as Moltmann goes on to prove and F.F. Bruce concurs. To Volf, the important issue is that humans not only have a body but are a body.

The traditional picture changes radically with the assumption that the world will end not in apocalyptic destruction but in eschatological transformation. Then the results of the cumulative work of human beings have intrinsic value and gain ultimate significance, for they are related to the eschatological new creation, not only indirectly through the faith and service they enable or sanctification they further, but also directly: the noble products of human ingenuity, "whatever is beautiful, true and good in human cultures," will be cleansed from impurity, perfected, and transfigured to become part of God's new creation. They will form the "building materials" from which (after they are transfigured) "the glorified world" will be made. Consider the human body. When I look on pictures of me as a child, I say I am that person. That is not, however, literally true. My cells have died and reproduced and so in a molecular sense there has been a transformation. To whatever extent this is true, might it not be something of a parallel to the planet? Volf's position over against a huge atomic bomb that explodes the planet is a form of continuity that does not play down the transformation of the Almighty God.

A brief review of the 1991 SPS presidential address by Murray Dempster will prove helpful. Dempster starts with the sect/church/mysticism typology found in Ernst Troeltsch's The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. Here, sect-type expressions of the church have such an intense eschatological expectation that the church mission focuses virtually singularly on evangelizing unbelievers. The resulting social quietism reinforced a conviction within the corporate mentality of sectarian believers that they were faithfully loving with eternal—not temporal—values in view.

Notice part of the final statement produced by members of the dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and some Pentecostals, "Pentecostals focus more on individuals than on structures, viewing persons as individuals. When a person is in need, Pentecostals will often attend to the immediate need without always analyzing the systemic issues that might give rise to the situation. As they probe more deeply, they uncover systemic issues that produce or aggravate the pastoral issue being addressed. Some Pentecostals, then, confront systemic issues out of strong pastoral concerns about an individual or a group of people. While Pentecostals have frequently been stereotypically portrayed as passive and 'other worldly', programs of personal renewal at grassroots levels have had far-reaching implications for social transformation.'

During the dialogue with WARC, I argued that when recounting the record of social activity by Pentecostals one should not forget social location and that Pentecostals did not realize observers would look on them differently.

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had they publicized their social awareness. As director of the IPHC Archives, I have found records of social care that have not been cited in any work on this subject. By contrast, when those in power take any note of the poor it is well publicized. Also, Pentecostals are often judged by the behavior of their masses whereas historic churches wish to be identified with a particular creed, council or famous theologian.

Yet among Classical Pentecostals, however, it is still hardly rare to hear that the church not worry about being an agent of social change because of the imminent return. The Kingdom of God is portrayed as an idealized state of future ahistorical bliss. Add to this the despair of working with structural change and preoccupation for individual rehabilitation. The latter which should not be dismissed by any account. Dempster goes on to argue that the eschatological continuity between the "already" and "not yet" kingdom implies that the apocalyptic act at the end of this age will not be one of total annihilation of the world but one of total transformation of the world. Dempster then affirms the notion of Miroslav Volf that eschatological continuity "guarantees that noble human efforts will not be wasted." Many join Dempster when he concludes, "... the second coming of Jesus Christ as an apocalyptic act at the end of this age—when interpreted within a Pentecostal/kingdom framework—can inspire hope in today's church that God's redemptive reign will find consummation in a new creation. Such a hope places God's stamp of significance on the massive human effort and sacrificial expenditures of resources that go into supporting programs of Christian social service and action. Such a hope is buoyed up by the conviction that God will preserve, transform and incorporate the church's kingdom-signifying deeds into the new creation when Jesus returns to bring the reign of God to its promised fulfillment. 'Maranatha,' the Lord cometh, therefore, should fuel the fires of the church's social concern with the same intensity that this hopeful expectation has historically brought to the task of evangelism."

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1 Writing from Oakland, California in 1946, Max A.X. Clark, "The Pentecostal Movement: Forty Years of Power, Probation and Progress," The Pentecostal Journal, 17, counts the second cause for the success of the Pentecostal Movement "is that it also ministers to the physical and temporary needs, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the poor, visiting the shut-ins and those in prison ..."

2 Dempster, "Christian Social Ethics," 38; see "Word and Spirit, Church and World," Paragraph #80.

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"You have received the Spirit of power..." (2 Tim. 1:7)
Reviewing the Prosperity Message in the Light of a Theology of Empowerment

Lawrence Nwankwo

The theme of this conference was a pleasant surprise to me. From my experience in Nigeria, "born-again" Christians, as members of the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups are often called, are regarded as standing for moral standards higher than those prevalent in the society. Even the choice of a regenerative metaphor - born again - is indicative of the centrality of the theme of personal and spiritual rebirth in their vision and discourse. This vision (re)commends new identity and new practice whose legitimacy and condition of possibility is the ‘Power from on high’. However, the focus is more on personal rebirth to the neglect of social rebirth. In the light of this, I understand this conference as interested in examining the reasons for the one-sided focus on personal morality and the near exclusion of social concerns understood in terms of commitment to the realization of a life-enhancing socio-economic and political and cultural field of action for all. I have to add immediately that the same can be said of most mainline Catholic and Protestant spiritualities. However, I am of the opinion that the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality resonates with the African contemporary life-world and that it has resources to reflect on and to more directly engage in social transformation. But, before this aspect of the spirituality can be liberated, some of its emphases, and here I focus on the emergent emphases due to its reception into the African context, have to be reflected upon. That is what I want to do here with the help of the metaphor of empowerment.

This paper has two main parts. The first part is diagnostic. Here I examine the Prosperity message. The aim is to find out why, despite its conviction that it is God’s will that, at least, believers should enjoy abundance of life, health, wealth, material comfort here on earth, this message does not see and confront the socio-economic and political mechanisms that thwart God’s plan of wholeness for humanity. The second part addresses the results from the first part in the light of a theology of empowerment. This theology calls attention to the fact that as children of God, we have received the Spirit from on High, a Spirit of power that strengthens and...
enables us to contribute to the advent of God’s Kingdom here on earth. This
is a theology that draws from the Trinity and has both pneumatological and
christological concentration. God associates humanity in God’s work of
creation and redemption. The incarnation is the high and unique point of
this divine-human synergism. Through the Holy Spirit, God is still active
in history, ‘trans-substantiating’ individuals and communities into the
Body of Christ and the Bread of Life to be broken and shared for the life
of the world. The final part shows that empowerment and the vision behind it
are applicable beyond the African context.

Let me characterise the voice speaking by indicating the tradition within
which I stand and the commitments that shape my reflection. I am an
African (Nigerian), a Catholic of the Roman rite and a systematic
theologian interested in Pentecostalism, liberation and inculturation issues
from the African context. I hope that these would help you to understand
some of my emphasis, my mode of theological reasoning and the choice of
my dialogue partners.

Finally, let me remark that I use the hyphenated term ‘Pentecostal-
Charismatic spirituality’ to embrace the different waves in Pentecostalism.
Also, I speak about ‘Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality’ in order to
indicate the family resemblance on the level of spirituality between the
Pentecostal churches and the Charismatic groups within the main-line
churches. In other words, my focus is not on distinct ecclesial groups as
much as on the commonality of emphases, vision and spirituality. May it
also be noted that these groups differ considerably from one another.

1This is the technical term in Catholic Eucharistic theology. This term documents the
influence of Greek ontology in the Christological and Trinitarian controversies in the
Great Ecumenical Councils of the Church. There has been a reaction against and a
debate about the continued use of these terminologies and the place of Greek ontology
in theology. Suffice it to note that I chose this term simply to indicate that the Holy
Spirit touches the whole of one’s life.
2For example, the scriptural union founded by Pastor Kumuyi emphasizes holiness and
thus are in line with the holiness tradition which is the root from which Pentecostalism
sprang up. For the relationship between the Pentecostals and the Holiness groups see
John Thomas Nichol, The Pentecostals (New Jersey: Logos, 1966) 1-17. However, the
group founded by Mensa Otabil of Ghana tries to instill black pride and incorporates
(post)-colonial discourse and stresses Africa’s political and economic self-
24:3 (1994) 234-251, 261. From the point of view of this emphasis, the group
came close to Black Pentecostalism researched by Lovett. This was also concerned
with socio-economic, political and cultural issues that affect the black communities
in the United States. See Lovett, L. “Perspectives on Black Pentecostalism,” quoted in
Walter Holloway, Pentecostal, Between Black and White (Belfast: Christian Journal,
1974) 22.

Lawrence Nwankwo: ‘You have received the Spirit of Power...’ (2 Tim. 1:7)
Reviewing the Prosperity Message in the Light of a Theology of Empowerment

Because of the transnational character of the Pentecostal-Charismatic
spirituality and the heterogeneity of Africa, questions can be raised about
the propriety of speaking about African Pentecostal-Charismatic
spirituality. I do not intend to give the impression that African Pentecostal-
Charismatic spirituality is monolithic. There is however a family
resemblance between them. I recognize the transnational character or more
accurately, its American connection.2 But while this spirituality is
seemingly peripheral in American life, it offers the dominant conceptual
framework in Africa. Finally, without having to discuss the peculiarities of
the groups, I focus on the Prosperity Message which offers the key to
understanding many of the tendencies and emphases both in the Churches
and the society at large.

The Prosperity Message3

There is increasing concern and alarm with regard to the attraction and
spread of the Prosperity Message in Africa. It is attacked from many
perspectives. Those interested in the economic aspect, explain the spread
as a co-efficient of the socio-economic and political insecurity in Africa.
For the pet psychologists, the Christian groups that emphasize prosperity
provide schemes of compensation and disjunctive mechanism to people
whose material condition of existence is deplorable. For those concerned
with the global flow of goods and ideas, the Prosperity Message and the
whole Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality is a transnational phenomenon
that receives it impetus from the Religious Right in America.4

1van Dijk, R. A., “From Camp to Encompassment: Discourses of Transsubjectivity in the
writes, “Pentecostalism is historically a transnational phenomenon, which in its modern
forms is reproduced in its local diversity through a highly accelerated circulation of
goods, ideas and people. The new charismatic type of Pentecostalism creates a moral
and physical geography whose domain is one of transnational cultural inter-penetration
and flow.”
2Gifford stresses this American Connection. He goes as far as suggesting that the Christ
for All Nation crusade organised by Reinhard Bonnke in Africa, is a curious amalgam
of Christian ideas and the American way of life. Gifford, P., “‘Africa Shall be Saved.’
An Appraisal of Reinhard Bonnke’s Pan-African Crusade,” Journal of Religion in
Africa, 17:1 (1987) 85. Although one should not over generalise, it remains true that
most of the literature and the liturgy adapted in these groups reflect American values
and approach to life.
3I defer to Allan Anderson’s choice of terminology and I agree with his desire not to
give offence. See Anderson, A., “The Prosperity Message in the Eschatology of Some
4For such a view, see Gifford, “‘Africa Shall be Saved...’”, 63-92.
I will argue, on the one hand, that although the Prosperity Message1 was articulated in America, it intersects with the holistic vision of salvation in the primal religions2 of Africa. Wellbeing is conceived of as touching both life here and the hereafter. On the other hand, this Prosperity Message induces and at the same time reinforces a strand in the primal religious tradition of Africa that discounts human agency in the transformation of society. Finally, I argue that the Pentecostal-charismatic spirituality has resources to overcome this one-sidedness. This is the point of departure for the articulation of a theology of empowerment.

The Prosperity Message and the African Primal World-view
There have been many studies of the Prosperity Message and I do not intend to go into them in any detail. Suffice it to mention that the central tenet of this emphasis in Christianity is that God has met all the needs of human beings in the suffering and death of Jesus. Every Christian should therefore share in Jesus victory over sin, death, sickness and poverty. Thus, it is the will of God for people to prosper or succeed in every area of life. Prosperity here includes health, wealth, wholeness. Some elements are strikingly new. First is the focus on the resurrection and not on the cross; on the fruits of the suffering and death of Jesus rather than on Jesus' call for all to take up their cross and follow him. Second is that material poverty is included in what Jesus redeemed humanity from. This means that a life of prosperity and comfort is the vocation and destiny of Christians thanks to the Jesus event. This life of blessedness starts here on earth and reaches consummation in the afterlife. What is needed to activate the divine blessing is faith. This has to be combined with the religious practice of tithing which, according to a particular interpretation of Malachi 3:10-12, is what is needed so that God opens the floodgates of heaven and rains down blessings. The blessings mentioned in the pericope of Malachi include protection against pestilence and increase in the fruitfulness of the land and the vine. This is translated into contemporary

values such as cars, fat bank account, employment, fertility, visas to emigrate, and protection from witchcraft.

Anthonia Essien describes the Prosperity Message as counterfeit or consumer religion. By consumer religion she means a religion shaped by the priorities and demands of the economic order. She also accuses it of preaching a brand of Christianity that is forgetful of the Cross and of the prophetic vocation of Christianity and Christians.3 A more theological, and at the same time sympathetic, assessment is made by Allan Anderson. The Prosperity Message is accused of not taking seriously the sovereignty of God and gravitating dangerously towards humanism - that is a religion centered on human beings. God is there for the sake of the human needs and faith is a lever for manipulating God into showering blessings on human beings. Thus faith and ipso facto God, have no intrinsic value in themselves.4

The criticism above, in my view, needs to be nuanced. I share Anderson's discomfort with regard to the tendency to make God a sort of cosmic bell-hop or errand-boy who responds to all human wishes at the instance of a 'trans-terrestrial telephone call' - that is a prayer of faith. But I would defend the view that human wellbeing lies close to the heart of God.5 This is what creation as an outflow of God's goodness and love means. However, God's ways are not our ways and God's thoughts are not our...

1Dijk, "From Camp..." 135-159.
3Anderson's second criticism is the pragmatic template used in the Prosperity message for evaluating faith. Living faith is one that has results to show. What counts as result are material prosperity. Thirdly, Prosperity Message uses a proof-text method of Scriptural interpretation and even then it is selective. The Scriptural passages that speak of the faith of Abraham, for example, as an existential commitment to God regardless of result is passed over in silence, so also are the texts where Jesus warns against riches. Finally, he critiques the sociological implication of the Prosperity Message. The view of wealth as a blessing and a sign of faith can provide a spiritual justification for contempt for the poor who would be seen as causes of their poverty. Anderson brings in personal experience to respond to the last charge. For him, the prosperity message demands that the wealthy share with the poor because of the belief that they prosper because they give. This shows immediately the limit of social engagement that can result from this spirituality. What is central is charity and no questions with regard to the structural causes of poverty. Cf. Anderson, A., “The Prosperity Message in the Eschatology of Some New Charismatic Churches,” op. cit., 78-80.

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2I follow Mercy Amba Oduoye in using 'primal religion' for what is often referred to as the traditional religions of Africa. This change is due to negative connotations that has accrued to the word, such as static, primitive and not modern. See Oduoye, M. A., Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1996) 57.
thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8) Thus, what I hear Anderson saying is that the Prosperity Message does not respect the otherness of God. It does not accept the logic of paradox, for example that life comes through death, that unless a grain of wheat dies it remains a single grain. It does not want to accept the mystery of evil - that suffering is in the world in spite of God’s love for all. It prefers to simplify the vision by focusing on Jesus’ death as substitutionary, once-and-for-all cancelling out and dissolving the dialectic between life and death, love and suffering. This is the point at stake, and not God’s sovereignty. In Nigeria, the Prosperity Message one-sidedly emphasises God’s sovereignty and leaves out human agency. This explains the popularity of the quotation from Zechariah 4:6 - “not by power nor might but by my Spirit says the Lord.” This is cited in support of an attitude of resigned waiting for the manifestation of the Spirit and power of God. I will focus on this in greater detail.

A very interesting aspect of Anderson’s reflection is his defence of the Prosperity Message. He goes on the offensive by insisting that it is those who hold an otherworldly, dualistic view of salvation who are shaken by the Prosperity Message. The Bible, he continues, especially the First Testament, emphasises the unity of the human being. It presents salvation as wholeness of human life, which begins here on earth and reaches consummation in the hereafter. Finally, he notes that African cosmology is wholistic. The missionary endeavour however offered a type of Christianity that is one-sidedly otherworldly. The upsurge in Christian groups that emphasis prosperity and I would include those who emphasise healing are indicative of the resilience of this cosmological vision. In other words, explanation of the spread of the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality and the attraction of the Prosperity Message is not unconnected with African primal spirituality. Purely sociological or socio-economic perspectives are not sufficient. The challenge then is to make the Christian message relevant to the whole of life.1

Africa’s Wholistic Worldview
By Africa’s wholistic worldview is meant the expectation that the experience of wholeness, that is, long healthy life, wealth, fertility, success etc., is legitimate and that religion should contribute to its provision. The primal belief among the Igbo of the Southeastern Nigeria is even more radical. One’s status in the spirit world depends on what status one had achieved in this life. A similar logic can be seen in the burial rites in other cultures in which people are buried with their precious possessions or even with slaves. They would use these objects of distinction and the slaves would continue to serve them in the spirit world. The Igbo has been misunderstood as being irreverent to their gods and deities. This misunderstanding arises because the community reserves the right to abandon, starve or replace its deity if s/he fails in his or her duty of protecting the community or fulfilling other needs for which s/he was being revered in the community. The implication is that the deities have an obligation to the community. This obligation is understood in terms of providing the conditions for people to achieve well being in their lives. Thus religion is not just about attaining fullness of life in the ‘other world.’ Life on earth is supposed to be a foretaste of that fullness of life and a sign of divine favour.

Other cultures with a longer history of contact with Christianity could have had such a cosmological framework before the otherworldly focus of a strain of

Christian tradition took over.2 At least, that is the case with Jewish culture as recorded in the First Testament. It has to be admitted that the root of this otherworldly focus is in the strain of apocalypticism that developed during the post-exilic period2 and thus provided the framework for the Second Testament.3 In the First Testament, this world and the otherworld are discontinuous. There is ambiguity with regard to the world both in the Second Testament and in Christian theological tradition. On the one hand, the world is seen as God’s creation, the sacrament of God, which is going to be re-created at the Eschaton. This is the tradition in which one finds the powerful images of a new heaven and a new earth. Although this is new, it is still the heaven and the earth that are new. Thus one can say that there is continuity even in the discontinuity with the old. On the other hand, the world is also presented as the domain of the forces opposed to God, as the domain of the Prince of this world. In this perspective, the destiny facing the world is conflagration. Everything would be destroyed by fire. In other words, there is a radical discontinuity between life here and now and the life that is to come. This vision of cosmic cataclysm undercuts the basis of any valuation of earthly realities. The theological challenge is to hold both perspectives together. This is done in my view by

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1In the Catholic theological tradition, for example, it was only in the Vatican II Council that the Church sought to come to terms with a world come of age. This meant sharing in the joys, the anxieties, and hopes of the world etc. It is interesting that it is secularization in Europe that forced theology to take the world seriously.


3Adrio König, one of Anderson’s sources tries to uphold the distinction between the eschatologies of the First and the Second Testament by speaking of the vision of “integrated salvation” in the First Testament and of “differentiated salvation” in the Second Testament. König, “Healing as an Integral Part of Salvation,” quoted in Anderson, ibid., 80. Anderson however, smooths this tension between the vision of the First and the Second Testaments. In my view, this tension ought to be kept. The Second Testament’s dominant presentation of salvation is otherworldly or points persistently in that direction. There is ambiguity with regard to the world both in the Second Testament and in Christian theological tradition. On the one hand, the world is seen as God’s creation, the sacrament of God, which is going to be re-created at the Eschaton. This is the tradition in which one finds the powerful images of a new heaven and a new earth. Although this is new, it is still the heaven and the earth that are new. Thus one can say that there is continuity even in the discontinuity with the old. On the other hand, the world is also presented as the domain of the forces opposed to God, as the domain of the Prince of this world. In this perspective, the destiny facing the world is conflagration. Everything would be destroyed by fire. In other words, there is a radical discontinuity between life here and now and the life that is to come. This vision of cosmic cataclysm undercuts the basis of any valuation of earthly realities. The theological challenge is to hold both perspectives together. This is done in my view by

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1Anderson, ibid., 80-82.
Africa's Alleged “Anthropology of Impotence” and the Focus on Sin
Having seen the possible reasons for the attraction to Africans of the Prosperity Message, let me focus briefly on the synthesis achieved. My view is that the crisis-ridden African context posed in strong terms the problem of suffering and theodicy to the Prosperity Message. Why is it that people, in spite of their faith, still do not prosper? The answer is that there is something which blocks the flow of God’s blessing. The block

acknowledging that the life of the Age to come definitely is the outcome of God’s regenerative act. It is beyond all that can be known or imagined by human beings. This does not however void life here on earth of lasting significance nor make human effort to contribute to the realization of the Kingdom inefficacious. This needs to be more rigorously formulated. But that is not the theme of this essay.


needs to be removed. This block cannot be social nor structural because of what Herman Besah Browne calls the “anthropology of impotence”. It is spiritual, that is, supra-human and thus requires a spiritual solution. This explains the centrality in African Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality of demonology and the stress on deliverance, on exorcism, on healing.

Stephen Njoku’s theology of curses and release from curses, and healing of the Family tree are examples of a local appropriation of the Prosperity Message coloured by an emphasis on deliverance. As expected, due to the crisis situation on the continent, he struggles to answer the theodicy question in the framework of the Prosperity Message. He foregrounds the Prosperity Message in a creation theology. For him, the creation of human beings on the sixth day, after all other things have been created, is of great significance. “A day after his creation, when he would have started work, Adam joined God in his rest. He looked around him and saw not work to be done, but work already done, good things already put under his feet. And so God created man not to work, but to enjoy and rest with him. It means that in every way we are abundantly provided for and abundantly blessed.” (my emphasis). It means that human beings are created to rest with God. However, the situation in Africa does not bear out this life of abundance. He therefore had to theorise that there must be something holding back this primal blessing. In his answer, he draws from and exaggerates some strands of the response to the question of suffering and evil in primal African religions.

Every culture is faced with the task of clarifying why people suffer and why some people suffer more than others. In Africa, as in other cultures, gods, deities, spirits and destiny are invoked in the explanation. Among the Igbo of the Southeastern Nigeria, for example, there is a paradoxical recognition that destiny can and cannot be changed. This is a way of saying that human beings are architects of their destiny but not always they way they want it. There are constraints. These constraints are not only bio-genetic and social. They are also spiritual. The spiritual factor is the interference of evil forces either through witchcraft or those activated by one’s forebears who incur curses on themselves and their descendants.

2For a more detailed critique of this theology see my review of Stephen Njoku’s books in Oracle, 1:2 (2001) 148-151.
3To show that destiny cannot be changed: the Igbo refer to the lines on people’s palms and say that it cannot be wiped out. People who suffer a lot of misfortune are also said to have “ajo chi” — bad personal god. However to show that all is not determined to the minute details, they also say, “onye kwe, chi ya ekwe” — if someone says yes, the personal god also says yes!
These notwithstanding, hard work is rewarded and recognised as the way to success. What has happened in Njoku’s articulation is that an anti-work ethic is enthroned and the crisis on the continent is explained in terms of the curses that block the flow of God’s blessing to Africa. The religious imagination at work can be seen in this way: God’s blessing is presented as ‘living water’ (Jn.4:10) flowing through the network of human and ancestral relationships. The flow can be blocked through the activities of one of the ancestral conduit pipes. The poverty, sickness, the AIDS pandemic in Africa, are results of a block in the conduit pipe of God’s blessing. To open up the clogged pipe, one needs to call God, the plumber par excellence, through the hotline of prayer to send ‘Holy Ghost Fire’ and burn up the offending evil spirits or the impersonal force of the curse and open up the channel again.

Herman Besah Browne characterises the anthropology that underlies Njoku’s and similar reflections as an “anthropology of impotence.” This means that the human being is seen as a helpless pawn of fortune and the gods. He claims that this is an authentic African view of human beings. Browne formulates his rather sweeping view in the context of his polemic against the possibility of an African liberation theology. “An African theology that is also a liberation theology [is] a theoretical impossibility.” According to him, this is because human agency is central in liberation theology but in African Traditional Theology (ATT), human beings are puppets of the gods. “Action is the preserve of divinity,” “human action is, in reality, the empirical result of divine agency” and “historical events are the effects, having their source of explanation in the spiritual realm, despite human agency and intentions.” (my emphasis) In conclusion, Browne claims that the world is seen as “a stage whereupon we play our roles - perfectly choreographed by the Creator - exiting to a better place.” (85).

2From the point of view of the Christian Scriptures, he gives the discourse on providence an anti-work spin while this discourse is better interpreted as indicating the source and ground of trust in God and hope amidst difficulties.
4In analogy to Christian theology, Browne speaks of ATT as African traditional God-talk, philosophical or fundamental theology. For him, it is the theo-logic of African Traditional Religion. He reconstructs this by engaging in what he calls a meta-anthropological search for the metaphysical presuppositions of the traditional beliefs. Cf. Browne, ibid, 11.

Browne however runs into trouble. If human life has been scripted and choreographed by God, what is the place of human freedom and how is the problem of evil to be made intelligible? He never bothered to raise the question of freedom, probably, because it is a legacy of modernity and the Enlightenment – the unpardonable sins of liberation theology. He tackles the question of evil, which is very existential in Africa. According to him, evil befalls people when the ancestors and the gods remove their protective shield. This happens if their protégé infringes the moral laws. This is what Browne calls Africa’s “victim as culprit thesis.” (59) The conclusion he draws from this thesis is that “the evils we suffer are never really caused by human agency, but by supraempirical agency,” and “we suffer the evil we suffer because of the evil we do.” (62) In conclusion, the right response to one’s suffering is self-examination and purification. Concretely, this means that the millions of jobless young Nigerians, for example, are suffering because of the evil they committed. In other words, the socio-political system is given a clean bill of health. Each individual is held responsible for his or her suffering. The ancestors are added as epicycles to save the theory.

Browne’s analysis converges with the vision presented by Njoku. The later speaks of curses as blocks to the reception of divine blessing, while the former makes the same point through his ‘victim as culprit thesis.’ People suffer because they themselves or those of their immediate family had sinned. There is much to criticise in this crypto-social analysis conducted with a skewed spiritual-moral lens. First, it has no inkling of the structural dimension of suffering - how people are deformed or paralysed because they are born in societies where the facilities for the prevention of some problems are lacking. This may be because of the inefficiency of those responsible for the provision of such facilities. Second, the view of society underlying this type of analysis is inadequate. Society is seen as nothing more than a conglomeration of individuals and families. No thought is given to the political, economic and social relationships that arise from and transcend the individuals that constitute it. Wars, for example, have been fought in the name of nation states. These states have a reality and are moral personalities. They transcend the individuals that make them up. Third, Njoku-Browne’s analysis lacks any sensitivity to history and to the global dimension of contemporary life. A decision in Brussels or policy change of any of the powerful financial institutions or regional trading blocks can have life and death significance for people in other parts of the world. One wonders how such events can be fitted into...
Browne's 'victim as culprit thesis' or into Njoku's framework of ancestral curse.

Browne's reflection is a polemic against the anthropocentricity of enlightenment thinking. Liberation theology served only as a tool for this project. And his strategy was to reconstruct an African ethno-theology in order to show that enlightenment thinking is not African. This is, of course, stating the obvious. The problem is that he allowed in a very uncritical way the polemic of his study to provide the interpretive key to African culture. Since enlightenment thinking and by the same token liberation theology emphasise human agency, African ethno-theology must do the opposite – emphasise divine agency. This is the bare bone of his method, which is deductive and ahistorical. The consequence is the over-systematisation of elements of the worldview. He thus misses the nuances and complexities of the African cultural response to their environment. This response is ongoing and historical. One would therefore expect a reflection concerned with articulating a framework for cultural and societal transformation that would be doubly faithful to the best in African culture and the best in globalized modernity in view of addressing the contemporary problems of Africa. He did not do this.

The same problem of contextual insensitivity can be levelled against Stephen Njoku. He appropriated categories articulated in non-African context without critiquing these. In the context of North America, for example, the connection between the Prosperity Message and the school of Positive Thinking of Norman Vincent Peale has been noted. This means that the affirmation, 'God wills the prosperity of those who believe' served as a psychological spur for people to think positively and work hard. This Message emerged during the boom years in the United States when opportunities for prosperity abounded. In Africa, however, the Prosperity Message is received in a context of crisis. With joblessness, poor sanitary condition, poverty, and a feeling of hopelessness it meant that all depends on God. 'God will make a way where there seems to be no way.' The enormity of the problem led to an analysis exclusively in terms of curses and evil spirits. In this, he follows mentors like Derek Prince and De Grandis. It is interesting that in the context of Western Europe and North America, curses and evil spirits are used to explain personal and individual problems. Recourse is made to these when science and technology, the height of human exercise of agency have been tried. The Federal Reserve and the Chairpersons of the Central Banks are expected to take aggressive moves in cutting interest rates in order to arrest economic slow down and possible recession. The economic crisis and the failure of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), for example, is seen by Stephen Njoku as evidence that Nigeria is under a curse. The curse is not from the corruption and ineptitude of the leaders or from negative consequences of the global economic system or the curse of the SAP itself, but from the effect of what he calls 'idolatry.' The primal religions of Africa are so described. The way to break the chain of curses and effect a socio-economic turn-around is through prayer. Thus from being linked to the school of Positive Thinking in the American context, the Prosperity Message underscores an attitude of resignation.

Let me sum up the discussion so far. The Prosperity Message resonates with the wholistic worldview that survives in Africa. This is the probable reason for its spread. However, in the American context, the message has the effect of motivating action born of trust in God's promise, in Africa it has the contrary effect of counselling reliance, surrender and waiting on God to pour out blessings of wealth, health, success. This resembles what anthropologists call a cargo cult mentality. It is this mentality and what is called Afro-pessimism that I consider the main determinants of the Zeitgeist to which African theology must respond. This is what I do below.

Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and the theology of Empowerment

The presence and action of the Holy Spirit is central to Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality. There is unanimous agreement that the Holy Spirit has been marginalised in western theology. This neglect has had some

1It is worth noting that enlightenment thinking was non-existent and therefore not European till Descartes and his colleagues articulated it. Nor was Liberation Theology derived from the Latin America culture. In fact, Browne hangs on his own tethers. He identifies liberation theology as indebted to enlightenment thinking. Peru, the home country of Gustavo Gutierrez was not part of the European enlightenment. If enlightenment thinking could be so appropriated into a different cultural context, what would prevent such an appropriation into the African context. One would thus have expected a discussion of the merits, demerits and direction of cultural transformation that would address the problems of Africa, and not a comparative analysis of his constructed African Traditional Theology and Liberation Theology.

2Gifford, African Christianity..., 40; Anderson, "The Prosperity Message," 78.


4José Comblin recalls Yves Congar's remarks that the observers from the Eastern Churches criticised the absence of a pneumatology in the Vatican II Council. See Comblin, J., The Holy Spirit and Liberation, (trans.) Paul Burns (Kent: Burns & Oates; Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1989) 16. Jürgen Moltmann draws attention to how the Holy Spirit was seen in Protestant theology only as a subjective principle for the appropriation of the salvation won objectively by Jesus on the cross. Moltmann, J., The
consequences in the history of Christianity. How has the neglect and its correction played themselves out in Africa? I have two intuitions, which I would only mention in passing. First, I want to suggest that the African Independent Churches can be seen as children of this neglect. Admittedly, this abstracts from the historical events and the personalities behind the birth of these Churches. This abstraction however serves the purpose of focusing attention on the dynamics of the culture contact. The other suggestion is that the rediscovery of pneumatology or the strong influence of Pentecostal-charismatic spirituality came at a point of deep crisis in Africa’s history. This gave rise to a peculiar reception of this spirituality and the result is a devaluation of human agency. This devaluation of human agency is a reflection of a widespread cultural factor. However, instead of claiming that an ‘anthropology of impotence’ expresses the primal African cultures as Besaeah Browne does, I am of the view that this impotence is historical. It is the result of the disilluminisation and despair induced by the viciousness of the problems and the negative comparison that media images of better life elsewhere incite. The crisis situation in Africa is overwhelming and becoming complicated by the day. African


José Comblin notes a series of dichotomies that arose therefrom: between Christology and pneumatology which resulted in Christomonism; between the Church and the world which resulted in atheism; the dualism between body and spirit which is the basis of the option for an otherworldly spirituality. See Comblin, op. cit.,13-19. See also Moltmann’s discussion of the distinction between vitality and spirituality and how the lack of a balanced pneumatology tilted the Church’s emphasis towards a spirituality of ‘not of this world’ life in God and left out the dimension of vitality as a life lived out of God to be reclaimed by atheists who took this quest for the intensification of life away from the shadow of God (Moltmann, op. cit., 83-98).

However one explains it, most Africans are pre-disposed from their cultural background to interpret the world and their experiences in terms of an interaction with spiritual beings. The first break with missionary Christianity, that is, Christianity as proposed by missionaries, occurred due to a lack of resonance between the world as imagined in Christianity and the African cultural world in which spiritual beings are integral. Indeed the missionary discourse was ambivalent. In its polemic against the deities and spirits of the primary religion, the missionary discourse presented them in line with Isaiah 44:9ff as illusions and products of human hands. On the other hand, it also demonised them and thus increased the population of the bad spirits. The effect of the discourse was to damn spirits that had hitherto been considered good or ambivalent. Missionary discourse thus brought a major disruption in the African world without providing the resources to deal with this. African Independent Churches are the first wave of creative response to the changed circumstance.

No line of approach seems promising and the biggest problem is how to build up social capital for financing the social reconstruction. Francis Fukuyama, defines social capital as “an instantiated set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits them to cooperate with one another. If members of the group come to expect that others will behave reliably and honestly, then they will come to trust one another. Trust acts like a lubricant that makes any group or organisation run more efficiently.” (Fukuyama, F., “Social Capital,” Culture Matters, How Values Shape Human Progress, (ed.) Lawrence E. Harrison & Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 98. Because this social capital is in short supply, commitment to the national recovery and development is lacking. Groups and individuals are struggling to maximise their capital.

Lawrence Nwankwo: ‘You have received the Spirit of Power...’ (2 Tim. 1:7)

Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality latches on to this situation and in turn reinforces it. However, Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality offers the resources for dealing with this despair and undertaking the global structural adjustment programme necessary for the continual search for greater harmony and prosperity for all. In this sense, while empowerment is borne out of reflection on the African context, it is also relevant to other contexts.

Empowerment – A Conceptual Analysis

Empowerment is an inflexion of the root concept ‘power’. Christian tradition has been ambivalent towards the concept of power. This ranges from outright condemnation to the identification of the Holy Spirit as the power of God. From the negative point of view, libido dominandi - usually translated as lust for power - is one of the three cardinal sins noted by St. Augustine. In contemporary times, Milbank continues this blanket stigmatisation of power. Moreover, discourse on power raises eyebrows because it focuses attention on the structure of relationships with the aim of ferreting out the often-concealed imbalances and their ideological justification. Against this background, empowerment calls for change and for transformation of the structure of relationship and their ideological underpinnings. But this comes about as a consequence of the transformation of human beings. These would then commit themselves to the transformation and renewal of the structures of society.

Power is an “essentially contested concept” because it has many levels of meaning. Power often means the capacity to dominate, to control and make others act in one way rather than another in order to fulfil the wishes of the one who has the power. In this sense, power comes near to a zero-sum
game. Someone gains power at the expense of someone else. From this vision, empowerment is not possible. Or rather, empowerment would only mean to delegate, to authorise. At the root of this vision of power is the model of power as resource or social capital, which an individual can convert or cash in order to achieve what s/he wants. Power can also be seen as a capacity or energy. The root metaphor is not social. Electricity is called power because it has a capacity to bring about some reality. In like manner, every human being can be said to have power - power of speech, power of hearing. This capacity can be heightened. This heightening, this increase of the transformative capacity captures what is meant by empowerment. Thus empowerment is built from a notion of power as transformative capacity. This heightening can be the result of a change in consciousness through and in a community. Theology contributes to this process in terms of the imaginative vision it offers of God's relationship with humanity and with creation.

This notion of power and empowerment has social implication. To explicate this leads to the debate in sociology between structural and structuration theorists. I can only present a simplified version of the issues at stake. The structuralists privilege the society as constituting human subjectivity. The human being is seen as very malleable and thus shaped by the society. They emphasise that society changes through the interaction of many forces among which human agency is only one. The structuration theorists use a more dialectical framework to relate the human being and the society. They acknowledge that there are deep structures of society that constrain and channel human action and result in quasi-mechanical reproduction of societal patterns. Without denying the difficulties of social change, they admit that society is constituted and reconstituted through human agency even if a majority of those involved in this process are not aware of the larger picture or social pattern that their action helps to maintain or to disrupt. I follow the later theorists because it seems truer to history. The emergence of the free market economy, for example, is the consequence of some policy decisions taken at historical points in time during the Thatcher/Reagan era. It is not the inevitable by-product of technological development.

The structuration framework admits the theoretical possibility of modifying, if not overthrowing the deep structures of the society, such as the global capitalism in its free market form. It is possible to change this, but the stakes are high. Those who are advantaged by it would resist it while those who demand its change are not in a position to enforce their desire. Another example is the deep structure of corruption in many developing nations. It is theoretically possible to change this by strengthening the structures of society. But, the rhizomatic network of clients and patrons, domestic and foreign, who emerged in the first place because of the weakness of the socio-political structure, have vested interests which they would not give up without a fight. Moreover, corruption has become, as it were, a way of life that it is hard for some people brought up in such circumstances to rid themselves of the opportunistic attitude to life that is conducive to corrupt practices. Opposing corruption may be really dangerous to life and limb and result in loss of one's due without any possibility of redress. Other issues that show the difficulty of social transformation are the environment and the spiral of violence in some societies. Everybody agrees that climatic change is caused by human activity and that there is need for urgent action. But the question is who shoulders the cost? What should have priority - business environment? winning the next election? having the ease of travelling in one's car instead of public transport where these are operating even if badly? About violence, it is my guess that no community loves violence and conflict. But how can memories be healed, hurts forgiven and structures which marginalize people be reformed? There are numerous other examples.

Put simply, while it is accepted that human beings through the exercise of agency make and remake their societies, societal structures and dynamics seem to take a life of their own and oppose all effort to change them. To put it better, the plurality and divergence of interests, the principle of

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1Giddens, A., The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984) 15. This notion of power is however criticised as not appropriate for understanding the social dimension of power. This criticism arises from a desire not to lose sight of the inequality and domination that are common in human society. This can however be done without identifying power with domination by calling attention to the differential in access to and control of resources and social capital, which are at the base of social inequality and domination. See Foucault, M., "The Subject and Power," Afterword in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1982) 220.

1Kenichi Ohmae puts it succinctly. He writes, "admittedly, had there been no computers, the new continent [his metaphor for the new economy] would never have come to pass. The technologies were necessary for it to exist. But they were not sufficient. Even with the change in technologies, other things might have happened to prevent the new continent from emerging. Keynesian economics might have been reinforced by a long period of deflation in the 1970s. The Thatcher/Reagan revolution, and the wave of deregulation that went with it, might never have taken place. Entrepreneurialism might not have been reinforced by the global awarding of platform status to the American dollar." Ohmae, K., The Invisible Continent: Four Strategic Imperatives of the New Economy, (New York: HarperCollins, 2000) 3.
double effect that seems to attend to some courses of action, show that society is not like wet clay that could be easily moulded by a potter. Moreover even those struggling for transformation according to a wholesome vision are children of their societies and are limited in the breadth of their imagination, their capacity to empathise etc. Of late, the talk is about donor weariness. These difficulties notwithstanding, or rather because of them, the question arises as regards how theology would articulate a vision of faith that would enable all, especially Christians to be salt of the earth. How is the face of the earth to be renewed so that all may have, at least, a foretaste of a full abundance? Where does one get the resources to overcome the pessimism and the desire to seek one’s own comfort and well being first?

Pentecost and the Theology of Empowerment
The popular understanding among the Pentecostal-Charismatics in Nigeria of the text of Zechariah 4:6 illustrates what a theology of empowerment is not. In this text, the prophetic word is addressed to Zerubbabel, the Persian appointed governor of Judah after the exile. The verse reads: “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord.” (RSV) The historical context of this prophecy nor the critical questions that this pericope raise, is not attended to.1 What is known and valued is that God is promising that the task of rebuilding the temple entrusted to Zerubbabel would be achieved in spite of all obstacles. Significantly, it would be achieved not by the might or power of Zerubbabel, but by the Spirit of God. This is however interpreted as to support the view that God would miraculously, that is, without any human input carry out the task. This shows once again the tendency to exalt divine agency at the expense of human beings as if God and human beings are competing and the agency of one excludes the other. It also represents a collapsing of the eschatological tension between God’s engagement in human history and the definitive fulfilment of God’s purpose despite all odds. The title of Stuhlmueller’s commentary on the books of Haggai and Zechariah Rebuilding with Hope points in the direction of empowerment theology. This title brings out the import of the verse in Zechariah. God is involved in history. Therefore the project and God’s purpose, despite all odds, are sure to reach completion and fulfilment. This interpretation in terms of God’s engagement and fidelity which inspires hope is distant from that which sees the verse as an assurance that God accomplishes God’s purpose miraculously.1 This excursus thus shows that at stake is a balanced theology of history and the model for understanding God’s relationship with creation and with the world. Paul’s admonition to Timothy points in the direction of this answer to these questions. Paul reminded Timothy that God’s spirit is not a spirit of timidity but of power and love and self-control. (RSV 2 Tim. 1:7) In the New English Bible, the translation is, “the Spirit that God gave us is no craven spirit, but one to inspire strength, love, and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7). Further, Paul encourages Timothy to take his share of suffering for the sake of the Gospel in the strength that comes from God. Against this background, Krister Stendahl’s reflection on the theme of the WCC assembly in Canberra, “Come, Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation” becomes illuminating. Stendahl took as title, Energy for Life.2 The Holy Spirit is the energy with which life is lived. This reminds one of the speech of St Paul at Areopagus. It is in God we live, move and have our being. This vision underlines the immanence of God while at the same time preserving the transcendence. It leaves room for God’s miraculous intervention in history over an above the immanent engagement. But it refuses to erect miracles as the norm of God’s relationship with creation.

The Pentecost narrative portrays the vision of a theology of empowerment. In the Gospel of John, the disciples were presented as afraid of the Jews and thus stayed behind locked doors. In the Lucan account, there was a positive injunction from Jesus that they should remain in Jerusalem till they receive the Holy Spirit. When they received the Holy Spirit, they were transformed. Peter who had denied Jesus in front of a maidservant became

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1Biblical scholars report that of the books of the First Testament, the book of Zechariah is the most quoted in the Gospel narrative of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. At the same time, it is “according to general consensus, ...one of the most obscure in the Bible.” Stuhlmueller, C., Rebuilding with Hope: A Commentary on the Books of Haggai and Zechariah, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988) 46. The pericope in which the verse occurs is also acknowledged to be an interpolation “so inconsistent with its context (the vision of a candlestick flanked by olive trees) that translators of the JB and the NEB rearrange the text, and scholars are overwhelmingly of the opinion that the verses constitute a later addition.” See Redditt, P. L., Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: The New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995) 39. These critical comments notwithstanding, it suffices to remark with Stuhlmueller that theological reasoning takes its point of departure from the bible as received from Israel and the early Church. One does not need to start with the special traditions or the various redactions. See Stuhlmueller, op. cit., 83.

2Other instances in the Scripture of the gift of the Holy Spirit indicate that divine and human agency are not traded off one against the other. In Judges 3:10; 6:34; 7:2; 13:25, are narratives about the Spirit of God enabling the military leaders to be victorious in war.

the fearless leader who witnessed to Jesus in front of the Jewish authorities. When they were flogged, the apostles rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. (Acts 5:41). They were also able to challenge the socio-economic organisation of their society. They formed a community where people shared all they had. 1 The case of Ananias and Sapphira shows the need for continual conversion. It might by that these radical commitment were possible to the first Christian community because of the expectation of the imminent coming of the Kingdom. This only shows the difficulty that has to be overcome in finding an incentive for commitment to being salt of the earth and for renewing the face of the earth.

The story of the Pentecost and the history of the Church contribute to the articulation of a theology of history that balances divine and human agency. God chooses people and communities and through them carries out His loving purpose. This is a central message of the incarnation. Emmanuel - God is with us. God wills to be with creation, to move history not from outside but from within, and to do this in, with and through human beings. God does not want to direct history as a monarch but to be with, to inspire, strengthen and lure humanity and history on the path to fulfilment. This fulfilment would come about through the definitive act of God. It is impossible to capture the details of this synergism between God and humanity just as it is impossible to penetrate into how the two natures in Jesus relate to one another. The Christological formulations and the theories of en- and an-hypostasis2 do not claim to explain the mystery of the incarnation. Rather, they are starting points for reflection. They mark the boundaries of orthodoxy using the Greek metaphysical categories. Jesus is truly God and truly human and was not a split personality. This shows the need for a dialectical framework in the reflection on the relationship between God and humanity or in the articulation of a theology of history. One sees this dialectics in the aphorism of St. Augustine: pray as if all depended on God and work as if all depended on you. It is this pattern of relationship between God and humanity that I capture with the metaphor of empowerment. God enables

[1] Bible scholars contest this Lucan account of the Christian Urgemeinde. They point out some of the contradictions in the account. Some of the members were selling their property, others are keeping their houses and where community gathered. Act 12,12-14. May be, the later came after the failure of the communal system of social organisation.


Lawrence Nwankwo: ‘You have received the Spirit of Power...’ (2 Tim. 1:7)

Reviewing the Prosperity Message in the Light of a Theology of Empowerment

and strengthens human beings through the power of the Spirit. The definitive success is an act of God. But meanwhile human agency in collaboration with God's grace and Spirit is necessary for furthering the loving purpose of God.

The final point I want to make is to relate the theology of empowerment to the Eucharistic body of Christ. In Orthodox theology and in some patristic writings, the salvific event of Jesus is understood in terms of divinization. Jesus, through his life, death and resurrection has made us children of God through the Spirit poured out on creation. Jesus is the first among many brothers and sisters. He shows us how and what it means to be sons and daughters of God. The high-point of this is on the cross where he consummated the self-gift and self-emptying that characterised his whole life. On the previous night, Jesus had summed up his life and mission in the Eucharist. He gave his body and blood, broken and poured out for the life of the world in symbolic anticipation of his death on the cross. However where the synoptic gospels had the institution of the Eucharist, John had Jesus wash the feet of the twelve. At the end, he explains: “If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. I have set an example: you are to do as I have done for you.” (NEB John 13,14-15). John thus interprets the Eucharist and the cross of Jesus in terms of service to one another. 1 From the above, one can argue that the vision of the Cross of Jesus can be made the centre of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and in particular the Prosperity Message. 2 This spirituality does not give in to dolorism - that is, making the cross, suffering, deprivation, poverty, and the negativities of life, into values in themselves. This is already something positive. From here, I move on to present the cross not as what one has to put up with but what one actively embraces in self-giving love. The Eucharist is a celebration and an invitation to give ourselves as Jesus has given his for the life of the world. We draw strength from the experience of the Holy Spirit in community and in concert with others we are called to change the situation that gives rise to poverty or conflict. This entails working very hard, prophetic denunciation, taking the way of calvary to forgiveness etc. It also entails the humble recognition that some negative experiences of life

[1] For Christians in Europe, this may recall Feuerbach’s humanism (Menschendienst ist Gottesdienst). But must this legitimate vision from the Christian tradition be abandoned because atheistic humanism challenged a hop-sided presentation of Christianity? I do not think that that is necessary. This history can even be seen as the mediation through atheistic humanism of a dimension of the implication of God’s revelation in Jesus which was forgotten in the history of the Church.

[2] Anthonia Essien’s criticism that this spirituality is preaching a cross-less Christianity still stands. However, my point is that the imbalance can be remedied.
cannot be so transformed. In such cases, the theology of empowerment calls attention to the fact that God's spirit stands with and supports us.

Conclusion
At the beginning, I called attention to the intellectual tradition within which I stand. I claim the Prosperity Message as a re-appropriation of the balance in the prismatic African worldview with its wholistic view of blessedness or salvation. I also honour the culturally conditioned conceptualization and aetiologies of sickness, suffering, ill-fortune etc as the result of interference from spiritual beings. From the liberation theological tradition I critique the cargo-cult mentality and the opposition between divine and human agency as seen in some manifestations of the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality in Africa. And from this tradition of spirituality, I appropriate an emphasis on the Holy Spirit as source of power and transformative capacity in response to what is known in literature as “afro-pessimism” and to the prevalent interpretation of experiences in terms of evil forces. I brought all these together with the metaphor of empowerment.

In the context of the theme of this conference, my paper has two parts. The first is diagnostic. I tried to understand why the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality focuses on individual spiritual and ethical regeneration to the detriment of social engagement. The finding is that this spirituality is held captive by the historically induced “anthropology of impotence” which is glossed over and spiritualised as faith in the sovereign and the miracle-working God. From this point, I articulated a theology of empowerment, which takes seriously and at the same time, seeks to overcome the existential pathos of impotence and pessimism. This is the point of strength of the Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality. As Christians, a growing awareness and experience of the presence of God’s Spirit, translates into greater rootedness in God and openness to God in service to others; it gives rise to a vitality of life lived out of God. From this perspective, ethics not only grows in importance as the Conference organisers hope but the resources for a liberation ethics is provided. Therefore, I dare to say that while the focus of my articulation of the theology of empowerment is the African context, it resonates also with other contexts where choices and negotiations for the realization of ideals in consonance with the Gospel vision of the Kingdom of God are as real and where there is also a pathos of impotence with regard to the realization of the Christian vision of abundant life for all.

1This aspect is not well developed in the paper but forms the background of the reflection.

Spirit Empowered Peacemaking: Toward A Pentecostal Peace Fellowship

Paul N. Alexander

I have very little that is new to say. I am not even sure that I can say what I must say in a way that even sounds fresh or intriguing or inspiring. But perhaps my improvisation on an ancient yet ongoing tune can add to this jazz that is our journey. There is a Japanese visual art in which the artist is forced to be spontaneous. He must paint on a thin stretched parchment with a special brush and black water paint in such a way that an unnatural or interrupted stroke will destroy the line or break through the parchment. Erasures or changes are impossible. These artists must practice a particular discipline, that of allowing the idea to express itself in communication with their hands in such a direct way that deliberation cannot interfere. The resulting pictures lack the complex composition and textures of ordinary painting, but it is said that those who see will find something captured that escapes explanation. This conviction that direct deed is the most meaningful reflection, I believe, has prompted the evolution of the extremely severe and unique disciplines of the jazz or improvising musician. Group improvisation is a further challenge. Aside from the weighty technical problem of collective coherent thinking, there is the very human, even social need for sympathy from all members to bend for the common result.

So it is with a little trepidation and a lot of hope that I embark upon this attempt at description and persuasion that may very well rise to the heights of intensely attached Christian particularity. For I am a subject who has been influenced and shaped by the Word, and I speak and live in that truth. The notes I play are very much determined by those that were played before me and every one has been played before, just maybe not in this order and not with my extemporization. And now, I improve on the song of shalom with the hope for sympathy from all members to help us walk in the light of and toward our proper telos.

1This is true. Joel Shuman even pre-used my title with his article “Pentecost and the End of Patriotism: A Call for the Restoration of Pacifism Among Pentecostal Christians,” Journal of Pentecostal Theology, 9 (1996): 70-96. Actually, his article helped me realize that there are pentecostals who really are concerned about these issues as more than just topics of historical study and I highly recommend it.

2Bill Evans, “Improvisation in Jazz” liner notes to Kind of Blue: Miles Davis, original 1959 LP release by Columbia. Emphasis added.
There are over five hundred and forty million Pentecostals and Charismatics in the world. One of every four Christians is a Pentecostal. One of every ten persons on this planet is a Pentecostal. I think about these sisters and brothers and I must admit that I am fascinated by the potential. Pentecostals have a heritage of taking Jesus and the New Testament very seriously and of placing our hope in the truth of the good news. If the gospel is truly powerful enough to transform humanity to be able to continue in the story of Jesus, then a group of people this diverse and sizeable who are committed to the Way of Christ could certainly effect change on a global scale. Although many implications come to mind, I am specifically thinking about the issues of war and other state sanctioned violence (which also include such issues as racism, classism, oppression, consumer capitalism, materialism). It is my humble belief that Pentecostals should be joyfully reminded of their heritage of aggressive and prophetic pacifism, that the biblical and theological case for pacifism among Pentecostals should be explicated, and that reconciliation, peacemaking, and non-violence should be restored as integral elements of the Pentecostal faith. The power of the Spirit to live and die like Jesus and the early Christians should be brought to the forefront of Pentecostal spirituality.

Therefore, I hope to accomplish three objectives in this article. First, I hope to remind us that our ancestors in the faith had significant concerns regarding the appropriateness of the participation of Christians in the killing of other humans, regardless of whether or not the killing was sanctioned by a government, and that we should rejoice and thank God for this. The majority of Pentecostal denominations issued statements in the early twentieth century declaring that they “cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life, since this is contrary to our view of the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God, which is the sole basis of our faith.”

Patriotism and nationalism were condemned as idolatrous and the kingdom of God was sought above all else. Many Pentecostals boldly declared that killing was incompatible with discipleship into the Way. This fact must be actively and corporately remembered.

This is made especially clear when the results of a recent survey are examined. The Society for the Study of Pentecostal Ethics conducted a survey of Assemblies of God pastors in the United States in April, 2001. Ninety three percent of those responding agreed with the statement, “It is appropriate for a Christian to support war.” Furthermore, sixty five percent of these Assemblies of God pastors agreed that “The principles of Jesus support war.” And an even greater number, a significant seventy one percent, informed us that they would actually kill in a war. These are not Pentecostal lay people who support war and would kill, these are the pastors of the Assemblies of God churches in America.

However, some hesitation can be seen in the responses to the statement, “Killing innocent humans can sometimes be justified and be appropriate

\[1\] The Pentecostal Movement and the Conscription Law,” The Weekly Evangel, (4 August 1917) 6. Sixty two percent of Pentecostal denominations formed by 1917 were pacifistic at some point in their history. However, this refers only to those denominations formed in the United States. European Pentecostals also evidenced pacifism in the early twentieth century. Beaman, J., Pentecostal Pacifism, (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1989) 30, 32-33.

\[2\] In this recollection I am not seeking or claiming to have found a perfect first generation of Pentecostals that can lead us to the promised land. As Everett Wilson astutely observed, “is not the desire to find an ideal first generation more an idolatry than it is a frank recognition that the Pentecostal movement is essentially God’s working with finite, defective, men and women whom he uses to demonstrate his purposes not because of some special merits but despite the absence of them?” Rather, the recognition that it was one time an important part of Pentecostalism can open the door to accepting its relevance now. “They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They?” in The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel, (eds.) Dempster, M. W., Klaus, B. D., and Petersen, D., (Oxford: Regnum, 1999) 99-100.

\[3\] This society was formed in the spring of 2001 by myself and some Southwestern Assemblies of God University students who were interested in studying Pentecostal ethics. The first project was to conduct a survey of Assemblies of God pastors in the United States of America regarding their perspectives of various ethical issues. The survey was conducted by mail and enough responses were received to provide a margin of error of +/- 10%. At this time the society consists of only a few members. The complete results are provided at the end of this paper. It should be noted that these results were obtained before the events of September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, D.C.

\[4\] Twenty seven percent strongly agreed.
for a Christian" since only eighteen percent agreed.\textsuperscript{1} It seems that most do not consider the fact that innocent people are always killed in warfare.\textsuperscript{2}

But are the Assemblies of God pastors simply militant themselves while also allowing room for those who oppose war in the name of Christ? Thankfully, the majority does allow some room for this since sixty percent believe that war can be opposed. However, a significant forty percent disagree with the idea that it is ever appropriate to oppose war and twenty two percent strongly disagree with any opposition to warfare. This reveals the hardened position against conscientious objection, pacifism, peacemaking initiatives, and even the just war tradition\textsuperscript{3} that the now militant U.S. Assemblies of God has arrived at. With the American Assemblies of God being led primarily by pastors who would kill others in a war for their country (even though some of these do not think even Jesus would support this), it is appropriate for us to re-examine our heritage and contemplate the path we have trod.\textsuperscript{4} I wonder what the results of similar surveys of different demographics around the world and in other Pentecostal fellowships would yield, and I invite us to explore these uncharted waters.

Second, I believe this could and should lead to Christian participation in the violence of war again being questioned by Pentecostals. In fact, Pentecostals should seriously examine "the conviction that the renunciation of the sword to which Jesus called His disciples is one of the keys to the rest of the problem of Christian faithfulness and to the recovery of the evangelical and ecumenical integrity of the church."\textsuperscript{5} The perpetuation and expansion of nation-states (or transnational corporations) through the dehumanization and killing of people whom God loves should not be tolerated by Christians unless solid biblical and theological support can be provided. The blatant militarism and glorification of national myths of superiority or godliness exhibited by some Pentecostals today\textsuperscript{6} must be critiqued and called to account. Pentecostals of all nations, whether European, African, Asian, or American, should be wary of the killing, for any reason, of their actual or potential siblings in Christ. Opportunity should be created in all Pentecostal denominations (and there are fourteen thousand of them)\textsuperscript{7} for dialogue about these issues, and a Pentecostal theology of peacemaking should be high on the agenda.

Third, I propose the development of a Pentecostal peace fellowship\textsuperscript{8} that is international and ecumenical in scope that will promote dialogue, writing, cooperation, and action on these issues. I clearly have an agenda of promoting Pentecostal peacemaking (and I blame this on Jesus), but this fellowship must include Pentecostals who adhere to the just war tradition (whether chastened or not) and even those who lean more toward an activist position. The biblical concern for peace and justice would best be promoted by allowing all into the discussion. The purpose of the fellowship would be to promote and foster a concern for and participation in active peacemaking that is supported by a solid Pentecostal theology. The outstanding work of Glen Stassen,\textsuperscript{9} the late John Howard Yoder, and others who promote the Anabaptist Vision will assist us in finding our voice. However, our Pentecostal contributions will assist our non-Pentecostal sisters and brothers in their endeavours to be Christian peacemakers as well. We have much to offer in this area, we have been silent for too long, and the Spirit is leading us to speak.

Disseminating information about global events related to violence and oppression to Pentecostal groups would be a valuable service that would raise the awareness of these concerns. Engaging in dialogue with other peace fellowships (Jewish, Episcopalian, Baptist, Orthodox, Lutheran, Catholic, etc.) and cooperating with them in pragmatic endeavours would be a powerful way of bringing Pentecostals into this most significant way of life. Internships for students, surveys, teaching, discipling, publications, press releases, political involvement, and even civil disobedience are all possible ways that the good news of the peace of Jesus Christ could be advanced through this fellowship.

\textsuperscript{1}It is possible that some were thinking of abortion when responding to this question but it was under the section, "Christians and War."

\textsuperscript{2}A disturbing nine percent believe it is appropriate to kill for the gospel. Eighty four percent believe it the duty of Christians to be patriotic to their nations, and twenty four percent think it is appropriate for Christians to enforce evil laws.

\textsuperscript{3}The just war tradition must allow room for objection to warfare if it is to be able to distinguish between just and unjust wars. The very nature of the tradition places the weight of justification on those who desire to pursue war. This forty percent who think it is never appropriate to oppose warfare reveals the crusade mentality that is present.

\textsuperscript{4}I have told some of this story to a limited extent in An Analysis of the Emergence and Decline of Pacifism in the History of the Assemblies of God, Ph.D. diss, Baylor University, 2000.


\textsuperscript{7}Ibid, chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{8}Burgess and McGee, 811.

\textsuperscript{9}The actual name has not been chosen yet. It should be decided by all of those who are interested so that it accurately reflects the nature of the organization. “Pentecostal Charismatic Peacemaking Fellowship International” has also been suggested.

With my plan revealed and my convictions laid bare, I now turn to Paul’s tried and true method of persuasion. I begin with the indicative mood and will then shift to the imperative. I will briefly state the facts, as I see them, regarding the Pentecostal heritage of conscientious objection to war and injustice. Then I will provide a concise Pentecostal theology, based upon the biblical witness, that supports Spirit led peacemaking and reconciliation rather than killing. Finally, I will list a few reasons why a Pentecostal peace fellowship is a good idea, and in so doing will exhort Pentecostals to pick up their crosses and follow Jesus as we ourselves participate in this way of life that is foolishness to the world.

Pentecostals and War

“The War Church is a Harlot Church!”¹ So says an early twentieth century Pentecostal preacher. But I am not the first to quote early Pentecostals to show that some were against social injustice, violence, racism, greed, and war.² And I also recognize that many early Pentecostals were not terribly concerned with these issues, the majority probably were too busy working, taking care of their families, and going to church to get caught up in social concerns and international crises.³ This probably remains true today. So my method of telling the story has the goal of linking an authentic Pentecostal self-understanding with active peacemaking in the world. And it is not too far of a stretch. Pentecostals need to know that their ancestors wrote and spoke things that they are not used to hearing today. My approach is not a simple “back to the good old days” because that would disregard the fact that these days had plenty of problems as well. But there was speech and act that accurately reflected a biblical, Jesus focused, Spirit empowered concern for shalom. To this I now call our attention.⁴

During World War I, an American Pentecostal, William Burton McCafferty, penned an uncompromising article that adamantly opposed combatant participation in warfare. He was responding to a previous article in the Evangel that had supported Christian participation.¹ The authors of the previous article had argued rationally that the Christian was obligated to defend the weak and innocent with violence. The only scriptures they used were references that supported obedience and subservience to the state (Romans 13.1-7; 1 Timothy 2.1-2; 1 Peter 2.12-17). McCafferty based his entire argument on the exegesis of scripture passages that supported nonresistance, spiritual warfare, and heavenly citizenship. McCafferty rejected the option of fighting to defend the weak against the “bully” because the disciples had wanted to do the same thing but were taught that it was wrong.

“In Luke 22:49, the disciples asked Jesus, ‘Lord, shall we smite with the sword?’ They prayed, but, instead of waiting for an answer, one immediately drew the sword and went to battle. Let us wait for an answer from God. Let us not begin to reason from the natural point of view. What was the answer of Christ to the disciples (Christians) to this question? (Matt. 26:51) ‘Put up again they [sic] sword into his place.’ This is what God is saying to the Christians of today. ‘Ye followers of the Prince of Peace, disarm yourselves’ for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.’ (the musket, sword, siege gun or cannon) (2 Cor. 10.4).”²

McCafferty did not allow reason to dissuade him from the serious application of the words of Jesus. Although it was “natural” to defend oneself, the follower of Jesus was supposed to do what Jesus himself did. The argument that we must go to war in behalf of the weaker nation because of its being in the right, is not consistent with the doctrines of Christ. It is also against the teaching of Christ to fight in self-defense. ‘For even hereunto were we called, because Christ also suffered leaving us His steps, who did no sin (violence, Isa. 53:9) who, when he was reviled, reviled not again...’³ He also argued that Christians were not citizens of their earthly nations so they should not defend them, “Jno. [sic] 17:16. Our citizenship is not of this world, our

³Jay Beaman, Murray Dempster, Walter Hollenweger, Howard Kenyon, Joel Shuman, Roger Robbins, John Howard Yoder, and others have pointed this out.
⁴I concluded in my dissertation that there was a minority in the Assemblies of God who were against war and a minority who supported it, while the majority did not bother themselves with worrying about it or actively teaching their children one way or the other (the absence of such teaching may allow it by default).
⁵The rest of this section is a compilation of some of the European and American Pentecostal voices against war and other social evils during World War I. A more complete description can be found in An Analysis, chapter 2.

¹Is European War Justifiable?, The Christian Evangel, (12 December, 1914) 1-2. This was the only article in The Pentecostal Evangel that supported Christian participation in warfare between 1914 and 1916.
³Ibid. McCafferty appealed to the life of Jesus as an example to be followed. In so doing, he aligned with the type of pacifism Yoder called “the imitation of Jesus.” “Its content is not abstract commands but rather the life and word of Jesus. His command and example are to be followed without calculation of social possibilities... It does not expect widespread acceptance, but neither does it acquiesce in the world’s noncompliance with Jesus’ norm.” Yoder, J. H., Nevertheless: Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism, 120.
citizenship is in heaven. Phil. 3:20. We belong to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are not allied...Christians are separate from the world and are subjects of God’s kingdom, a kingdom of peace.\(^1\)

McCafferty employed fourteen scripture verses, all of which were from the New Testament with the exception of one reference to Isaiah 53 (which he used to equate sin with violence). He concerned himself with finding and presenting the attitude that Jesus and his disciples took regarding war. Any other argument, regardless of how “natural” it seemed, had to be measured against the direct teachings and lives of Jesus and the New Testament Christians. This is the first article in the Evangel that systematically presented a pacifist argument and it revealed a paradigm that was followed by subsequent pacifists.

Both the July 3 and July 10, 1915, Weekly Evangels presented advertisements for Arthur Sydney Booth-Clibborn’s strongly worded pacifist book, Blood Against Blood.\(^2\) Booth-Clibborn employed a multitude of scriptures and illustrations to prove that a Christian had no place in the bloodshed of war. “The editors of The Weekly Evangel heartily recommended it. A most striking, realistic and forceful book by Arthur Sydney Booth-Clibborn, an English Pentecostal Evangelist and Elder who has put into words the principles burning in the hearts of all the Pentecostal saints on the subject of whether a Christian should go to war or not. This book presents war from a Christian standpoint and is not intended for those out of Christ. Should the United States go to war with Germany what will be the attitude of the Pentecostal people. Send for a copy of this wonderful book and make a decision.”\(^3\)

High praises for a text about pacifism being the Pentecostal view of war seems to reveal that the early leaders of the Assemblies of God thought this was the direction they wanted the fellowship to go, and the preponderance of articles between 1914 and 1916 recommended abstinence.\(^4\) An unnamed author in 1915 provided evidence that some American Pentecostals were more concerned about promoting peace than supporting war, noting, “the nations [should have]... spread the Gospel of Peace and made known the rule of Jesus...‘the King of Peace’ instead of obeying the ‘traditions of men’ and preparing big guns, air craft, rapid firers [sic], submarines, a big navy, and bigger army for the destruction of human life.”\(^1\)

The following week witnessed the first article by Frank Bartleman in The Weekly Evangel. He voiced the concerns of the marginalized in society and condemned war in no uncertain terms. His first paragraph proclaimed that only hypocrites pray for peace while helping the war to continue. He asserted that America’s claim of neutrality was a lie because America made the European war possible by selling arms to all the participants. “The nation, the voters, the church members, could stop this if they would insist upon it...[but] we are willing to receive these millions of blood money. We had better pluck out the stars from our flag and instate dollar marks in their place.”\(^2\) He contrasted the symbols of the nations, “wild beasts and birds of prey,” with the human heart (representing peace) that Nebuchadnezzer had taken away from him. His concern for the poor manifested itself repeatedly, writing, “The poor people must spill their blood to save the rulers fortunes... The servant class must be emancipated. The lords must turn their great ‘preserves’ into potato patches to feed the starving thousands of the common people...[Soldiers are] blinded by sin, blinded by ignorance, blinded and controlled by their leaders.”\(^3\) Bartleman also predicted terrible after effects of the war, noting, “We will have nations of murderers after this war. A generation with their hands stained with the blood of other human beings... Whole nations will be fired with hatred in heart and mind against one another for coming generations. Not only men but the women and the children. Unborn generations are thus cursed.”\(^4\) He presented the selfish motives and horrific results of war in such ways that made it completely incompatible with Christianity. He condemned specific sins of every nation, from England and America to Germany, Russia, Italy, France, and Japan, declaring that “We speak without fear or favor... We favor no country.”\(^5\) Lest anyone question his lack of loyalty to the government, he provided his attitude toward national fidelity. “Patriotism has been fanned into a flame. The religious passion has been invoked, and the national gods called upon for defence [sic] in each case. What blasphemy!”\(^6\) In this manner the answering of the war question seemed to be taking definite shape among Pentecostals.

1McCafferty, “Should Christians Go To War?” 1.
4The ratio was at least 10:1 in favor of nonparticipation. However, war remained a minor concern compared to missions, revivals, and doctrinal debates.
5McCafferty, “Should Christians Go To War?” 1.
7ibid.
8ibid.
9ibid.
Bartleman provided another article to *The Weekly Evangel* one month later. In it he continued his tirade against the greedy nations and patriotism, his defense of the outcasts, his condemnation of war, and he added a call to repentance, writing, “It is not worth while for Christians to wax warm in patriotism over this world’s situation...American capitalists, leaders and manufacturers are as deep in the mud as the others....[Germans] are in the wrong sometimes also, and they are likely to stand by their country, right or wrong. England will do that also. America will do the same thing. There is not principle enough in any of these countries to overcome that.”1

Bartleman appealed to principle as a reason to abstain and blamed “nominal Christianity” (the opposite of radical Pentecostal Christianity) for the disastrous wars. Discussing the evils of war caused him to remember the other evils in which America had participated and he thus revealed more of his social conscience, writing, “We have killed off about all of our American Indians. What we have not killed outright we have starved. . . . Will not God deal in judgment with such a nation as this? Most assuredly! We have stolen the land from the North American Indians. . . . Our wrong to the black people was avenged in blood. What will the next be?”2 Bartleman condemned participation in the European war and called for a transformation of things. He admitted that the world would continue to kill but that did not mean they needed Christian participation. “Hence we need a call at this time as a nation to repentance. I suppose it will be always possible for our nation to hire men to slay others. But the spirit of patriotism is not going to burn very bright in a people who are ruled by grafters.”3

J. Roswell Flower penned an article and printed a letter from a reader who condemned Bartleman as “a German first and a Christian afterwards—so personally interested in the war as to have lost sight of the impartial view of a Christian.”4 Flower agreed and admitted that Bartleman’s article was “too strongly worded and that it should not have appeared except in a greatly modified form.”5 E. N. Bell’s absence during this time served as one of the primary reasons it did appear, “as Brother Bell was still away from the office and we could not advise with him, we allowed the article to go in the paper.”6 Even though Flower apologized for the “mistake” of printing the article, he supported its antipatriotic stance and even seemed to lean toward nonparticipation in war. He wrote, “We are not citizens of this world, but citizens of a better country and our interests are all for that country to which we all hope to go. In this office there is a Canadian, a Dutchman, an Englishman, and for a time a German. We have no arguments about the war as we are only interested in it from a Christian standpoint and its effect on the coming of the Lord. God’s people must all get to this place, *where national prejudices must die and where the glory of God only will be sought.*”7

Flower wanted every Pentecostal to mature to the point where they felt loyalty only for God and not for their nation. This “heavenly citizenship” sentiment corresponds with the ideal of pacifism and Stanley Frodsham developed it more fully the following month. Frodsham argued that “an attitude of strict neutrality to the warring nations” needed to be expanded to include actual rejection.8 He wrote, “When one comes into that higher kingdom and becomes a citizen of that “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9), the things that pertain to earth should forever lose their hold, even that natural love for the nation where one happened to be born, and loyalty to the new King should swallow up all other loyalties.”9 This absolute loyalty to God made all the affairs of the earth appear completely different. There was no room for pride and the removal of pride brought the removal of hatred and war. He wrote, “National pride, like every other form of pride, is abomination in the sight of God. And pride of race must be one of the all things that pass away when one becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus.”10

. When seen from the heavenly viewpoint, how the present conflict is illumined. The policy of our God is plainly declared in the Word, ‘Peace on earth, good will toward men.’”11 Frodsham employed the New Testament to prove that Christians should not participate in the wars of this world. He set the kingdoms of this world in direct opposition to the kingdom of God and forced a choice upon his audience, “Is any child of God going to side with these belligerent kings?...
Will he not rather side with the Prince of Peace under whose banner of love he has chosen to serve? Choosing to follow peace rather than war meant rejection but Frodsham knew what really mattered, "The world, especially the religious world, has no use for the children of God, but the Lord taketh pleasure in his people. It is important for the saint of God to remember that his citizenship is in heaven." Frodsham willingly spoke against loyalty to the government and against the related participation in war. He employed strong words and numerous scriptural arguments to inspire Pentecostals to follow God rather than their idolatrous nations.

Early Pentecostals spoke against war not just because the killing itself was immoral but also because of the results that it had upon its participants. They sometimes expressed their perspective regarding the intrinsic evil of war by quoting other writers as in the following, "I see the best, the most gentle men coming back transformed. I will not say that they have actually become wicked; but it is something much worse; they have grown accustomed to do evil unconsciously, to give the lie to all their lives, all that they believed, all that they desired, hitherto. To kill has become their duty, their sole object and purpose of life. Their hearts are hardened."

Another direct quote came from Booth-Clibborn's Blood Against Blood under the title "What is War?" It also served as an advertisement for the book: General Sherman: 'War is hell. . . . ' George Fox, when offered a captaincy: 'I cannot fight, for the spirit of war is slain within me.' Sydney Smith: 'God is forgotten in war: every principle of Christianity is trampled upon.' Tertullian: 'Our religion teaches us that it is better to be killed than to kill.' John Wesley: 'Shall Christians assist the Prince of Hell, who was captain: 'I cannot.' Tertullian: 'Our religion teaches us that it is better to be killed than to kill.' John Wesley: 'Shall Christians assist the Prince of Hell, who was accustomed to do evil unconsciously, to give the lie to all their lives, all that they believed, all that they desired, hitherto. To kill has become their duty, their sole object and purpose of life. Their hearts are hardened.'

It is probably no coincidence that these unequivocal antiwar citations appeared one week before the Assemblies of God informed the United States government that they were an organization of conscientious objectors. Nevertheless, these statements presented a clear message about the incompatibility of Christianity and war. They sometimes expressed their perspective regarding the intrinsic evil of war by quoting other writers as in the following, "I see the best, the most gentle men coming back transformed. I will not say that they have actually become wicked; but it is something much worse; they have grown accustomed to do evil unconsciously, to give the lie to all their lives, all that they believed, all that they desired, hitherto. To kill has become their duty, their sole object and purpose of life. Their hearts are hardened."

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The column right next to this one, written Mrs. A. R. Flower, explained that war called patriots to the aid of their country. In contrast, the child of God needed to answer the call to "deeper consecration, unceasing prayer, and earnest endeavor for soul." This was the part that the Pentecostals were to take. One week later the son of Arthur Sydney Booth-Clibborn tackled the war question. Samuel Booth-Clibborn forcefully echoed the sentiments of his father and employed a scripture-laden approach to show the absolute nature of Christian nonresistance. He separated Christians from "Pacifists" who used mere politics and "Socialists" who, although their "zeal for peace" was admired, worshipped materialism. Even though early Pentecostal writers expressed pacifistic ideals they scorned the term itself because of its connection with non-Christian "human" efforts to establish world peace. Booth-Clibborn addressed his message only to Christians, "Yes, us Christians, who have been preaching this Gospel of LOVE, JOY, and PEACE so loud and so long. Now that it has come to practicing what we preach, now the fiery test will be applied—are we willing to go through for Jesus?"

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2ibid.
3Mrs. A. R. Flower, "Daily Portion From the King's Bounty," The Weekly Evangel, (21 April, 1917) 7.
4Booth-Clibborn, S. H., "The Christian and War. Is it too Late?," The Weekly Evangel, (28 April, 1917) 5. Booth-Clibborn rejected pragmatic conscientious objection and revealed that he was a pacifist who appealed to the example of Jesus and completely rejected any form of noncombatant military service. "A truly enlightened Christian will have the spiritual perception to see that this so-called 'non-combatant service' is only a part and parcel of the whole machine. Men and women thus employed are every bit as guilty in the Supreme Court of Heaven of the murder of their fellow-men, as are those in the trenches." Booth-Clibborn, S. H., Should A Christian Fight? An Appeal to Christian Young Men of All Nations (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.) 83.
5ibid.
He discounted Old Testament accounts of warfare because they “lived in the age of Law and Judgment; whilst we dwell in the Dispensation of Grace and Mercy.” He disallowed any use of the Old Testament to justify killing in warfare as “thick ignorance...resulting in this everlasting muddling up of OT and NT teaching, of Law and Grace, of Judgment and Mercy, of War and Peace...” He established his entire position on Jesus and the New Testament: “Find me in the New Testament where Christ ever sent His followers on such a mission? On the contrary He sent them out to save men—not to butcher them like cattle...No! as far as the Christian is concerned, the “eye for an eye” system has given place to the “Turn to him the other cheek also” of Matthew 5:39-44.”

When challenged with the question of self-defence, Booth-Clibborn responded with a four-point answer. First, he argued that a “murderous individual” employs his free will while wars are fought by “poor harmless people...driven like cattle and quite against their will by godless governments into butchering each other.” He then claimed that God often protected his children “according to their faith; for they put their trust in Him rather than the police.” But should the “brute” actually break in and threaten one’s life, “if it should come to actual violence—Matthew 5 and Romans 12 would still remain true, and God’s Word would still have to be obeyed.” Thus, even when it seemed like Booth-Clibborn would justify self-defence because it differed from war, he did not. Obedience was key. He then made his fourth point. Many religious persecutions which down the ages have been the inevitable accompaniment of every new and powerful movement; and yet these very persecutions have set the seal of God’s approval in the most striking way on the doctrine of Christian non-resistance. Those same early non-resisters, mind you, were the same martyrs, of whom, in recent days of inherited religion, the boast is so often heard, that ‘their blood was the seed of the church!’

Samuel H. Booth-Clibborn lauded the faithfulness of early Christians and radical movements who did not fight and who did not succumb to patriotism. This statement revealed that Booth-Clibborn wanted Pentecostals to stay true to their restorationist, Spirit empowered, missions-focused origins. Pacifism provided the integral avenue for this to be accomplished. In 1917, the Weekly Evangel presented two pieces that addressed the Pentecostal perspective on war. Samuel H. Booth-Clibborn provided the first with the second installment of his previous article. He condemned Christians who approved war in stern fashion: “It is also essential that we bring unprejudiced, humble, and earnest minds and hearts to bear on this matter, as I’ve found ninety per cent of militaristic Christians to be lacking in the above kind of ‘Preparedness,’—as is evidenced by a biased, feverish state of mind, fatal to clear spiritual thinking.”

He reiterated the belief that “it was simply God’s Holy Ghost power!” that made it possible to accomplish amazing things for God as a nonviolent person. He also implemented one of the most unique arguments against participation in war that occurred in the early Assemblies of God: “But there is another way in which the Temple can be destroyed, viz., by dragging into it the present horrible hatred, pride, and bloody butchery! ‘Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy (R. V.) the Temple of God, Him shall God destroy!’ (And ‘all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.’)”

Booth-Clibborn appealed to the classic “temple of God” concept to show that the Christian must not desecrate himself by hating and killing. He argued that Christians could choose but one position regarding this question, especially since they were filled with the “Spirit.” J. W. Welch, the chairman of the executive presbytery of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1917, penned an article that related their opinion regarding military service. He introduced it by stating that the purpose was “to interpret as clearly as possible what the Scriptures teach upon the subject, as we have from the beginning declared the Bible to be our only rule of faith and practice.” The scriptural foundation allowed them to “hope to secure the privilege of exemption from such military service as will necessitate the taking of life for all who are real conscientious objectors and who are associated with the General Council.” Welch claimed that they were merely stating “the position always held by this company of believers” because the time had now arrived that necessitated it since conscription was imminent. He told the constituency that they should be willing to serve in any capacity that did not require killing and that he himself was appalled at the idea of Pentecostal men bearing arms.

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1 Booth-Clibborn, S. H., “The Christian and War,” The Weekly Evangel, (19 May, 1917) 4. Emphasis in the original. Note the designation “militaristic Christians” he employed as he addressed the Assemblies of God, he did not want his audience to be so defined but he recognized that some were.
2 ibid. Emphasis in the original.
3 ibid. Emphasis in the original.
The lay reader of The Weekly Evangel read the military service resolution for the first time in the August 4, 1917, edition. The executive presbytery (probably J. W. Welch) wrote a three-paragraph introduction to the resolution and then related the chronology of the events that had transpired since April. Significantly, missions served as the first justification for the resolution. Early Pentecostals concerned themselves primarily with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and they did not want to adopt any stance that would work against their mission. If any person had never read anything up until this point about Pentecostals and the military, their introduction to the topic, as introduced by the executives of the Assemblies of God, would have been in the context of evangelism.

From its very inception, the Pentecostal Movement has been a movement of evangelism, studiously avoiding any principles or actions which would thwart it in its great purpose. All the wings of the movement, which have grown out of the work that originated in the Southwestern States and the Pacific Coast are a unit in this respect. In order to accomplish this goal they realized that they could not participate in warfare because the ideals of the two conflicted. They believed that telling the story of Jesus and then killing that same person served as a blatantly hypocritical contradiction. The author then recalled the Quaker heritage of the Assemblies of God and appealed to their serious approach to the words of scripture to explain their position.

From the very beginning, the movement has been characterized by Quaker principles. The laws of the Kingdom, laid down by our elder brother, Jesus Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, have been unqualifiedly adopted, consequently the movement has found itself opposed to the spilling of the blood of any man, or of offering resistance to any aggression. Every branch of the movement, whether in the United States, Canada, Great Britain or Germany, has held to this principle.

The leaders of the Assemblies of God claimed to speak for the entire Pentecostal movement and gave the impression that there were no dissenters among their ranks. The wording of the paragraph above would have led one to believe that every Pentecostal person in the world was opposed to participation in warfare. The anti-warfare, pacificist, and conscientious objection articles in the Evangel up to this point outnumbered the combatant participation articles by more than ten to one so the above statement seems to reflect a sentiment within the Assemblies of God that was stronger than the procombatant position, or at least the Assemblies of God believed they needed to project that appearance in order to protect their conscientious objectors. The author then explained that previously there had been no reason to state the position of the Assemblies of God. Now that “war clouds gathered and actual war was declared” they found it necessary to commit to writing “the established principles or creed of all sections of the Pentecostal Movement, and especially that part represented by the General Council.” The full resolution, with its title, read as follows:

Resolution Concerning the Attitude of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Toward any Military Service which Involves the Actual Participation in the Destruction of Human Life.

While recognizing Human Government as of Divine ordination and affirming our unswerving loyalty to the Government of the United States, nevertheless we are constrained to define our position with reference to the taking of human life.

WHEREAS, in the Constitutional Resolution adopted at the Hot Springs General Council, April 1-10, 1914, we plainly declare the Holy Inspired Scriptures to be the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and WHEREAS the Scriptures deal plainly with the obligations and relations of humanity, setting forth the principles of “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14); and WHEREAS we, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, believe in implicit obedience to the Divine commands and precepts which instruct us to “Follow peace with all men,” (Heb. 12:14); “Thou shalt not kill,” (Exod. 20:13); “Resist not evil,” (Matt. 5:39); “Love your enemies,” (Matt. 5:44); etc., and WHEREAS these and other Scriptures have always been accepted and interpreted by our churches as prohibiting Christians from shedding blood or taking human life;

THEREFORE we, as a body of Christians, while purposing to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, are nevertheless constrained to declare we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life, since this is contrary to our

1The resolution had been mailed to all ordained Assemblies of God ministers in May.
3Ibid. Emphasis added. They declared that no single person deserved to be killed and absolutely no aggression was to be resisted.

4Evidence exists that shows that the noncombatant and pacifistic positions were not unanimous. See, An Analysis, “Freedom to Fight, 1914-1940.”
view of the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God, which is the sole basis of our faith.¹

The first “whereas” stated that scripture served as the only determinant of doctrine and ethics. Supposedly, any belief needed to be defended only with scriptural support since it was “all-sufficient.” Furthermore, they argued that their sole authority, the Bible, “plainly” provided one unequivocal position about participation in warfare. They expressed this single principle by quoting five scripture verses, four from the New Testament and one from the Old Testament. The fourth and final “whereas” declared that many more scriptures than they had even listed had “always” been interpreted by Pentecostals to forbid killing. It is quite significant that all four “whereas” paragraphs refer to scripture to justify their conclusion. They did not appeal to reason or any philosophical principles. They appealed only to scripture.

The final paragraph of the resolution recognized that it did not support absolutely loyal American citizenship by incorporating the word “nevertheless.” But it also could have been interpreted to allow noncombatant service since it did not involve “the actual destruction of human life.”² The presbytery then once again defended their principle of conscientious opposition to war and killing by mentioning the “clear teachings” of the Bible as the “sole basis” of their faith. The multiple references to scripture revealed the manner by which early Pentecostals justified and defended their nonparticipation. They introduced their resolution by referring to evangelism, Quaker principles, and Jesus Christ.³ They loaded their resolution with praises for scripture, descriptions of scripture, and scriptures themselves: “Holy,” “Inspired,” “all-sufficient,” “rule,” “obligations,” “principles,” “Divine commands,” “precepts,” and “sole basis.”⁴ This early method stands in stark contrast to the manner in which the Assemblies of God justified their military service resolution fifty years later.⁵

¹Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
²At the least, they did not explicitly forbid noncombatant military service and it did explicitly state their desire to be loyal citizens.
³These were arguments employed by the Booth-Clibborns and Bartleman.
⁴Ibid.
⁵The Assemblies of God made not one single reference to scripture in the 1967 article on military service that reversed the historic position. “As a movement we affirm our loyalty to the government of the United States in war or peace. We shall continue to insist, as we have historically, on the right of each member to choose for himself whether to declare his position as a combatant, a noncombatant, or a conscientious objector.” General Council Minutes, 1967, 35. It was significant that this was written as an American statement, despite the fact that the majority of the Assemblies of God constituency (seventy percent) were not citizens of the United States in 1967. Now there are 38 million Assemblies of God people worldwide with less than 3 million (seven percent) in the United States.
⁶Booth-Clibborn, A. S., “Nigh, Even At The Doors,” (7 September, 1918) 2.
⁷Ibid. Emphasis in the original. This is evidence of Booth-Clibborn’s vocational pacifism.
⁸Booth-Clibborn, A. S., “Nigh, Even At The Doors,” (5 October, 1918) 6. It was possible that Booth-Clibborn purposely contradicted E. N. Bell’s earlier appeal to American forces for the protection of Pentecostal missionaries. Booth-Clibborn and Bell were diametrically opposed on this issue. Bell, E. N., “Wars and the Missionaries,” The Christian Evangel, (12 September, 1914) 1.
⁹Ibid.
¹⁰This does not mean that I agree with every methodology or argument they employed, but it does mean that the issues they were addressing need to receive significant focus now as well.
Pentecostal theology of mission has several critical points at which a critique of war and killing can enter. If all people are supposed to be led to Jesus (and this is a safe theological point for most Pentecostals), \(^1\) at what point does a person cease being a subject worthy of redemption and love and become an object deserving death? Furthermore, at what point does a witness of Jesus/missionary (and all Pentecostals are supposed to be this) cease converting and start destroying? The common answer might be, "When the government says so." But this allows a redefinition of who we as Pentecostals are and who the rest of the world is that places national namings, "ally" and "enemy," above Christian namings, "believer" and "unbeliever." Rather, we say as the disciples said, "we obey God rather than men." Pentecostal evangelism is not supposed to be a part-time occupation or an element of Christianity that gets laid to the side sometimes when more important matters call (safety, security, prosperity).\(^2\)

Third, the Bible is taken seriously by Pentecostals and this should lead to a high regard for peacemaking and significant questioning of violence, oppression, and the subordination of the kingdom of God to national lusts of self-preservation. Critical biblical scholarship does indeed support a Christianity that is not nationalistic and not violent. Pentecostals would do well to consider the implications of their belief that God has actually revealed his way in the Bible. Yoder observed that "the prima facie biblicism of early Pentecostals never matured into a solid ethical hermeneutic,"\(^3\) but that can and should be corrected. The respect for the Bible is not a hurdle that has to be overcome, it is a strength that should be directed and developed. Pentecostal theological ethicists can be free to exegete scripture because the communities we serve regard it highly, and taking the biblical stories seriously should lead one toward an ethic of excessive love.

Finally,\(^4\) it would be an understatement to say that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been an integral aspect of Pentecostalism. It has been touted as

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\(^1\) Joel Shuman argued that abandoning pacifism was a "grievous error" for Pentecostals. He then provided a good "theological rationale for [his] assertion that the gradual and eventually complete loss of pacifism is among the most compelling signs that the Assemblies of God has, at least in practice, abandoned its self-understanding as a community of radical Christian witness." He did this by showing "that the moral ramifications of the doctrine of Spirit baptism must be understood eschatologically (as they initially were) in order to undergird a restoration of Pentecostal pacifism." "Pentecost and the End of Patriotism," 71-72.

\(^2\) L. Grant McClung, Jr. claims that "Pentecostalism by its very nature is intrinsically missiological." "'Try to Get People Saved' Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Mission," in The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel, 32.

\(^3\) John Howard Yoder, foreword to Pentecostal Pacifism, by Jay Beaman (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1989) iii.

\(^4\) This is certainly not the end of the theological rationale, indeed, it is barely a beginning.
the highlight of Christian spirituality and the gateway to God’s special empowerment and leading, not to mention all the gifts of the Spirit. But the ethical implications of this experience have unfortunately been left too often to merely personal and individualistic applications. The Spirit may be mentioned regarding the consumption of alcohol, gambling, or marital fidelity. But we must recognize the already existent biblical link between this powerful enabling of God and the ability to lay down one’s life for others. It is the Spirit who enables us to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who mistreat us (Luke 6.27-36).

Luke portrays Jesus as the Spirit-filled person (4.1), who was led by the Spirit (4.1), empowered by the Spirit (4.14), and anointed by the Spirit (4.18) to teach and live the way he did. He then encouraged his followers to emulate him after they were empowered by the same Spirit (24.46-49). He makes his priorities clear to them and continually rejected violent revolution and the sword. Luke 22, which is often used as a justification for the use of the sword since Jesus said to buy one, is better interpreted within the context of temptation. Judas had succumbed to the tempter (which Jesus had successfully rejected so far, even his offers of safety, security, wealth, and power), and all the disciples were to be sifted. Jesus reminded them that his kingdom was not the way of the world: exercising authority and controlling through power. Rather, God’s way is to serve, to suffer, and even to die for others.

Then Jesus reminded them they did not need money, provisions, sandals, or swords to follow him. But now at this hour of temptation they would have the opportunity to forsake him and seek these other things. The two swords they had were “enough,” not for the actual defense of the disciples but certainly enough for their temptation. After Jesus’ prayers and requests for prayer to withstand the coming temptation, Peter still succumbed by attacking with the sword and then followed his physical denial of the way of Jesus with his verbal denials. It is not by accident that this incident occurs before the day of Pentecost. Peter’s misunderstanding of Jesus (from telling Jesus he would not suffer and die to his use of the sword) was prior to the vindication of the resurrection and the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit to walk in God’s way. He was quite different afterwards, both in the sermon immediately following and in his later writing, “don’t render evil for evil, or insult for insult, but on the contrary pursue it... if you suffer for good, good for you! For you don’t fear what they fear [death].” The scope of this paper does not allow for a more nuanced treatment, but it will be forthcoming. In the meantime, see Yoder, J. H., 1972, The Politics of Jesus, (Grand Rapids: Eerdman’s, 1972), The Original Revolution (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), or Cahill, L. S., Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994).

1Frank Macchia defines speaking in tongues as “an experience with God that continually urges the people of God to move beyond the confines of private piety or even church fellowship to the global issues of justice, peace, and the redemption of the world... Contemporary Pentecostals must [believe] that tongues connect individual Christians and churches with the need for global justice, reconciliation, and redemption.” “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology,” The Globalization of Pentecostalism, 18.

2Why A Pentecostal Peace Fellowship Is Needed

How will another organization help the kingdom of God? Aren’t there enough already? These are legitimate questions and deserve answers compelling enough to justify the organizing of a Pentecostal peacemaking fellowship. So now I humbly offer some reasons why such a fellowship will help us follow the leading of the Spirit.

First, my critique of Pentecostal approval of war and other forms of violence and oppression is not unique. Various lay people, pastors, and scholars reveal concern on various occasions in various ways. But these efforts are random and not well organized, an article here, a proposal there, or an occasional chapter in a book. Sharing this idea with Pentecostals around the world has brought encouraging responses. In Europe there is a

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Pentecostal peacemaking. European Perspective," in envisions an "ethic of global concern which would naturally include the importance of rather than a theology of telling," and for "the believers in Europe to numerous students, and others in India, England, Holland, Germany, Colombia, Philippines, and Italy.

Third, this fellowship could serve global Pentecostalism as a forum for those voices from around the world who are of the Spirit yet differ greatly on these significant issues. It has already been shown that the majority of Assemblies of God pastors in the U.S. would kill for their country. Perhaps, Pentecostals from other parts of the world have something to say about this. This would a place where voices unified by the Spirit, yet not necessarily uniformed, could speak to these issues and present their understandings of the significance of being Pentecostal in a world divided by hostility and selfishness. Jean-Daniel Plüss hopes for "a shift from a theology of victory to a theology of humility," “a theology of listening rather than a theology of telling," and for “the believers in Europe to stretch out ‘the right hand of fellowship’ to minorities and marginalized communities and together address global concerns with a vibrant message adequate to answer the pressing spiritual and moral needs of the world." A Pentecostal peace fellowship would actively foster these positive developments.

Finally, this fellowship could be a place that promotes actual participation in reconciliation efforts around the world. Writing, reading, and discussing certainly have their place (for the Messiah taught consistently) but it must be accompanied by participation in the way of the cross. Pentecostals have a heritage of following the leading of the Spirit to the difficult places, and that must remain true of this fellowship dedicated to reconciliation and love of fellow humans. Those involved should be dedicated to active involvement in reconciliation in their local communities. This can be done by finding those who are ostracized or oppressed and befriending them, by speaking truth in public to the powers that exploit, and by not being ashamed that we live from the particularity of our redemption in Christ. I know students who would be honoured to do a ‘peacemaking internship’ with Pentecostals who are in perilous areas working for the cause of Christ. The mission of the church must include this supposed foolishness and a peace fellowship will assist many denominations (both Pentecostal and non) to work together to make the witness of God’s work in our lives extremely visible.

And so I end my fleeting solo and pass it off to you. I have been neither objective nor unbiased, but have contributed my piece as someone who claims to have been transformed by the power of Jesus Christ. Our bible, our theology, and our heritage supports an active and public peacemaking, let us be faithful, obedient, and Spirit-filled followers of our Saviour as we seek peace. This part of the journey is just beginning and we trust that the Spirit who led Israel, Jesus, the early Church, and the early Pentecostals leads us as well.

Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Albania, and the U.S., professors at Duke, COG Theological Seminary, Southeastern College, etc. the president of an Assemblies of God university, numerous students, and others in India, England, Holland, Germany, Colombia, Philippines, and Italy.

1Plüss, J. D., “Globalization of Pentecostalism or Globalization of Individualism? A European Perspective,” in The Globalization of Pentecostalism, 175-176. Plüss envisions an “ethic of global concern” which would naturally include the importance of Pentecostal peacemaking.

2Plüss, 180. He also rightly believes that Pentecostal spirituality should have a “common Christian attitude of respect and love towards the other because of the overriding awareness of God’s active Spirit. Such a community could be called a culture in the sense that believers have been socialized to live a meaningful metaphor of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, respecting the voices of all people and mutually experiencing God’s Spirit moving through and with them.” These communities can rightly be called the church when they are willing to die, rather than kill, for their God.

3Lest this seem to be purely social work (in the derogatory sense of the term), I am actually describing the fruit of a converted and transformed life.

If you are interested in being involved in any way, please contact the author at palexander@sagu.edu.
Recovering the Way of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

Glen H. Stassen

In the Gospel of John 14:26 and 15:26, Jesus promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name, and the Holy Spirit “will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you,” and “He will bear witness to me.” That means the Holy Spirit will surely teach us the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount—the biggest section in the New Testament of what Jesus said to us. Murray Dempster makes the point especially clearly: “Luke made it clear in his prologue in the Acts that because of the transference of the Spirit the church continued to do and teach those things which Jesus began to do and teach (Acts 1:1). What needs to be underscored is that the message of the kingdom of God was the focal point of all those things that Jesus began to do and teach”.1 And Gordon Fee hammers it home with his thoroughly faithful and accurate biblical scholarship: “The universal witness of the Synoptic tradition is that the absolutely central theme of Jesus’ mission and message was ‘the good news of the kingdom of God’”.2 The ethics of the kingdom of God is set forth most clearly in the Sermon on the Mount. Each of the beatitudes announces a blessing of participation in the kingdom of God. The Lord’s Prayer prays for the kingdom to come. The kingdom is mentioned explicitly nine times in the Sermon. And I hope to show that each of the main teachings is a pointer to the way of deliverance that we are given when the kingdom breaks into our midst.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives us The Great Commission: “As you go, therefore, make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to practice all the commands that I have given you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” (Matt 28:19-20). The way of discipleship and the commands of Jesus are most explicitly taught in the Sermon on the Mount. The way we are to make disciples of all peoples is to teach them the practices taught mostly in the Sermon on the Mount.3 The Sermon on the Mount echoes throughout the Gospel of Luke, as well as in Paul’s letters and the rest of the New Testament. In the first three centuries of the church, no other biblical passage was referred to as often as the Sermon on the Mount. Pentecostalism is a movement of restoration of New Testament faith and practice. Therefore it is the inherent logic of Pentecostalism to pray for the help of the Holy Spirit in recovering the Sermon on the Mount for our practice. I do so pray.

How the Tradition of Dualism and Evasion Developed

We see the centrality of the Sermon on the Mount clearly in one of the first Christian writers after the New Testament, Justin Martyr. In about 157 A.D, Justin wrote his First Apology. When he presents what Christians stand for, he quotes almost the whole Sermon on the Mount. He could not be clearer that he expects Christians to do these practices. He emphasizes what Jesus emphasized: “Not every one who saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.... By their works ye shall know them. And every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.” He says Christians do carry out Jesus’ teachings, and this bears clear witness to the power of the teachings to transform the way people live: “And many, both men and women, who have been Christ’s disciples from childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I boast that I could produce such from every race of men. For what shall I say, too, of the countless multitude of those who have reformed intemperate habits, and learned these things?” (Justin Martyr, Apology, 167-8).

But then a crack appears, a hint of greater diversions yet to come in subsequent church history. Justin has addressed his Apology to Emperor Antoninus Pius and his son, trying to get their favor. Therefore, immediately after presenting these teachings from Jesus’ way, he then quotes Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 22:17ff.: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And he interprets it dualistically: “Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men....” Thus he limits Christian independence from the Emperor to how we worship. Clearly Jesus’ way as taught in the Sermon on the Mount concerns much more than our worship. He has just quoted its teachings on what we do with sexual relations, marriage, truth telling, loving enemies, prayer, investing our money, judging others, and where we place our trust. Yet here Justin introduces an incipient dualism for the purpose of not offending the Emperor. He is “apologizing” to the Emperor, trying to persuade the Emperor to be kind to Christians. In order to be subservient to the powers and authorities, he compartmentalizes or splits up Christian responsibility so that our worship belongs to God, while in other things we do what the earthly ruler says. That gives the Emperor a blank cheque in matters outside of worship. It gives much more than Jesus would.

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2 ibid, 8.
Think a moment. For Jesus, what belonged to God? .... Everything.

Jesus was a Jew, not a dualist. He knew God is Lord over everything. His teaching in Matthew 22 is an ironic Hebrew parallelism. The second member of the parallelism, “Render to God the things that are God’s,” means “render everything to God.” It gives an ironic twist to the first half of the teaching: God has sovereignty over Caesar; we render to Caesar only what fits God’s will. But Justin was a Gentile, not a Jew, and a disciple of Socrates and Plato before his conversion, used to a dualism in which the spiritual was split off from the earthly. In Platonic thought, God was outside the cave in which we live, in the eternal realm, not the earthly realm. Wanting to please the Emperor, Justin here, perhaps unintentionally, gives the Emperor authority over everything but the spiritual realm of worship.

Justin's order of teaching is the opposite of Jesus'. Having said a little coin can go to Caesar, Jesus climaxes his teaching by saying, in effect, “but God is Lord of everything.” Having quoted Jesus’ way in the Sermon on the Mount, Justin climaxes his teaching by saying, in effect, “but Caesar is Lord in everything but worship.” It is this incipient Platonic dualism, combined with the desire to please the powers and authorities of this world—whether they be political rulers, concentrations of wealth, racist power structures, or habits, customs, and self-interested practices—that creates in subsequent church history the devilish dualism in which whole swaths of life are moved from under God’s authority and placed under the authorities of this world. And then the way of Jesus gets fenced in to apply only to one narrowly limited realm—worship, or inner attitudes, or individual relations. Surely Justin, a sincere Christian, did not intend all that followed in subsequent church history from this seemingly small, innocent crack in our responsibility to God. But it did follow. When Constantine became the first Christian Emperor (306-337), the church downplayed whatever might suggest criticism of Constantine’s way of ruling.

The disabling and ultimately tragic development is that the focus soon shifts from Jesus and the particular way he incarnated with his community, the way of his God, to the metaphysical relationship of the individual figure, Jesus, to the church’s God, now become also the empire’s God.... So one searches in vain in the classic creeds, those pure distillations of the

The church historian, Jaroslav Pelikan, shows that Luther's two-realms dualism was a departure from the great preacher of the early Greek church, John Chrysostom, and the great preacher of the Roman church, Augustine (Divine Rhetoric, 145ff). Chrysostom and Augustine taught that the commands of the Sermon were God's will for everyone—for disciples first, and through them, for all humankind; and were to be carried out in practice. Luther limited it to Christians in their inner lives, not for all humankind or the outer life. The result was secularism: people were taught that the gospel has nothing concrete to say about how we live our lives in the public realm, except that our inner motive should be love. Having a motive of love, however, can be shaped into all kinds of ethics, especially when the secular ruler defines our actions in the public realm. Consequently the realm of religious faith gets reduced to shrinkingly narrower parts of our lives. And lay people see the gospel as less and less relevant to their lives. Secularism in Germany means only 5% of Lutherans are in church on an average Sunday morning. The Bible, throughout its pages, teaches that there is only one God who is Lord of all of life, and never splits life into one realm ruled by a secular ruler and the other ruled by God. Present-day Lutheran scholars, and many Lutheran pastors, are critical of the two-realms split and seek to correct it.

During the Reformation, John Calvin taught the sovereignty of God over all of life, and developed a covenant ethic for life in the world that continues to be helpful. He saw the Sermon on the Mount as Christ's interpretation of the Old Testament, not a contradiction of the Old Testament. He was practical-minded, and he interpreted the Sermon as giving practical guidance, and as intended to be obeyed. His practical emphases did sometimes reduce the Sermon to what he saw in the Old Testament, however, or to what he thought he could expect Christians to do. And he skipped over Jesus’ teaching in Matt 7 that we are not only to hear these words, but do them.

The Anabaptists in the Reformation insisted on discipleship as following Jesus concretely, and they did teach the Sermon on the Mount more concretely as authoritative for the whole life of Christians (outer as well as inner). But most of them did not see how they could expect the Sermon to apply to the kingdom of the world, and so they developed a “two-kingdoms ethic” in which they did not think the Sermon applied to non-Christians, and they did not develop an ethic for the outer kingdom. Menno Simons, however, clearly saw Christ as Lord over earthly rulers, and did not hesitate to call rulers to do justice and act according to God’s will as revealed in the prophets and in Jesus. Present-day Anabaptist scholars are also emphasizing that Jesus Christ is Lord over all of life, and not only the church.

The leaders of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, in their resolution of 1917 declaring they could not participate in war making, declared, “The laws of the Kingdom, laid down by our elder brother, Jesus Christ in His Sermon the Mount, have been unqualifiedly adopted, consequently the movement has found itself opposed to the spilling of the blood of any man, or of offering resistance to any aggression. Every branch of the movement, whether in the United States, Canada, Great Britain or Germany, has held to this principle”. But we have lacked a constructive ethic of peacemaking, based on the way of deliverance in the

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2Pelikan, J., Divine Rhetoric: The Sermon on the Mount as Message and as Model in Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther, (St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001) 79f, 106f, 110-114, 119, 123.
The Sermon on the Mount is not “High Ideals,” It is “Transforming Initiatives”

A key step in the accommodation to the secular powers and ideologies is to teach that the Sermon is hard teachings, ideals too high for us to reach up to, impossible for practical living. Once that step is taken, then it is easier to argue that we need some other ethics that we can practice—which almost always turns out to be an ethic that accepts the authority of some secular power or ideology.

Thus a tradition has developed that the pattern of the Sermon is antitheses, in which Jesus commands that we have no anger, no lust, no divorce, no oaths, no resistance of evil, no asserting of any rights. Then people realize that they cannot avoid ever being angry, etc. So they say these are hard teachings, high ideals, very strenuous. They praise them for being so idealistic, but conclude they cannot follow them in practice and instead adopt another ethic that comes from somewhere else. They compartmentalize Jesus' teachings as meant for attitudes but not actions, or for repentance but not obedience, or for another future dispensation when we will not be sinful but not the present time, or merely as illustrations of a general principle like love but not meant to be followed in

...
Traditional Righteousness

Matt 5:21 You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment." (author's translations in this chapter to follow the Greek verb forms more closely).

Seeing it this way naturally places the emphasis on "Jesus' teaching." And, since it is clear that Jesus does give commands in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' teaching here is interpreted as a command not to be angry and not to call anyone a fool. But since we cannot avoid being angry, if we are truthful about ourselves, Jesus must not mean what he seems to have said. So it is a hard teaching, a high ideal, an impossible demand.

This is a misinterpretation. Jesus in fact gives no command not to be angry or not to call anyone a fool. In the Greek of the New Testament, "Being angry" in verse 22 is not a command, but a participle, an ongoing action. It is a diagnosis of a vicious cycle that we often get stuck in: being angry, insulting one another. It is simply realistic. We do get angry, we do insult one another, and it does lead to trouble. As New Testament scholar Dale Allison points out, early Christian tradition did not clearly know an injunction against all anger: Eph. 4:26 says "Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." In Mark 1:41 the original text may have had Jesus "moved with anger," and Mark 3:5 explicitly says Jesus was angry. Matt 21:12-17 and Matt 23 show Jesus angry, and in 23:17 Jesus calls his opponents fools, against the reading of 5:22 as a command. "For the most part later Christian tradition followed Eph. 4:26 and did not demand the elimination of all anger—only anger misdirected." ¹

But Jesus does give commands here. There are five of them, all imperatives in the Greek. They all come in what the above diagram tacks on as an "illustration." Yet verses 23-26 are not mere illustrations. They are not "illustrations" of killing or being angry. Nor are they merely illustrations of a negative avoidance—not being angry. They are


Jesus' Teaching

5:22-26 But I say to you that every one being angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." (Illustration: So if you are offering your gift at the altar,...)

Transforming Initiative

5:23-26 So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there... and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then coming, offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser.... Explanation: lest your accuser hand you over to the judge... you won't get out till you've paid the last penny. (Italics mark the Greek imperatives.)

We can see that the third member is the climax in three ways: it is where the commands, the imperatives, come. It is longer than the other parts of the teaching. And in biblical teaching, the third member of a teaching is regularly where the climax comes. In fact, the Gospel of Matthew has about seventy-five teachings with a threefold or triadic pattern, and almost no teachings with a twofold or dyadic pattern. It would be odd if Matthew's pattern in the Sermon on the Mount were only dyads, when everywhere else he presents triads.

So I want to propose the simple shift in perspective of putting the emphasis on the climactic part, where the imperatives are. I propose to label it the

transforming initiatives that are the way of deliverance from anger and killing. They are not mere illustrations, they are the climax of the teaching. Therefore, I propose that the teaching should be diagramed in a way that, instead of overlooking the climax of the teaching, highlights it as the third and climactic part.
transforming initiative—in three senses: it transforms the person who was angry into an active peacemaker who comes to be present to the enemy and to make peace. It transforms the relationship as merely being angry into a peacemaking process. And it hopes to transform the enemy into a friend. It participates in and is empowered by the way of grace that God takes in Jesus when there is enmity between God and humans: God comes in Jesus to be present to us and to make peace. He sends His Holy Spirit to be with us until the end of the age. This is the breakthrough of the kingdom that we see happening in Jesus and in Pentecost. Disciples who deserted Jesus, and people of all tongues, experience God’s presence, making community with us rather than shame and alienation. It is the way of grace that Jesus is calling us to participate in. It is an invitation of grace and deliverance from the vicious cycle of anger and insult.

This pattern of transforming initiatives is followed consistently through the whole central section of the Sermon on the Mount, from 5:21 through 7:12. And this transforms our understanding of the whole Sermon. It means the emphasis is not on some negative commands that are hard teachings. The emphasis is on the way of deliverance based in the grace of God’s inbreaking kingdom. These transforming initiatives are regular practices that are commanded by Jesus for Christians to take. Here, for example, in the first teaching (5:21-26), whenever we find ourselves in a relationship of anger or insult, we are to engage in the regular practice of talking it over and seeking to make peace, doing conflict resolution. And so throughout the Sermon: Jesus is giving us regular practices that participate in God’s way of grace, God’s way of deliverance from the vicious cycles that we get stuck in. These are practice norms. They are not mere inner attitudes, or vague intentions, but regular practices to be engaged in. As we engage in them, we learn better ways to practice resolving conflict: it is better first to listen carefully rather than to begin by accusing or by stating our position. It is better to point to my own problem, saying “I feel hurt by something you said” rather than to speak judgmentally, as in “You often insult me” (This is called “making an I statement rather than a you statement”). Conflict resolution is a shared community practice among followers of Jesus. We learn from each other in the community how to go to our brother or sister and seek to make peace. As a Christian community, we can do role-playing, teaching each other how to do this practice more sensitively. (Each transforming initiative throughout the Sermon ends with a brief explanation, just as here I have given an explanation of conflict resolution. In this teaching, the explanation is “lest your accuser hand you over to the judge”).

It is not a “high ideal,” to be admired from a distance, but an actual practice. It is not an impossible teaching, but is in fact practiced regularly by many of us. It solves problems. It is the way of deliverance from vicious cycles of anger and insult. Nor is it legalism. It is the way of grace—the way God takes toward us in Christ and in the Spirit, and the way we can participate in God’s grace mediated through the community. It is part of what we celebrate in the Lord’s Supper: Jesus’ death for making peace between us and God, and between us and one another. And it is part of what the Christian community practices: making peace among us. Paul’s letters are full of the practice of making peace among us in the Christian community.

The Pattern of Transforming Initiatives in Matt 5:38-42
Let us look at another teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:38-42. Again we see the threefold pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Righteousness</th>
<th>Vicious Cycle</th>
<th>Transforming Initiative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:38 You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’</td>
<td>5:39 But I say to you, do not retaliate by evil means. (Not an imperative in the Greek, but an infinitive—probably with implied imperatival meaning.)</td>
<td>5:40-42 But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if any one wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to one who begs from you, and do not refuse one who would borrow from you.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Clearly the first column is a traditional teaching, as expected. And clearly the second column is a vicious cycle—the cycle of retaliation. And again the transforming initiative has the imperatives (marked with italics). I should explain our translation of the second column, verse 39, as “do not retaliate by evil means.” Usually it is translated, “do not resist evil.” But this seems wrong to anyone who thinks about it, because Jesus often resisted evil, confronting Pharisees who exclude the outcasts, Peter who told him not to suffer, the devil who tempted him not to follow God’s will,
the wealthy who hoarded their possessions, and the disciples who lacked faith.

In a seldom noticed insight, Clarence Jordan has pointed out that the Greek for evil can mean either "by evil means," or "the evil person." Either translation is equally good according to Greek grammar; the decision must come from the context. The context is that Jesus repeatedly confronts evil, but never by evil means, and never by means of revengeful violence. Therefore the context favors the instrumental "do not resist by evil means". Furthermore, the Greek word for "resist" or "retaliate" usually means military or violent or revengeful resistance in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint) and in the Greek sources of the time. Therefore the verse should be translated "do not retaliate or resist violently or revengefully, by evil means".

This is nicely confirmed by how the Apostle Paul reports the teaching in Romans 12:17ff.: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil.... Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God.... If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink.... Do not overcome evil by evil [means], but overcome evil with good." Paul also commands transforming initiatives of peacemaking: feed a hungry enemy and water a thirsty one. The teaching is also echoed in Luke 6:27-36; I Thessalonians 5:15, and Didache 1:4-5; and a somewhat similar teaching in 1 Peter 2:21-23. Not one of them refers to an evil person; not one of them speaks of not resisting evil; not one of them speaks of renouncing rights in a law court. All emphasize the transforming initiatives of returning good and not evil, using good means and not evil means; and Luke and the Didache give almost the same four transforming initiatives (cheek, coat, mile, alms). I Thessalonians 5:15 says "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all." The evidence is overwhelming: this is not an impossible ideal of not resisting evil, but a naming of the vicious cycle of retaliation by violent, revengeful, or evil means. And a transforming initiative of peacemaking.

Furthermore, the emphasis should be placed on the four transforming initiatives in the third column, with their four imperatives, and their greater length—surely the climax of the teaching. Each of these initiatives is like Martin Luther King's nonviolent direct action: it is nonviolent, and it is activist. Each takes an action to oppose injustice, to stand up for human dignity, and to invite to reconciliation. Turning the other cheek has been misunderstood in Western culture that thought there were only two alternatives—violence or passivity. But since Gandhi and King, we can appreciate Jesus' teaching better. In Jesus' culture, "to be struck on the right cheek was to be given a hostile, backhanded insult" with the back of the right hand. In that culture, it was forbidden to touch or strike anyone with the left hand; the left hand was for dirty things. To turn the other cheek was to surprise the insulter, saying, nonviolently, "you are treating me as an unequal, but I need to be treated as an equal." Jesus is saying: if you are slapped on the cheek of inferiority, turn the cheek of equal dignity. As we will explain the other three transforming initiatives—the cloak, the second mile, and giving to the beggar, similarly are not merely giving in; they each go beyond what is demanded to take a nonviolent initiative that confronts injustice and initiates the possibility of reconciliation. The point I want to make for now is that these are not impossible demands any more than nonviolent direct action was an impossibility in the civil rights movement and its continuing echoes in the overthrow of injustice by nonviolent direct action in the Philippines, Eastern Europe, South Africa, and Latin America. John Howard Yoder demonstrates that nonviolent direct action was practised successfully by Jews resisting Roman oppression in Jesus' time.

Beyond this, notice that the four initiatives that Jesus teaches here use seven of the same Greek words in the Septuagint version of the Suffering Servant passage, Isaiah 50:4-9: resist, slap, cheek, sue, coat, give, and turn away. Isaiah 50:4-9 is a passage of participative grace in God's dynamic, living, empowering presence. God, the living Lord, gives deliverance, and the servant's actions participate in God's deliverance. Here I quote only part of it, showing how it is based in the Lord who, in grace, gives deliverance: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of one who is taught, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. God wakens me morning by morning, God wakens my ear to hear as one who is taught.... I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not turn away my face from mocking and


The Pattern of Transforming Initiatives in Matt 5:43-48

Now let us turn to the next teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, the climax of the six teachings in chapter 5, Matthew 5:43-48:

Traditional Vicious Cycle Transforming Initiative

Righteousness

5:43 You have heard that it was said: “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.”

5:46-47 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

5:44-45 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

The Pattern Continues Throughout the Sermon

We have examined three of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, and have seen that their basic pattern is threefold. They are not impossible ideals, but transforming initiatives, based on God’s grace, the inbreaking of God’s reign, and our participation in it. They are the way of deliverance from the vicious cycles that we get stuck in. Thus we have taken a major step in overcoming the “hard teachings and high ideals” interpretation that

The traditional teaching comes not from the Old Testament, but from the Dead Sea Scrolls. The transforming initiative (“love your enemies”) comes before the vicious cycle. Probably this shift in order signals that this triad is the climactic conclusion of the first six triads in Matt 6. So also a summary verse, 5:48, is added, like the summary verse at the climax in 7:12. The transforming initiative is to participate in the kind of love that God gives regularly: as God gives sunshine and rain to God’s enemies as well as friends, so are we to give love and prayers to our enemies as well as friends. It could hardly be clearer that the transforming initiative is participation in God’s active presence and God’s grace. God’s giving rain and sunshine to God’s enemies is no abstract doctrine or high ideal; we experience that the living God does this every day. So is it for us: in practicing this kind of love, we are “children of our Father in heaven.” The teaching clearly points to our experience of God’s present reign—God’s present kingdom—and our participation in it.

Those who want to make the Sermon on the Mount into impossibly high ideals interpret the summary verse, 5:48, as demanding moral perfection, as a Greek idealist ethics might. They assume that “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” means moral perfection. But it would be odd in Hebrew and Aramaic to presume to speak of God as morally perfect in that Greek sense. Rather, the word here means complete or all-inclusive, in the sense of love that includes everyone, even enemies. This is the point that Jesus has been emphasizing in this teaching: the love of God’s grace that includes the complete circle of humankind, with enemies in it as well, by contrast with tax collectors and Gentiles, who love only their friends. Its meaning is very much like Luke 6:36—“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” There Luke also has been emphasizing love that includes enemies. So we are not to think of impossible moral ideals, or idealistic moral perfection, but of practical deeds of love toward enemies, including prayer for them. And again, it is participation in God’s dynamic present action, giving love to all.

has caused evasion of the Sermon. We have begun to see how the Sermon on the Mount is transforming initiatives that give real, practical, grace-based guidance for Christian ethics. This is a major step in the recovery of the way of Jesus for Christian ethics. And it leads to specific guidance for peacemaking initiatives well beyond the debate between nonviolence, just war theory, and nationalism over the rightness or wrongness of making war.

The Triadic Pattern Continues Throughout the 14 Teachings of 5:21-7:12

The pattern of threefold teachings, climaxing in grace-based transforming initiatives, continues throughout the central teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. My time and space are running out. What I can do is to give a road map, diagramming the Sermon on the Mount as follows. Then I can offer a brief comment on the other teachings.

THE FOURTEEN TRIADS OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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<th>Traditional Righteousness</th>
<th>Vicious Cycle</th>
<th>Transforming Initiative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You shall not kill</td>
<td>Being angry, or saying, You fool!</td>
<td>Go, be reconciled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You shall not commit adultery</td>
<td>Looking with lust is adultery in the heart.</td>
<td>Remove the cause of temptation (cf. Mk 9:43ff.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Whoever divorces, give a certificate</td>
<td>Divorcing involves you in adultery</td>
<td>(Be reconciled: I Cor 7:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You shall not swear falsely</td>
<td>Swearing by anything involves you in a false claim</td>
<td>Let your yes be yes, and your no be no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth
6. Love neighbor & hate enemy
7. When you give alms,
8. When you pray,
9. When you pray,
10. When you fast,
12. No one can serve two masters
5. Retaliating violently or revengefully, by evil means
6. Hating enemies is the same vicious cycle that you see in the Gentiles & tax collectors
7. Practicing righteousness for show
8. Practicing righteousness for show
9. Practicing righteousness for show
10. Practicing righteousness for show
11. Moth & rust destroy, and thieves enter & steal
12. Serving God & wealth, worrying about food & clothes

Turn the other cheek
Give your tunic and cloak
Go the Second mile
Give to beggar & borrower
Love enemies, pray for your persecutors; be all-inclusive as your Father in heaven is
but give in secret, and your Father will reward you
but pray in secret, and your Father will reward you
Therefore pray like this: Our Father....
but dress with joy, and your Father will reward you
But pile up treasures in heaven
But seek first God's reign and God's justice/rightness
13. Do not judge, lest you be judged
Judging others means you’ll be judged by same measure
First take the log out of your own eye

14. Do not give holy things to dogs, nor pearls to pigs
They will trample them and tear you to pieces
Give your trust in prayer to your Father in heaven

The bold type indicates the teachings that are also presented in Luke (and in one case, Mark).

5:27ff: on removing the eye or hand that causes the practice of looking at a woman lustfully or covetously clearly has the threefold pattern that we expect. The initiative of removing the eye or hand is one of Jesus’ dramatic exaggerations for impact; I think it means to cut out the practice that I engage in which leads me to lust.

5:31ff: on divorce is the one exception to the pattern. The transforming initiative is omitted. It appears instead in 1 Corinthians 7:11—“be reconciled to one’s spouse.” This, too, is a peacemaking initiative, and its variation from the pattern would be interesting to discuss, if there were time and space. The next teaching on not swearing falsely, which involves one in the vicious cycle of defending a lie by claiming God as witness, and the initiative of letting your yes and no be truthful, clearly follows the pattern.

6:1-18: on almsgiving, prayer, and fasting continue the transforming-initiative pattern. In 6:7-15, nobody misses the point that the climax is not “do not heap up empty phrases,” but rather the transforming initiative, “Pray like this: Our Father who art in heaven....” Nobody suggests praying the Lord’s Prayer is an impossibly high ideal; it is regular practice of Christian groups and churches.

Each of the four teachings (6:2a, 5a, 7a, 16a) begins with a traditional practice of righteousness:
Thus, when you give alms....
And when you pray....
And praying....
And when you fast....

Each then has a warning against a vicious cycle of practicing righteousness for show. Each climaxes with a transforming initiative to practice it in God’s knowing, merciful, and secret presence; and an explanation that your Father sees in secret what you need and will reward you (6:3-4, 6, 9-15, 17-18.). Thus again, the transforming initiative at the climax points to God’s dynamic, living presence and our participation in God’s presence.

6:19-6:23 begins with a proverbial and traditional teaching, a negative imperative resembling the traditional negative teachings in 5:21-6: “Do not treasure up for yourselves treasures on earth.”

The vicious cycle is clear: “where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal.” The transforming initiative is the imperative, “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”. The expected explanation is 6:22-23, with the focus on the eye and the heart. A brief suggestion to show that the transforming initiatives are not “impossible ideals”: Heaven is “the sphere of God’s rule where his will is done.... To have one’s treasure in heaven means to submit oneself totally to that which is in heaven—God’s sovereign rule. It is this motif that follows in 6:22-23, 24, 33, not to mention the parallels in 5:8, 7:21, and 12:34”. The contrast is not this life and the life after, but this life where there is injustice and God’s reign characterized by peace, justice, and joy in the Spirit. The transforming initiative is to invest one’s treasures in God’s reign of justice and love. The teaching does not reject all possessions, but “treasuring up treasures,” i.e., stinginess or greed. The evil eye in the OT and Judaism connotes stinginess, jealousy, or greed, and the healthy eye connotes generosity. An impossible ideal would be to practice piling up wealth for oneself but not letting it be consumed and not letting it affect where one’s heart is. Jesus’ initiative is more realistic: invest it in God’s reign, in God’s justice and charity, and your heart will be invested there as well.

6:24ab is the traditional teaching that begins the next triad: “No one is able to serve two masters. For either one will hate the one....”. This is in the form of a traditional Jewish wisdom proverb. Then the vicious cycle is named in 24c, “You are not able to serve God and mammon.” “Do not be anxious” in verse 25 continues naming the vicious cycle. It is a negative verb, and so we expect it to belong with the vicious cycle, and its meaning also fits: it names the vicious cycle of trying to serve mammon and thus being anxious about possessions. As in the other vicious cycles, it is characterized by not trusting or obeying God—not participating in the dynamic, gracious, delivering presence of God. But it is an imperative, and so is the one exception to the pattern that the imperatives come only in the transforming initiative member of the triads.

The positive transforming initiatives are three imperatives, look to the birds, observe the lilies, and seek first God’s reign and God’s justice (verses 26, 28, 33). They put us in the midst of the grace of the reign and righteousness of God, as we have seen in all transforming initiatives. It is the way of deliverance from seeking to serve both God and Mammon. And it makes this triad parallel in meaning and form with the previous triad about investing treasures in God’s reign rather than in treasures that moth, rust, and thieves consume. The expected explanation follows the transforming initiative: today’s trouble is enough for today.

The transforming initiative in 6:33 points explicitly to the inbreaking reign of God and God’s delivering justice. Since God’s sovereign rule and all the benefits for our material needs come from God to us, this passage suggests by implication that we can become a part of God’s redemptive force in history by sharing these benefits with those who are in need. Part of the benefits for our material needs come from God to us, this passage suggests help alleviate the evil of hunger and need elsewhere. Not only do we recognize that all we have comes from God, but we also recognize that sharing that with others to remove their suffering is to defeat the enemy and to “seek the Kingdom...on earth as in heaven”.

The structure of the next triad (7:1-5) is straightforward. The traditional teaching is in proverbial form: Do not judge, for you will be judged with the judgment with which you judge. The vicious cycle is criticizing or trying to correct the fault in the brother’s eye while having a log in my eye.

The transforming initiative is repentance, “First remove the log from your own eye.” The explanation comes next, as expected: “Then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” “First,” proton, has also occurred in 5:24, first be reconciled, and in 6:33, seek first the reign of God. In its echo of the transforming initiative immediately preceding, “seek first the reign of God,” it suggests that the initiative of repenting for the log in my eye is a practice that participates in the coming of the reign of God.

We have now arrived at the verse that is the most puzzling, mysterious, and indeed baffling of all in the Sermon: 7:6. Scholars cannot find a context in which this verse has a clear meaning. I propose that 7:6 looks exactly like a traditional teaching that begins a new triad. Many traditional Jewish teachings call Gentiles dogs or pigs. The vicious cycle follows: they will trample them under foot and turn and tear you into pieces. The transforming initiative has the imperatives, as expected: ask, seek, and knock. They are all positive initiatives, not negative commands, just as we expect. The expected explanation follows in 7:9-11. And as in the previous teachings, the transforming initiative brings us into the presence of the dynamically present Father who graciously gives us good things. He is worthy of our trust—far more worthy of our trust than the dogs and pigs are. Now we have a very strong clue. The meaning of the transforming initiative is very clear: give your trust, your loyalty, and your prayers, to your Father in Heaven. It is not only about prayer; it is about how trustworthy, how merciful, how caring your Father in Heaven is; He knows how to give good gifts. He deserves your trust and loyalty much more than the dogs and pigs do.

What then, logically, can the traditional teaching in 7:6 mean? Do not give your trust and loyalty to the dogs and pigs instead of to God, as 6:19ff. taught us to give our trust and loyalty to God rather than to treasures and mammon, and as 6:1ff. taught us to give our trust and loyalty to God rather than to prestige. Whom do the dogs and pigs stand for? Usually scholars say they stand for gentiles, which is not wrong, but I want to be a bit more precise. The many references in the Talmud and Midrash to swine as Rome fill twice as many lines as do references to swine as the heathen world in general. Dogs stand for non-Israelite nations in a more collective sense, not individuals. Not one saying applies either dog or swine to an individual Gentile or to a specific group of Gentiles smaller than a nation. This suggests “dogs and pigs” more likely refers to Rome than to particular kinds of Gentiles—for example those who do not receive the Gospel willingly.

In Mark’s story of the healing of the demon-possessed man in the Gerasene region, i.e., a Gentile region (Mark 5:1ff.), the man says: “My name is Legion,” as in Roman Legion. The unclean spirits are sent into a herd of pigs, which rushed into the sea, as many Jews wished the Roman Legion would do. The association between pigs and the Roman Empire—and demon possession—is transparent. In another passage about whether to give loyalty to the Roman Empire in the form of giving the poll tax to Caesar, Matthew 22: 21 uses the same key word in Matthew 7:6-12, didomai (give), with the prepositional prefix, apo. So also do Mark 12: 21, and Luke 20: 25. The temptation to give loyalty and trust to the Roman Empire, and thereby seek prestige, power, and wealth, was a very present temptation in Jesus’ time. Its outcome in being trampled under foot and torn in pieces by the Roman troops (Matt 7:6) took place in A.D. 70. Furthermore, being “trampled under foot” is precisely the fate that salt deserves when it has lost its distinctiveness by compromising with the world (Matthew 5:13). In the Gospels, Jesus often warns against the temptation of seeking prestige, places of honor, and wealth within the
system of the powers and authorities while neglecting the weightier matters of the Law—justice, faithfulness, and mercy—and neglecting to lift a finger to lift the burdens from the needy. His own temptation was to seek rule over the world by the means of Satan, and he opposed it by teaching Deuteronomic loyalty to God alone: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him” (Matt 4:8-10). Is this not what the concluding triad teaches—worship the Lord your God, and serve only him, not the powers of the Roman Empire? It is the temptation against which the Book of Revelation warns us.

Conclusion
The threefold, transforming-initiatives structure can be verified in seven ways:
1. It is remarkably consistent throughout the fourteen triads, with only one exception.
2. Once we see the threefold structure, the Greek verbs line up with remarkable consistency. The main verbs in the teachings of traditional righteousness are all futures or subjunctives. The main verbs in the vicious cycles are all continuous process verbs—indicatives, participles, infinitives. The main verbs in the transforming initiative members are consistently imperatives, and this is the only place where imperatives occur, with one exception (6:25).
3. It fits the consistent tendency throughout Matthew’s Gospel to prefer triads over dyads—with about seventy-five triads and almost no dyads.
4. The number, three times fourteen, was important to Matthew. The Sadducees and Pharisees saw a mystical significance in this number, and Matthew’s rival group claimed their teachers were descended from a triad of fourteen generations. So Matthew began his Gospel by pointing out that there were three times fourteen generations from Abraham to Jesus. It fits neatly that here he gives us fourteen threefold teachings.
5. It gives a fruitful clue for the likely meaning of the hitherto baffling Matt 7:6, on not giving our holy things to dogs and pigs.
6. Its emphasis on the third member of each triad is confirmed by the Gospel of Luke. Luke sometimes omits the first or second part of a teaching, but always includes the third part. (Where Luke parallels the Sermon on the Mount is indicated by the bold print in the diagram).
7. It shows that Jesus’ teachings engage us in transforming initiatives that participate in the reign of God, or the presence of the gracious God who acts in Jesus and in the Holy Spirit within our present experience, who reconciles us with enemies, who is present to us in secret, who is faithful and trustworthy, and who brings deliverance from the vicious cycles that cause the violations of the traditional righteousness. The second member consistently names vicious cycles; the Sermon is by no means based on an idealistic assumption that we do not get stuck in vicious cycles of sin. And the third member points the way of deliverance in the midst of this real world of sin. This refutes the kind of ‘idealism that seeks to hallow Jesus’ teachings by making them impossible or making them call for hard, strenuous human effort. Instead it suggests a hermeneutic of grace-based, active participation in eschatological deliverance that begins now. The split between attitudes and actions, in which Jesus allegedly emphasized intentions and not actual practices, falls away. Legalism falls away too; Jesus is pointing to participation in the grace of the deliverance that characterizes the inbreaking of the reign of God. Jesus is indeed the prophetic Messiah who proclaims the inbreaking reign of God and points to specific ways of participation in the kingdom.

Causes of Evasion
Four causes of evasion of the Sermon on the Mount deserve mentioning:

When, in the early centuries, some Christian theologians began seeking to appeal to Greek culture and philosophy by adopting Greek metaphysics, they lost a sense of God’s dynamic action in history. Greek metaphysics misunderstand what Jesus pointed to as the breakthrough of the kingdom merely as ideals for human effort.

Some have interpreted the Sermon legalistically. They have seen it as hard teachings, prohibitions of anger, lust, divorce, oaths, resistance, and concern about what we shall eat or wear. So it became, for them, a guilt trap. Seeing the Sermon as transforming initiatives makes clear that Jesus is the prophetic Messiah who proclaims the inbreaking reign of God and points to specific ways of participation in the kingdom.

Many miss the meaning of justice for the poor and powerless in our use of money that we saw above in discussing righteousness. Their loyalty to mammon or wealth causes them to evade God’s will and so to miss the true experience of God’s presence. Many evade the Sermon because they are living in disobedience to the way of Jesus. Our responsibility and our fervent commitment is to try to remove obstacles to Jesus’ way of life that come from misinterpretation of Jesus’ teaching. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit and you, with the support of your community of faith.
BOOK REVIEWS


What would an Asian-American who has spent all of only one week of his life in England say about three books that are written to and for the Black Church in Britain? While other reviewers will have to comment more specifically about whether or not Beckford's political theology successfully engages the British Black experience and situation, let me address my fellow Pentecostals and provide three sets of reasons why we need to take Beckford's work seriously as being at the forefront of contemporary Pentecostal theology.

First, Beckford's work is a fully conscious attempt to develop a fully contextualized and relevant theology. Here is a contextual theology that is not only tradition (Pentecostalism) and race/ethnicity (Black) specific, but also culturally (British, African and African-American, with applications for Black Asians or Asian Indians in the UK as well), geopolitically (England and the Caribbean), and historically (the roots and routes of the slave trade) situated. To be more specific, Beckford's goal is the empowerment of the Black Church in Britain in the face of socialized and institutional oppression. Toward that end, the retrieval and reappropriation of Black cultural, historical, and even religious symbols are at the heart of this project. Thus, Black culture is brought into dialogical relationship with the gospel in a fully self-critical manner. Black music (GR, chs. 2 and 4; JD, chs. 1 and 6), film (GR, ch. 5), and art (JD, Part II) is engaged theologically to remember the history of Black resistance to oppression and reclaim the aesthetic creativity of Black culture, and is analyzed with regard to some of the ways in which they have been are either ineffective or even counter productive to Black liberation. Black religion, specifically the Rastafari concept of "dread"—a multivalent notion derived from the Afro-Caribbean experience—is pressed into service to call attention to the divine wrath that is set against social injustice, and to mobilize and channel Black rage toward what Beckford calls "redemptive vengeance": the salvific process of transformation that includes cultivating forgiveness, creating new space for new relationships, and forging reconciliation between oppressors and the oppressed so as to break the cycle of violence.

As Lecturer in Religion and Popular Culture at the University of Birmingham, Beckford is ideally situated to research and reflect theologically on these matters.

While Beckford is not oblivious to methodological issues in theology—discussions of epistemology, hermeneutics and method are interspersed throughout (e.g., JD 147-50; DP, ch. 4, 192-97; GR 105-07)—he refuses to allow questions of method to bog down the theological task of engaging pressing issues in particular social contexts. Given Pentecostalism as a global phenomenon, the tension between any global Pentecostal theology and the variety of contextual Pentecostal theologies needs to be skilfully negotiated. Beckford's project models how the former needs to be grounded in the latter. Clearly, he is fully alert to the situatedness, perspectival character, and political investedness of all theologizing. Yet Beckford avoids the relativism of postmodern criticism in two ways: by applying the hermeneutics of suspicion to the postmodern rejection of metanarratives (DP 217-19), and by intrinsically connecting theology and liberative social praxis.

This latter move, central to all three volumes, leads to the second set of reasons that I see Beckford as being at the vanguard of contemporary Pentecostal theology: his political and liberative theology also deeply prophetic. Prophetic, of course, in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets who railed against the social injustices sanctioned by those in power in ancient Israel. Further, prophetic also in finding space for a theology of righteous anger that pervades the biblical revelation, but that is so often minimized in today's politically correct environment. And, indeed, the prophetic edge of Beckford's vision extends beyond issues of racism to include sexism (see, e.g., Beckford's appropriation of the womanist critique in JD, ch. 8), classism, and even the oppression of both the disabled and children. His goal is both what he calls the internal psychological liberation of Black people and external social justice. Toward these ends, Beckford engages with a variety of liberationist projects "on the ground," including Ruach Ministries and other social projects organized by ecclesial groups (e.g., DP, ch. 1); the Black Theology Support Group, an ecumenical group of Black intellectuals, theologians, and Church leaders focused on developing cognitive tools for Black liberation (DP 152-55); and the "Prison Link" ministry of the African Caribbean Evangelical Alliance in Birmingham, UK, which
If not enough has been said so far to encourage Pentecostals to read Beckford, then let me (thirdly) say it plainly: Beckford is not only a liberation theologian, but a Pentecostal liberation theologian. He gives voice—in dialogue with other Black Pentecostal thinkers such as Roswith Gerloff, Iain MacRobert, Valentina Alexander and Nicole Rodriguez Touli—to the Black Pentecostal experience as expressed in the British and Caribbean contexts. He raises afresh the question of what it means to be “Pentecostal” by taking seriously the possibility of Black cultural and liturgical expressions being sites of the Spirit’s transformative presence and activity; this is especially important since, “In Black Pentecostalism, everything signifies!” (DP 213). He both retrieves and develops a dynamic pneumatology, a prophetic spirituality, and a charismatic theology of personal and social discernment, all informed and sustained by Pentecostal intuitions, experiences, and practices. And, while being eminently pneumatological in all of the ways already mentioned, he also pays attention to the fact that the charismatic gifts of the Spirit are focused on “selfless faith” but not on the kind of “selfless faith” directed at the edification (liberation!) of the other (DR 25-56). At the same time, consistent with the strong Apostolic or Oneness presence in Black Pentecostalism in Britain, Beckford does not neglect the development of a distinctively Black Pentecostal christology (e.g., JD, ch. 7; DP 198-204; GR, 40ff.). While more traditionally minded Pentecostals would question whether or not Beckford’s “dread Christology” is not overly syncretistic, he would reply, echoing Hollenweger, that all theology is syncretistic and should be responsibly so (JD 138-40).

Clearly, I am enthused by Beckford’s project. His rhetoric is fair, his analyses are nuanced, and his method is discerning and critical—of Black expressive cultures, of the Black Church, and yes, even of the Rastafarianism that he appropriates. (He has to be, of course, since he does not, and indeed, cannot, idealize Blackness; but why does Beckford ignore rather than criticize, for example, the patriarchalism of Rastafari, which gender subordinationism has been commented on by Diana Austin-Broos [Jamaica Genesis: Religion and the Politics of Moral Orders (University of Chicago, 1997)], among others?) He has also shown himself to be eminently teachable—having learned, I see, from Roswith Gerloff’s reminder at the beginning of his project not to neglect the biblical tradition at the heart of Black Christian and Pentecostal spirituality (see Gerloff’s “Response” to Beckford at a 1996 conference, published in Allan Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger, eds., Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition [Sheffield, 1999]). I have learned a great deal from him, including why I and my Asian and White friends were so drawn during our college days to late Sunday night celebration services at the Faith Deliverance Center in the heart of the Black community in Oakland, California; what it may mean for me to theologize as an Asian-American; and what it means to develop an authentically contextual and relevant Pentecostal theology, among other things. My one minor caution/quibble would be to avoid reducing all theology to political theology, as Beckford’s rhetoric at times lends itself to. I would rather say that all theology includes a political dimension; but I know Beckford is aware of this as well. I look forward to his future work, and hope to engage with him in the ongoing project of doing and living the kind of Pentecostal theology that is inspired by the Spirit.

Amos Yong


This work was originally prepared as a PhD thesis under the supervision of Professor Max Turner. It retreads some of the ground covered in Turner’s Power from on High (Sheffield: SAP, JPTS 9, 1996), and, like Turner’s, seeks a mediating position between the understandings of, say, Dunn and Menzies. Wenk attempts, though, to go beyond Turner in delineating the ‘socio-ethical’ role of the Holy Spirit in forming and guiding the Christian community.

Wenk first surveys Jewish literature (Part I, pp.53-118). Here he expands upon Turner’s criticism of Menzies’ reading of it. In particular, he finds much more evidence of the ethical influences of the Spirit than Menzies.
was prepared to admit, though sometimes he does this with resort to some rather strained exegesis (e.g. of Pseudo-Philo [p.73] and of Jubilees [p.79]).

Part II commences with a fascinating chapter on 'The Transformational and Creative Force of Prophetic Speech'. This introduces one of the thesis' greatest strengths, which is to use speech-act theory to destroy an artificial divide between the words of a prophecy and their effect on its audience (e.g. "The Spirit's role cannot be limited to the content of the speech, stripping it artificially from the intention through the utterance" [p.137]). Wenk thus draws together the concepts of Spirit-endowment for prophetic proclamation and the possible ethical influences of such proclamation on its hearers. So he can conclude, "To argue that the ethical consequences of charismatic manifestations are mere 'side-effects' of the Spirit's concern for the mission of the church misses the point" (p.316).

In subsequent chapters, this awareness of speech-act theory is applied to an exegesis of passages in Luke-Acts which offers varying degrees of plausibility. Studying John the Baptist, he is more convincing on Luke 1:15 (John's greatness is ethical, and results from John's lifelong infilling of the Spirit - Wenk softens these claims with 'I suggest', 'possible', and 'likely' [pp.154, 161, 171], but rests important conclusions on them).

Wenk is particularly impressive in studying Luke 3:1-14. He notes (pp.46, 173) that the relevance of this section to pneumatology has been overlooked by scholars before him. Having highlighted John's ministry as a prophet, Wenk notes parallels, for instance structural, between the record of John's ministry and the earlier pronouncements of it. "This supports the view that Luke expected his readers to see what is narrated in 3.1-20 as the direct result of John's endowment with the Spirit as prophet (1.15-17)" (p.178) and "Therefore the socio-religious effects should probably be understood as the work of the Spirit through the prophet, rather than as an almost incidental 'consequence'" (p.179, italics his).

Moving to Luke 3:16-17, we find Wenk being insufficiently critical of Turner. Dismissing other views concerning the meaning of the Baptist's promise, Wenk finds Turner's explanation 'more persuasive' (p.184). Actually, Turner's opinion would not persuade all, for "he rejects the view that it assumes a Spirit-outpouring by the messiah" (p.184) - surely the straightforward meaning of the words of John. Here, a more rigorous critique would have been welcome.

The next chapter considers the work of the Spirit in the incarnate Jesus. Wenk develops Turner's argument that the Spirit helped Jesus overcome His temptations in the desert. Given Jesus' use of Deuteronomy 8:3 (Lk.4:4), the 'striking parallel' between Luke 4:1 and Deuteronomy 8:2 which Wenk notes is indeed striking. So Wenk does further damage to Menzies' argument that "Luke gives no indication that the Spirit enabled Jesus to overcome the temptation" (quoted on p.199).

There follows a section concerning the Nazareth pericope (Lk.4:16-30). Here Wenk is again on weaker ground: "4.16-30 represents the Old Testament motif of the anointed messianic figure who would restore faithfulness and obedience among God's people" (p.201). His appeals to speech-act theory suggest "the Spirit's role to be as much related to the intended end of Jesus' messianic proclamation of good news as to the content thereof" (p.201). Fair enough: but it is hardly a straightforward reading of Isaiah 61:1-2/58:6 which concludes that the 'intended end' is 'restored faithfulness and obedience', rather than liberation from various bondages. Wenk wishes to contend that the final outcome of that liberation is holy living, as in the case of Zacchaeus, and the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-47. However, he must admit that "Luke relates only a few examples of those who were ethically transformed based on their encounter with Jesus' liberation" (p.207). Luke's emphasis was surely on the liberating power Jesus' anointing, as summarised at Acts 10:38.

Wenk's chapter eleven takes us to Pentecost, which brings about "a major ethical influence on the community's life" (p.236). Wenk plays down the missiological motif of Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:4,8, focusing on the socio-ethical dimension of Joel 3:1-5 (2:28-32). Then he relates the community life described in Acts 2:41-47 to the outpouring of the Spirit. In all of this, he portrays some accurate and useful information. However, he will leave some readers unconvinced that for Luke the 'socio-ethical outlook' is 'predominant' (p.252). Luke's concerns for the missiological and prophetic aspects of Pentecost seem to have been minimised, while ethical concerns have perhaps been given an artificially central place.

The final chapter of textual study takes in the rest of Acts, choosing in particular to "focus on the Spirit's role in the preservation of the community's unity in times of transition and conflict" (p.278). Passages which portray the Spirit clearly as the source of the church's bold witness are not discussed (p.277). One finds useful and insightful material (e.g. "Being full of the Spirit and of wisdom' was a prerequisite to resolve the conflict in Acts 6.1-7, and this gives the Spirit a fundamental role in the preservation of the church's unity" (p.291). One's only reservation might be over Wenk's choice of passages to study. Such selectivity focuses on what
is more peripheral to Luke's purposes, and thereby leads to a distortion of Luke's overall pneumatology.

In conclusion, Wenk's work is a useful contribution to the debate about Lukan pneumatology, not least because of his method. Not only does he most particularly utilise the insights of speech-act theory, but he also makes consistently good use of narrative criticism (e.g. pp. 176, 285). Wenk's hermeneutical approach is clear, and helpful to the debate. The book is not without its weaknesses, but should be read by those who wish to broaden their understanding of Luke's pneumatology.

William Atkinson

William K. Kay, Pentecostals in Britain, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), xxiv + 372 pps

There are numerous pictures dating from the 1930s of row upon row of British Pentecostal ministers all staring intently at the camera, recorded for posterity at their denominational conferences. You see how they appear, but to understand how they thought, how they viewed their own ministry and Christian tradition seems almost impossible to know with any accuracy. There have been very few attempts to get inside the minds of Pentecostal ministers. In the 1960s Bryan Wilson wrote about the conflicts that he believed ministers faced as they struggled with institutionalisation and personal charisma. In the 1980s Margaret Poloma produced a significant assessment of the American Assemblies of God by detailing the reactions of ministers to her close questioning. Finally, as the twentieth century came to a close William Kay asked almost 1000 British Pentecostal ministers a series of personal questions in an attempt to get a feel for the state of Pentecostalism in Britain as it reflected upon almost a century of development.

The value of the work is that ministers have been asked what they actually believe, rather than it simply, and naively, being believed that they adhere to doctrinal positions of the various groups. The four groups examined were from Elim, Assemblies of God, Apostolic Church and the Church of God. The response rate of 930 equates to a 57% response rate from AoG, 64% from Elim, 84% of Apostolics and a much lower figure of 21% from the Church of God. The vast majority of respondents (97.5%) were male and aged between 40-64 (64%).

The book is useful on two counts. For each of the issues it engages with, for example the use of the gifts of the Spirit, healing, ethical matters, ministerial background and expectations, the chapters begin with a section detailing the various developments that have taken place historically. In this regard alone, the book would be worth its price — it provides a careful overview of the issues that British Pentecostals have struggled with over their past history. The chapters then deal with the contemporary reactions to the issues raised. The study, based as it is on ministers, inevitably only demonstrates the picture of Pentecostalism from the pulpit. This is an account of how the leaders see Pentecostalism, not one that details how the vast majority of British Pentecostals view their own churches. Overall, unsurprisingly, Kay's evidence points to the fact that ministers with extravert personalities fit well into Pentecostal styles of spirituality. Similarly, charismatic and evangelistically minded ministers who lead by example are more likely to replicate their example within congregational life, thus leading their churches to numerical growth. It would be interesting to compare the way that congregations would react to the same questions. Overall, there are not massive denominational differences between Pentecostal ministers — most differences seem to revolve around a small number of defined areas of disagreement, e.g. the role of women in ministry, the living out of holiness codes, the expectation of tongues being linked to the baptism in the Spirit. Would a congregational survey reveal a wider number of contentious issues — for example, issues faced in the arenas of employment and family life? In other words, are ministers addressing the most relevant issues of life, or have we become sucked into religious posturing?

The book concludes with a number of hypothetical situations from the past before turning to the future challenges. What would have happened if George Jeffreys and Elim had joined with the Assemblies of God as their evangelistic agency? Would the Charismatic Renewal have been different had classical Pentecostals embraced it earlier? Would the Pentecostals have had more to say about the evil of racism had their churches embraced the wave of commonwealth immigrants that came to Britain in the 1950s? Having missed some of the opportunities that faced them in the past, Kay then highlights the present challenges — denominational relationships, the understanding of true spirituality, holiness and mission. These are commonly seen to be global concerns for Pentecostals; it is no surprise that Britons have to face the same issues.

This is a book that repays revisiting. The implications of its findings need to be worked out by ministers and congregations, as well as analysed by the Colleges preparing ministers for future life. It provides a snapshot of ministers at the close of the century. In years to come when we are the ministers pictured standing row upon row, there will be more help in
helping future historians to understand just what we were thinking and feeling as we squinted at the camera.

Neil Hudson


This book seeks to set out and examine developments and machinations at the radical end of the evangelical spectrum which occurred in the early decades of the nineteenth century. To this end a veritable pantheon of activists and protagonists feature in what is a considerably detailed and rigorous treatment of the subject matter. The spiritual movements which they presided over constitute a geographical tableau which ranges from Geneva and the Swiss canton of Vaud, to London’s Caledonian Chapel and Albury in Kent; from Clydeside and St. Andrews in Scotland, to Trinity College Dublin and the south-east of Ireland; from pre-Tractarian Oxford, to early secession in Bath, Salcombe and Plymouth. Prominent among those featured are Henri-Abraham Malan (1787-1864), Henry Drummond (1786-1860), John Nelson Darby (1800-82) and Benjamin Wills Newton (1807-99). Stunt acknowledges that many of the numerous dramatis personae introduced will be unknown to his readership, and to this end he provides substantial cross-references in the footnotes and biographical summaries in the index.

It was against the background of David Hume’s loathing for the “phrensy” of religious enthusiasm, and Edward Gibbon’s castigation of “unsocial” Christianity, that Jean-Jacques Rousseau emerged as a “rather disconcerting ally for earnest evangelical Christians.” Stunt ventures that while far removed from Christian orthodoxy, his disposition betrays discernable parallels to the Pietist frame of mind. These are to be observed in his disdain of fashionable society (le monde), his trenchant criticisms of the philosophes in their exaltation of reason, and their failure to find a place for the emotions of human experience. In contrast, he was largely instrumental in the prevalent “cult of sensibilité,” and espoused the cathartic value of tears and emotional expression. While an organic link between the Romantic movement and the upsurge of experimental “religion of the heart” may be beyond definitive establishment, the early years of the 19th century witnessed the inception of a different climate in which the ‘enthusiasm’ of evangelical piety was better placed to breathe and flourish.

One of the chief concerns of the Romantics, who delighted in primitive simplicity, was to recapture the past and return to nature. This functioned in a manner which could be deemed analogous to the Renaissance ad fontes impetus, and echoes the yearnings of the radical evangelicals for an apostolic idyll. While such aspirations were evident in the Swiss reveil, one of the most distinctive leaders to emerge in Britain was Edward Irving, himself a friend and admirer of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Associations with innovation and controversy also arose from incidents such as the sermon he preached to the anniversary meeting of the London Missionary Society in 1824. The profile of the missionary which he advanced was forthright and uncompromising, as was his criticism of the evangelical missionary establishment. It is in the light of this and other instances advanced, that Stunt observes that Irving, Drummond and others of like disposition, came to function as a sort of evangelical “vigilante” group.

At this time Dublin’s flamboyant Church of Ireland archbishop, William McGee petitioned the House of Commons to reject Catholic Emancipation and to protect the Protestant Establishment. This was exacerbated by the further Erastian step of imposing oaths of allegiance and supremacy on all converts from “Romanism” within his diocese. Such measures disturbed evangelically-inclined Church of Ireland ministers who had heralded something of an “Irish Reformation” among sections of the overwhelmingly Catholic population. An ardent clergyman and former Classical Gold Medalist at Trinity College, Dublin, John Nelson Darby ruefully described this as a “closing of the door of Christ against weak souls.” Stunt charts, in some considerable detail, the growth of his disillusionment and ultimate disaffection from his ecclesiastical alma mater, a journey which features prominently in the phenomenon of evangelical secession in the decades under consideration.

The most striking feature of this book is the wealth of historical detail presented, which serves to marvellously illuminate numerous obscure byways of evangelical heritage. Not least among these is the vivid depiction of earnest Protestant exchange between Switzerland and Britain, more than two centuries after this may have been commonly believed to have reached its zenith. It is altogether probable that some readers will find the work frustrating in that it traces unfolding events to the point of secession, beyond which it does not venture. For instance, the incipient stages of the Brethren movement in Ireland and Plymouth are meticulously documented, but its consolidation and expansion, much less the Exclusive/Open split of the 1840s, are tantalisingly absent. Yet Stunt explicitly states his primary purpose to be the identification of patterns of
Yet the implications of the adoption of such an 'eschatology of disaster' both Pentecostal and Charismatic concerns. Not only were many of the ideas and emphases generated in this period formative for the early Pentecostalism that emerged in Britain in the first years of the twentieth century, but they continue to feature across the Pentecostal/Charismatic spectrum in the twenty-first century. For instance the eschatological views associated with the Albury circle, and most particularly J. N. Darby, were central to the impetus and identity of the first generation of Pentecostals. Yet the implications of the adoption of such an 'eschatology of disaster' can only be intimated by Simon Chan's charge that Pentecostalism has been injudicious in its choice of ally in the past: what he deems its questionable alliance with dispensationalism only succeeded in undermining its theological credentials (Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, p. 11).

Other pertinent issues raised include a pre-World War I internationalism which the early Pentecostals inherited from their 19th century forebears, a sense of antipathy, if not outright hostility toward the Roman Catholic Church, and ecclesiological questions surrounding the nature of secession and dissent, the merits and demerits of which were hotly contested in the early years of British Pentecostalism. Closely aligned to this are what Stunt identifies as “ritualistic cul-de-sacs” and “ecclesiastical agoraphobia,” which frequently accompany the quest for a smaller and ever purer communion. All of these issues remain current and problematic for Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, and must be reapproached and reassessed in a new century. Stunt's masterly elucidation of aspects of the origins of such matters, can only assist those willing to engage in this process.

Timothy Walsh


Grant Wacker has written a key text that will become staple reading for all those engaged in the study of early Pentecostals and their subsequent development. Focussing on the first 20 years of American Pentecostalism, it reveals the personality of the new movement by analysing Pentecostal reactions to such aspects as speaking in tongues, the use of testimonies, preaching, leadership – both male and female and their relationship with wider society.

As would be expected from Wacker, all the chapters are supplied with copious end notes directing readers to the mass of primary source material that enables the current reader to develop an understanding of their forefathers a century ago.

Wacker's central thesis in the book is that early Pentecostals were the product of two contrasting characteristics. On the one hand, they were resolutely otherworldly. He uses the term 'primitivism' to indicate their determination to return to absolute biblical fundamentals. Early Pentecostals were determined to be led by the Spirit in every area of their lives. They had had such a wonderful experience of God that they felt their lives could never be the same again. This meant that for some, newly baptised in the Spirit, they testified that they had been unable to speak in English for days, communicating solely in heavenly languages. It also meant that they expected to rely wholeheartedly on the Spirit for the leadership of services – there was no need for human priests – the Lord would guide them from beginning to end. And yet, they were not so heavenly minded not to realise that they needed a clear vision of what God wanted to do on earth with and through them. Therefore, although they may have been incapacitated linguistically for a few days, they recognised that these languages had to be of some use. Initially they believed them to be for mission work, though they later became a mark of doctrinal rectitude. For this to be possible they had to be able to distinguish between gist and sign. All could receive the sign; fewer would be recipients of the gift. It allowed for the experience whilst also providing flexibility for those slow to move into using tongues regularly. In terms of leadership, it was evident to all that though the Lord was hailed as the leader, 'the plain truth is that the Pentecostal sky was studded with stars, luminaries of flesh and blood variety and their trajectories both illumined and ordered the world around them. Together they defined the movement's identity more than most imagined'. (p.144) To this end, alongside their primitivism was a strong element of pragmatism.

Most early Pentecostals were not country bumpkins unaware of the needs of their new movement. They were entrepreneurs able to develop the message and the structure to reflect the needs of both existing members of congregations and would be proselytes. Primitivism alone would have reduced the movement to an exotic footnote in church history. Hardheaded pragmatism meant that it developed into the most vibrant Christian group in the twentieth century.
This is a book that warrants close reading – it is packed with information gleaned from hundreds of primary sources. To understand why Pentecostals are as they are in the contemporary world, one needs to understand their lineage. This book will add to the overall story that many know with a more nuanced understanding of how early Pentecostals understood their world, themselves and their Lord.

Neil Hudson

THE EUROPEAN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

History
The European Pentecostal Theological Association was founded in 1979 as a Fellowship of those actively engaged in Pentecostal education or ministerial training in Europe. Membership is open both to individuals and institutions who agree with EPTA’s purposes and share its convictions. Many of Europe's finest Bible Colleges are included in EPTA's membership.

Purposes of EPTA
1. To promote excellence and effectiveness in Pentecostal scholarship, ministerial education and theological literature.
2. To foster exchange, fellowship and co-operation between member institutions and individuals.
3. To foster exchange and fellowship between the Association and other associations with similar objectives and commitments.
4. To strengthen the testimony of Jesus Christ and His Church in Europe and to bring glory to God in all actions and concerns.

EPTA Conferences
Each year the Association holds its annual conference at a different venue, usually in the facilities of a member institution. These meetings, in addition to the necessary business, include papers, seminars and discussions that stimulate theological discussion and encourage an interchange of ideas and information.

Membership of EPTA
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