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The Journey of the Finnish Pentecostal Mission:
The Fire Burning in the Tensions between
Modality and Sodality

Arto Hämäläinen

Abstract

The Finnish Pentecostals’ impact to the world missions has traditionally not been very well known. However it is now touching 60 nations with 345 long term workers as well as annually with 400-500 short termers. The goal has been to have one missionary per one hundred believers (about 140 now). This study paper reflects and analyses the development of the Finnish Pentecostal mission from the Azusa type of spontaneous mission movement almost one hundred years ago to the well structured mission body today. The paradigm shifts have led from sodality to modality, and finally to sodality in modality, from traditional mission society to local church centred mission, and eventually to the well defined cooperation unit of the mission organization and local churches.

From spontaneity to the mission society 1912-1929

There is a similarity between the Finnish Pentecostal mission history and the Azusa missionary zeal. Mr Emil Danielsson was sent to Kenya as a Finnish

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2 Arto Hämäläinen, How to Start Missionary Work in New Sending Countries (Helsinki, Fida International&Avainsanoma, 2003, 22
Pentecostal missionary in 1912, one year after the first visit of Norwegian Thomas Barratt who has been considered as the father of the Finnish Pentecostalism. In fact already some years earlier two Swedish Pentecostal sisters had arrived as evangelists to Finland and got some response in the Swedish speaking part of the Finnish population.3

The spontaneity typical of the Azusa missionaries4 marked both the first Finnish Pentecostal missionary and his senders. Actually there were no Pentecostal local churches at the time. The first church was established only in 1915. However Danielsson was sent with great enthusiasm with support money raised in the meeting of the new Pentecostal fellowship consisting of people from various backgrounds (e.g. from the different Lutheran revival movements). An interesting detail in Danielsson’s sending off was that the bishop of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in USA, Mr. J.H. King was present in that gathering. King spent a lengthy time in Finland, and maybe his influence has been later somewhat underestimated.5

Danielsson spent seven years in Kenya during which he also made an exploration trip to Congo. That proved to be a tough experience as he had to witness a couple of his team members die on the way. He had a desire to stay in Congo, but it was not possible. During his stay in Kenya Danielsson first worked in Kisumu at the Norwegian mission station. However people there turned against Pentecostalism, and after his journey to Congo Danielsson had to find new co-workers. He had close cooperation for instance with some Americans.6

Already during those early years some elements of the embryo of the sending structure can be identified. One influential Pentecostal pioneer, Pekka Brofeldt had a private magazine where he encouraged Pentecostals to give voluntary support to Danielsson. That had some effect. Also Barratt in his newspaper Korsets Seir which was translated into Finnish encouraged people to help Danielsson.7

Brofeldt understood already at the early stages of the movement the need to become mission minded. He wrote: ‘The Pentecostal church should also be a mission church having its own missionaries...The Lord will give workers for pagan countries, when there will be an awakening to the love

3 Jouko Ruohomäki, *Karismaattisuuden kutsu* (Keuruu, Aikamedia, 2009), 387-390
4 Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street, Mission & Revival* (Nashville, Tennessee, Thomas Nelson, 2006), 239-240
5 Ruohomäki, *Karismaattisuuden kutsu* 433-435
6 Lauri Ahonen, *Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään* (Keuruu, Aikamedia, 2002), 21-32
7 Ahonen, *Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään*, 24-25
towards missions.’ He emphasized also the need of the Spirit filled missionaries.\textsuperscript{8}

Another interesting link to the Azusa is the case of the sister Maria Björkman. This lady from Finnish background lived in USA as an emigrant and thus was influenced directly by the Azusa street events. In the meetings she had received the call to China, and she went there around 1907-1908. She worked in the province of Huabei especially among the children and kept an orphanage there as well. Later she was in contact with missionaries sent from Pentecostal churches in Finland to China.\textsuperscript{9}

In spite of the influence of the mission inspiring writings of Danielsson and Brofeldt it took time before the proper sending and supporting structure was built. From 1809 to 1917 Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian empire, and before that Finland was part of Sweden. During the time of autonomy the way was open to Estonia and Russian areas close to St.Petersburgh, where people related to Finns were living (Inkerinmaa). Mr Pekka Nuutinen went to Estonia in 1914 at the time when the First World War broke out. He with his co-workers Aleksander Summanen and O. Konsa faced many difficulties. The work also continued after the year 1920 when Estonia gained its independence.\textsuperscript{10}

The Pentecostal experience touched many missionaries from different denominational backgrounds. This also happened in the Finnish mission context. Several Lutheran missionaries were filled with the Holy Spirit in China. Some of them then joined the Pentecostal church, but none of them continued as a missionary.\textsuperscript{11} Another type of case was that of Ms Anna Kempe, an Evangelical Free Church missionary working among Tibetans. She experienced the Spirit baptism in 1925, and after that found working connections in the Pentecostal mission.\textsuperscript{12}

A new phase started in the Finnish Pentecostal mission when an experienced missionary Nikolai Pöysti who had worked in Russia and Manchuria (China) arrived in Finland in 1926. After a short stay in Sweden he returned to Finland and became co-pastor in the Filadelfia church in Helsinki.\textsuperscript{13} The church used two languages, Finnish and Swedish. At the

\textsuperscript{8} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään} 26
\textsuperscript{9} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään} 19-20
\textsuperscript{10} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään} 54-55
\textsuperscript{11} Ruohomäki, \textit{Karismaattisuuden kutsu}, 401-403
\textsuperscript{12} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään} 43
\textsuperscript{13} Juhani Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ in \textit{Kaikkeen maailmaan}, ed. Arto Hämäläinen (Vantaa, RV-kirjat, 1989), 11-12
time the church had 500 members.\textsuperscript{14} The other pastor was Eino Manninen, who became a leading figure in Finland in many ways like Pethrus in Sweden and Barratt in Norway.

Pöysti started to fan the mission fire in the churches. About 40 churches were established in the 1920s. He also understood the need of the mission structure. That was the reason why he started to promote the founding of a mission society. The society was founded in the fall of 1927 under the name of Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM). In the same founding meeting a very crucial recommendation was also made as the churches were encouraged to take a monthly offering for the missionary work.\textsuperscript{15} That has been practiced by the churches since that time to our days, and is surely one of the success factors in the Finnish Pentecostal Mission.

The FFFM was set up as a typical mission society. It basically raised money and supported missionaries, mainly in Estonia, and sister Anna Kempe in India who worked among the Tibetans there.\textsuperscript{16} However, some opposition was rising against the organized missionary work. The wave came from Sweden and Norway. Pethrus and Barratt had come to that such theological conclusion that it was not biblical to have any organizations except the local church. That led to the closing of the mission organizations in Sweden and Norway. Finland followed in their trail, and the FFFM was closed in the fall 1929.\textsuperscript{17} Now some of the largest local churches were in charge of the missionary work.\textsuperscript{18} This resulted in an extremely congregational model of doing the missionary work.

One of the goals of the FFFM was quite progressive, namely the idea of providing theological training to the future missionaries. The dream was soon put into practice as theological studies were integrated into the missions course. The goal of the training was both intellectual and spiritual growth. The first students were the missionary heading for Tanganjiga, Sylvi Mömmö and the missionary to Estonia, John Söderholm.\textsuperscript{19}

The idea of giving theological training for missionaries was quite radical in the Nordic Pentecostal context at that time. The course was intended to be two years long. It so happened that it was against the policy that was going

\textsuperscript{14} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään}, 79
\textsuperscript{15} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään}, 80-83
\textsuperscript{16} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään}, 93-101
\textsuperscript{17} Arto Hämäläinen, \textit{Leadership: the Spirit and the Structure} (Helsinki, Fida International, 2005), 113-115
\textsuperscript{18} Ahonen, \textit{Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään}, 109
\textsuperscript{19} Arne Herberts, \textit{I kärlekens tjänst} (Vasa, Taborförlaget, 1994), 12
to affect the Nordic Pentecostalism for decades, based on a decision taken in Sweden in 1919. According to that principle only short courses were acceptable. Behind this was a fear that formal training would produce ‘bread priests’.20

2. From the Congregational Basis to China, Africa And South America 1929-1945

In the 1930s after the suppression of the FFFM (which was never deleted from the governmental registration) the larger local churches served in the role of providing practical services for the missionaries. It is also noteworthy that the FFFM was bilingual (Finnish-Swedish) and served both language groups in the Finnish Pentecostalism. When the local churches took the initiative the flourishing cooperation over language barriers in missionary work gradually declined. However the contacts between the language groups were not totally lost.

Especially the churches in Helsinki (Saalem among the Finnish speaking and Filadelfia among the Swedish speaking) and in Turku came to play a vital role in practising world missions. The first missionary supported by a local church was Mr. Toimi Yrjölä who was sent to China by the Saalem church in the fall 1929, in other words just after the suppression of the FFFM. About the same time the promoter and first chairman of the FFFM, Mr. Nikolai Pöysti, was sent with his family also to China by the Pentecostal church in Turku.21

The Swedish speaking churches started their missionary work in 1933 by sending sisters Frida Pellas and Anna Wallenius to China. The latter was later married with Toimi Yrjölä, connecting the two language groups in the work in China. Yrjölä became the strongest pioneer figure in the Finnish Pentecostal mission. He established a church and a Bible school in Tungfeng, Manchuria (China). In the church building at its inauguration there were seats for 1000 people. The revival was characteristically very Pentecostal. In one occasion 120 people were baptized by the Holy Spirit.22

Yrjölä also became a strong motivator for missions. When he was on furlough in Finland in 1935 he challenged the churches to send ten more missionaries to China. One year later he went back along with nine new

20 Hämäläinen, *Leadership*, 116-1
21 Nikolai Pöysti’s son Earl became later famous radio evangelist for Soviet Union. He worked through the Swedish Pentecostal IBRA-radio for a long time.
   Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiberätyksen historia’ 12-13
22 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiberätyksen historia’ 13-15
missionaries. They were however to face big hardships there. Four of them died of severe diseases. It was a big sacrifice for the Finnish Pentecostal churches that were just taking their first steps in world missions.23

It was not only China. Missionaries were sent to Tanganyika (1934), Argentina (1934) and further to Uruguay, Burma (Myanmar) (1934), Belgian Congo (1937), Mozambique (1938) and further to South Africa, India (1938). Finnish churches in North America became involved in the work in India at the same time.24 Also the Swedish speaking churches had supported family Nyman in Mongolia since 1933.25

The development in 1930s strengthened the role of the local churches in the missions. There was a shift from the mission society to a congregational model of practicing the missionary work. Because the number of the missionaries was relatively small, no serious problems arose. The missionaries were mostly pioneering type of people ready to go to remote areas. In this they followed the model they had learned in Finland. New churches were established and the zeal for evangelism was high.

The most central field of that time was China. The largest number of the missionaries worked there. Also the results were encouraging which surely enhanced the mission vision in the local churches. In Tanganyika the work started with Swedish Pentecostals. It was a strategic move which gave direction also for the future. Later the Nordic cooperation (Finland, Norway, Sweden, sometimes also Denmark included) took place in several countries (e.g. Japan, Taiwan, Uganda, Bolivia, North Korea). Sometimes there have been two countries together, sometimes 3-4 (Tanzania, Japan, Bolivia).

In China the influence of the Finnish Pentecostal missionary work even though significant in the areas it touched (Manchuria and later after the WWII Yunnan) was only drops in the ocean in the huge scale of the vast country, and their missionaries’ impact was a small rivulet among thousands of missionaries. In Myanmar the Finnish missionaries played a more central role for the development of the Assemblies of God in Myanmar.

The missionary training did not stop during the suspension of the FFFM. The new promoter for training was Mr. Lauri Mömmö. He managed to get permission in 1931 from the pastors and elders conference to organize a training course for the missionary candidates in 1932. However the new thinking about the role of the local church was also reflected on the planning

23 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 14-15
24 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 14-18
25 Ahonen, Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään, 173-214
of training. The idea to run a national missionary course was in conflict with the principle of not having any organization besides the local church. That is why the Siloam-church in Helsinki was asked to ‘adopt’ the course. The course was run in 1933 two times, one in the spring and again in August. After that there was a break in the training of the missionaries. Later the missionary training got integrated into the training programme of the Bible institute (now Iso Kirja College).

Shortly after this, there came a period when the missionary work turned out to be very difficult. The so-called winter war broke out between the Soviet Union and Finland when the former started the attack against its neighbour. After these events and during the Second World War the missionary work largely stopped.

3. Strong Growth after the WWII 1946-1973

It seems like the missionary work had been in an incubation process during the war. The fire which had been there before the hard time was immediately aflame. Some people like Toimi Yrjölä kept the vision alive and fresh through his writings. In any case the churches started to send missionaries in spite of the difficulties to get foreign currency from the Finnish national bank. Over 30 missionaries in three years’ time went out without any guarantee of support from Finland. Some of them worked abroad to get their support, some received help from Sweden or North America. China was again the main field. A few years after the war there were 17 missionaries working in Yunnan, China.

Some significant inputs were made in a few years’ time. Mr. Lars-Eric Bergsten, who was well known both among the Finnish and Swedish speaking believers, was sent by Filadelfia in Helsinki to Brazil 1948. He became highly appreciated there, and is honoured like one of the apostles in the Brazilian Assemblies of God.

The sending of missionaries to Kenya in 1949 was to have very long term consequences. The work contributed to the birth of one of the largest Pentecostal movements in the country (Full Gospel Churches of Kenya with more than 300 000 members in 2010).

As the missionaries were expelled from China (1949-1950) their dispersion meant the beginning of work in many other countries. Some of the Finnish Pentecostal missionaries went to Japan and Taiwan where the

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26 Ahonen, Lähetyskäskyä täyttämään, 272-280
27 Kuosmanen, ’Helluntaiheräyksen historia’ 1
Nordic countries Pentecostal missionaries formed a joint front. Some others went to Singapore, Sri Lanka, and India.

Finnish Pentecostal missionaries have been the first Pentecostal missionaries in three countries, i.e. in Thailand, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Mr. Werner Raassina with his wife was sent to Thailand in 1946. He lost his wife and several children but was faithful in continuing his work. Today the Full Gospel Churches of Thailand is the largest national Pentecostal church in the country.

The Pentecostal work in Ethiopia was started by the Finnish couple Sanfrid and Anna-Liisa Mattson. Through God's leading they got to know the Emperor of Ethiopia when he was in exile. The Emperor later helped them to come into the country and start the work. According to the statistics of Operation World there were 2.5 million Pentecostals in Ethiopia in the beginning of this century.

The work in Eritrea was started by the time it was part of Ethiopia by Paavo and Meeri Virtanen from Finland. After the independence in 1990s the partnership was formed between Finland and Eritrea. The good developments faced difficulties because of the dictatorship rule in the country. Churches have been closed, and many pastors and believers have been imprisoned since 2004.

The next big impact after the spreading out of the China missionaries in the beginning of the 1950s was connected again to the mission promoter Toimi Yrjölä. He initiated a mission ship enterprise, and succeeded to inspire a large group of mission candidates to commit themselves to this ministry. The ship with the destination of Sri Lanka and India departed from Helsinki, Finland with 28 mission candidates on board in 1955. Their on-the-job training started. In those days the churches had 43 missionaries in 12 countries. In this context this new step was huge. Most of the candidates on board the ship continued after a shorter time in Sri Lanka-India to other destinations like Taiwan, Kenya, Uruguay, Japan, Thailand.

A very special story in the Finnish Pentecostal mission history is that of Mr. Kaarlo Syväntö. He went to Israel in 1947, before the independence of the state of Israel. He had great difficulties to convince the supporters, but slowly the churches in Finland started to understand his calling. His vision

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28 Eeva Hilpinen, *Manifold Missions, Finnish Free Foreign Mission 70 years* (Saarijärvi, Suomen Vapaa Ulkolähetys, 1997), 58
30 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 28
was to distribute Bibles and New Testaments to the Jews and others who were interested to get them.  

Thousands of items of scriptures were distributed in that way. He could also be part of the emerging Messianic movement in Israel. In the first years they were only a few believers in Yeshua, but the latest statistics tell of about 10,000.  

The number of the countries increased only moderately in 1960s. The work in Papua New Guinea started in 1968 by Mr. Lauri Pesu and Kari Harri with their families. From that root sprouted the ALC Pentecostal church which has already sent missionaries to other countries. The vision about the spiritual need in Europe began to grow in 1950-1960s (Belgium, France, Spain). In 1971 the missionary ship Ebeneser sailed to Indonesia which became a new partnering country. The collaborating church there has been the GPDI, today with a few millions of believers.

In the light of a new situation with a rapid increase in missions the senders in Finland started to reconsider their decision to interrupt the work of the FFFM. The need for better coordination was clear. It was neither wise nor economical that several churches were replicating the same kind of practical things. There was also the need to speak in one voice before the authorities as in the case of negotiating about the deliverance of foreign currency etc. After some years of negotiations and preparations the FFFM was revived in 1950.

The Finnish decision was not in line with other Nordic countries. The congregational thinking led them to abolish mission organizations in 1929-1930. That thinking was still dominating in all Nordic countries in 1950s. It may be that the main reason in Finland to make a change was more pragmatic than theological. It took until 1986 than Norway formed the mission organization, and even to 1998 when Sweden made that decision.

It is however important to notice that the working model was not the same as in the former period of existence of the FFFM. It was not any more a mission society. The local churches had learned since 1930s to take their role in the missionary work. In spite of the fact that the FFFM office had taken over some responsibilities they still had an important role to play.

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31 Hilpinen, *Manifold Missions*, 127
32 Julia Fischer, *Israelin uudet opetuslapset* (Hämeenlinna, Päivä Oy, 2010), 201
33 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 29,37
34 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 28
35 Kuosmanen, ‘Helluntaiherätyksen historia’ 39
36 Hämäläinen, *Leadership*, 115
The structural change in missions was also interesting in the light of the fact that the local churches had no formal national structure. There was only the pastors’ and elders’ conference once or twice a year, but its decisions were not binding. They were only recommendations.

The new structure also contained an office of the General Secretary (for Missions). The first one was Mr. Odin Finell (1950-1960) who served also simultaneously some local churches in the same role (Saalem, Sion, Filadelfia). The new office with a capable man in it was without doubt of great importance for the growth of both Finnish and Swedish speaking churches.

In the years after the WWII the pioneer spirit was still characteristic of the Finnish Pentecostal mission work. However it should be noted that it had a holistic dimension. It was more prominent in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, India, but was found at least in small scale in other countries as well. The Finnish Pentecostal mission history confirms the observations of Gary B. McGee when he is pointing out that the Scandinavian Pentecostals have been more open for the holistic ministry than the Americans.


The work in many countries that had started in 1930-1950s had reached the partnership phase in 1970s. The national church structure had been established, and the number of the believers was increasing. Some kind of Bible education was provided, and opposite to the sending country, Finland, also longer term training programmes were established (Kenya, Thailand, Taiwan). That created to some extent the feeling that the task of the sending country was fulfilled. In spite of the fact that individual missionaries were still many times involved in pioneer type of ministry, for the most part naturally together with the national people, some kind of satisfaction of completing the task was sneaking around the corner.

The question about the future prevailed. What is the role of the Finnish churches after the national churches are practising the 3-self model? Have the missionaries done all they have to do? Had the time of phasing out of missions come?

In my opinion three crucial things opened a new way forward. One was the stronger recognition of the holistic mission, the other took place through

37 Herberts, I kärlekens tjänst, 89
the short term mission which at that time got started. The third was the
growing awareness about the need behind the iron curtain.

The Finnish Pentecostal missionary work has been holistic from the very
beginning in the sense that all human needs, both spiritual and physical
have been met. As it was stated before, the Nordic countries’ missionary
work was not similar to the North American in that sense. However the
volume of the health care, education programmes etc. was not very large.
Finland itself was a poor country in the wake of the WWII, and supporting
of the missionaries was a great effort. There were no large resources
available for the social actions.

However the social ministry had grown significantly in some countries
when we look at the situation in the 1970s. Ms Aune Hyny had large
orphanages in Machilipatnam, India. Missionaries in Ethiopia had started an
orphanage, schools and health care programmes. The same had happened
also in Kenya and to some measure in Tanzania. Ms Annikki Raatikainen
started children’s ministry in Bangladesh in 1974 which meant not only
more attention to the needs of the poor people but also first clear
involvement in the Muslim context.39

During the time of the above mentioned developments the Pentecostal
chairman of the Finnish Missionary council, Mr. Gösta Bergsten managed to
pass through the council an initiative to the Finnish government to get
financial support from the state for the social programmes of the mission
organizations40. This had earlier taken place in Sweden which surely
encouraged Finnish mission executives to try the same. The Minister of
Foreign Affairs of Finland became acquainted with the social projects of the
mission organizations about the same time. He was surprised by the scope
and quality of the work. All that led to a decision in the Finnish government
to direct money for the social work of the mission organizations in 1974.

The government support was a strong encouragement to the FFFM. That
also gave much of a new dimension to the work in Africa where the social
problems were big and a substantial amount of support was given. New
reasons to stay in the old missions fields took place.

The first short term teams were sent to Austria and Greece in 1977. Later
other European countries were involved. The young people who were
brought to face a totally new spiritual situation compared to their countries
of origin, were impressed, and started to share the vision about reaching
Europe with the gospel. The pioneer approach found new ground. At the

39 Hilpinen, Manifold Missions, 25, 31, 58, 63, 70-71
40 Herberts, I kärlekens tjänst, 109
same time the number of missionaries in European countries started to increase. Most of the new missionaries, not only in Europe came from the short term teams. In that way short term ministry became very crucial for the future development in missions in Finland.

The third aspect opening new avenues was the interest behind the iron curtain. Finland was the neighbour of Soviet Union. Traditional missionary work behind the eastern border was not possible. However the news about the persecution and the lack of Bibles in Soviet Union reached the Finnish Pentecostals. One concrete action to do something for the Russian people was a big Nordic prayer campaign. Every Pentecostal church in Finland had one city to pray for in Soviet Union. At the same time a new literature organization Avainsanoma (Key Message) arranged for illegal transportations of Bibles to the Eastern European communist countries. That had a huge impact, which been mentioned with appreciation by the believers in those countries afterwards.

Another way to help people behind the eastern border was to use radio. Finnish IBRA radio, established in 1955, got involved. Later it changed its name to Good News Radio, and now it is part of the Keymedia organization. The awareness of the spiritual needs in Soviet Union served to expand the vision of the believers outside the traditional mission fields, and brought also new pioneer challenges (the unreached in Soviet Union).

The period brought along structural challenges as well. The development work (social ministry) was practised in Sweden in accordance with the congregational principle. Various social projects were run by separate local churches. However in order to guarantee the quality, and to provide some expertise a new organization PMU (the Development Cooperation Organization the Pentecostal Churches) was established. In Finland the solution was different. The existing mission organization, FFFM, was asked to take on the responsibility of the development work. The local churches were not to run development projects. They were directed to the mission organization.

The progress did not stop in the concentration of the development work. It continued with the coordination of short term ministry which was neither left to the churches, but almost from the very beginning was linked to the mission organization. The same happened later to the ministry concerning the Jews and work among the Roma people. All this was indicating that Finland had chosen another approach than its Nordic neighbours. The different structures have not however hindered the cooperation in many projects between the Nordic countries.
On the other hand the Finnish media work in missions went through another process than the mainstream mission work. In spite of the close cooperation elsewhere the lack of integration concerning media has been a spot of weakness in the whole picture in the Finnish Pentecostal mission.

5. The Roles in the Cooperative Unity become clearer 1987-2000

Ralph D. Winter and Orlando de Costas have been highlighting the modality-sodality conceptions in the missions. The FFFM was a typical sodality like the traditional protestant mission societies used to be. Then the paradigm of the congregational ecclesiology took over in the Nordic countries in about 1930, and the result was the modality paradigm. Finnish Pentecostal leaders started first to doubt its effectiveness in the time of the bigger growth after the WWII, and revived the FFFM organization to serve the local churches. That meant a paradigm shift, now from modality to sodality in modality.

There were sometimes tensions between the sending churches and the mission organization working as ‘the sodality in the modality’ especially in the first decades of the new model. The mandates were not very clearly marked, and especially in conflict situations it became sometimes very difficult to act, because neither the local church nor the mission organization could be said to have the final word. It became even worse when the national church was involved. The local church liked to defend its missionary in case of conflict. The national church disagreed and the mission organization wanted to emphasize the independence of the national church, but had no power over the local church. This often resulted in a dead end.

On the other way the mission organization had to take increasing coordination responsibilities in order to serve the local churches well. The situation became slowly paradoxical, even paralysing. The local churches were afraid to give more power to the mission organization, but at the same time there were expectations to get more services and to use the expertise of the mission organization. The situation called for forming joint strategies that started little by little in redefining the roles of the partnering units.

The first strategy was formed 1987 and was titled ‘The Joint Mission Strategy of the FFFM and the Finnish Pentecostal Churches’ The next strategy was formed in 1993 with the name ‘Our Missionary Work Towards the Year 2000’. The third strategy came into power in 1998, and it was titled ‘Working Together’. In that strategy the leading role of the mission organization in the strategic matters was clearly stated. A revised version of

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41 Hämäläinen, Leadership, 240-249
the document was published in 2003, with well defined roles both for the local churches and the mission organization. The same idea was further strengthened in the last strategy named ‘Good Winds’ in 2007. That document is targeted to the year 2012.42  

One of the principles of the last decades has been an increasing international cooperation in Pentecostal (Pentecostal European Missions, Pentecostal Asian Mission, World Assemblies of God and Pentecostal World Fellowship missions commissions) and evangelical contexts (Lausanne movement), and to some measure ecumenical networks.

The original name Finnish Free Foreign Missions was found not to work properly any more in the new mission context. The content of the word ‘free’ was not necessarily clear nor was the word ‘foreign’ promoting the partnership idea with the national churches. In 2001 the organization changed the name into ‘Fida International’. The word ‘fida’ comes from Latin and means trustworthy, faithful.

6. Conclusion

Finnish Pentecostal mission has travelled a long journey from the small embryo of Azusa influenced mission excitement to well structured sodality in modality, keeping up its flexibility to grow and change at the same time. Fida International (former FFFM) is the largest Pentecostal mission organization in Europe today. What are the reasons behind its success? First, the Pentecostal spirituality has been in the prominent position. The first of at least eight reasons for this is that Pentecostal missionaries have experienced the supernatural leading of the Holy Spirit in their work.43 Secondly, structures have been flexibly developed to meet the actual needs in the world missions. Thirdly, the work has been strategically planned and implemented. Fourthly, the roles of the local churches and the mission organization have been processed, and finally clearly defined. Fifthly, effective training programmes have been provided for both short and long term ministry. Sixthly, the co-working triangle of the mission organization, local church and training institution has taken place in the way Patrick Johnstone has been emphasizing.44 Seventhly, the mission organization has been actively involved in the Pentecostal and Evangelical networks, and to some measure in ecumenical connections. Eighthly, the holistic way of working has been featuring these activities.

42 Arto Hämäläinen, Päämääränä kasvu (Keuruu, Aikamedia, 2009), 120-169  
43 Hämäläinen, Leadership, 357-368  
44 Patrick Johnstone, The Church Is Bigger Than You Think (Fearn, Christian Focus Publications, 1998), 210