

THE NEW REFORMATION: THE AMASING RISE OF THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

A church revival which happened in 1906 in Los Angeles sparked a massive global church movement which came to be known as the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. It started with a single woman about a hundred years ago, and today it has more than 600 million adherents. It is perhaps the most significant development in the Christian church since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century and it certainly has changed the face of Christianity irrevocably. In this article we look at the roots of this movement and its massive impact on the global Christian church. We will also attempt to answer the question of why this movement has been so incredibly successful.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century turned the Christian church on its head. It irrevocably changed not only the accepted understanding of the church and its role in society, but also the face of the church: with the Reformation's slogan of *sola scriptura* and *sacra scriptura suis ipsius intrepres est*, the Bible became the legitimate "property" of all believers, not only the object of study for a select few informed church-sanctioned interpreters.

Throughout the next few centuries the effects and implications of the Reformation continued to impact on both the Catholic Church (in the form of the counter-Reformation and, later, Vatican II) and the multiplicity of Protestant denominations that came into being and developed a variety of theologies and understandings of the church. The church landscape at the beginning of the 21st century is seen by many historians as a logical consequence and continuation of the Protestant Reformation.

However, 2006 marked the 100th anniversary of a second reformation, even greater than the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century; a reformation that has had an even greater impact on the church in general than that of the earlier Reformation. Unlike the Protestant Reformation, it did not have a sudden, rapid and politically supported rise, but it has developed steadily, virtually unnoticed, from humble beginnings into one of the most significant religious movements in human history. It is seldom seen in terms of a new Reformation, but in this paper we wish to make this point: what we have is not only a continuation of the Protestant Reformation, but a new Reformation in

itself, with a far greater impact than the Protestant Reformation. This new Reformation is the Pentecostal-charismatic movement which burst onto the scene in 1906 with the Azusa Street revivals in Los Angeles.

Today it is growing at a rate of 52 000 a day or 19 million a year (estimate by mission expert David Barrett, quoted in *Christianity Today* 1988). Approaching in excess of 580 million adherents worldwide (see Blumhofer 2006:21), it is after Roman Catholicism, the largest Christian tradition. It finds expression in a variety of forms, from small village churches to mega churches, the largest being that of the Yoi Do Full Gospel Church, founded by David Yonggi Cho, with an estimated weekly worship attendance of 240 000. "At the current rate of growth, some researchers predict there will be 1 billion Pentecostals by 2025, most located in Asia, Africa, and Latin America" (McClung 2006: 35).

In the first section of this article we will briefly examine the rise of this movement, or rather this new Reformation, which has and still is changing the face of Christianity all over the world and is showing no signs of abating. We will also examine its massive impact on modern Christianity. In the last section we will attempt to answer the obvious question: what are the reasons for the spectacular success of a movement which had rather humble origins?

2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

2.1 Roots of the movement

There are a number of very good introductions to the Pentecostal phenomenon, such as the *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity* (Burgess (ed) 2005) and Allan Anderson's *An introduction to Pentecostalism: global charismatic Christianity* (2004). For this brief introduction I have chosen to rely mainly on the work of Vincent Synan (1975, 1997, 2001a, 2001b), who is perhaps today the most significant of Pentecostal academic historians.

No social phenomenon takes place in a vacuum. There are always prior events and influences that lead up to a social movement like the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. It is generally accepted that the roots of the Pentecostal movement are to be found in the holiness movements of the 19th century, in which John Wesley played a key role. The central theme of Pentecostals and charismatics alike is the teaching of baptism with the Holy Spirit. Synan (1997:x) actually traces the origins of the idea that one receives the Spirit in a special way after conversion, back to the rite of confirmation in the Western churches, where "it was a very practical and sacramental 'second blessing' that conferred the Holy Spirit when the Bishop laid hands on the one being confirmed". In subsequent centuries this understanding of the essence of a spiritual life was continued, especially in the monastic and mystic traditions in the Catholic and later the Anglican traditions. "All of these stressed a 'deeper' or sometimes 'higher' Christian life that went far beyond the level of nominalism that characterised the majority of Christians for most of the history of the church" (Synan 1997:x). The basic premise was that neither the full depth of a relationship with God nor all the gifts of the Holy Spirit were

received at the first instance of confirmation or conversion. A second, deeper or higher experience, later, after the initial conversion, really brought the fullness of the Christian life. Over the centuries it was articulated in a number of ways by various traditions, but this was the foundation of the so-called second blessing so central to the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. This was also the seminal idea upon which John Wesley founded his holiness movement, which became the Methodist Church, and it was John Wesley more than anybody else who planted the seeds of what was to become a mighty worldwide movement.

Wesley's thoughts were inspired by a strong reaction against the severe Calvinism of his day, which essentially taught that a predestined select few would be saved (Synan 1997:2). Wesley emphasised that salvation was for everybody and that there was accompanying "proof" or "evidence" of this salvation in the form of a crisis experience at the moment of conversion. Synan (1997:2-3) indicates that Wesley himself was strongly influenced by the Catholic and Anglican mystical traditions in the form of Thomas a Kempis, Jeremy Taylor and William Law. After a stint as missionary in America in 1735-38, Wesley returned to England and on May 24, 1738 he experienced his famous conversion. Based on his own experience and his understanding of a second blessing, Wesley taught that in addition to the first conversion, or justification, a Christian believer must also be cleansed from a "residue of sin" which remained because of Adam's sin. This "second blessing" did not render a person totally sinless, but inspired the person so sanctified to strive every day to live a life of "victory over conscious willful sin" (Synan 1997:6). Over the next 30 years, as Methodism developed, various forms of Wesley's doctrine developed. While a few branches within Methodism even rejected the notion of a second blessing (see Synan 1997:7), it remained a crucial element for Wesley himself. When Methodism reached the shores of America around 1766, the elements of a second blessing and a subsequent life of holiness were retained intact and transplanted to the new context. American Methodism and the holiness tradition swept over America in the next eighty years or so (see Synan 1997:9-19 for a good summary of its spread), culminating in a massive revival in New York in 1858, a few years prior to the American Civil War. At this stage the Methodist holiness movement was very strong in the North, but weak in the southern states which tended to put their religious energy into defending the institution of slavery, so the massive revival that spread across America in 1858 had very little impact on the South. After the war in 1865, nearly two years passed before there was a resurgence in the holiness movement. It was primarily driven by a series of holiness camps, initiated by people like John Inskip and William Osborn, of the Methodist Church and Methodist Episcopal Church. They organised the first national camp meeting for the promotion of holiness. Other camps followed (Synan 1997:26 indicates that between 1867 and 1883 fifty-two national camps were held) and a National Holiness Association was formed. The holiness movement also found particular success among members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion and it also quickly spread nationwide in many black churches.

In the latter part of the century, the American version of the holiness movement was also exported to many places in the world, such as parts of

Europe, Asia and Africa, through the work of missionary pioneers like Amy Smith. At the same time numerous smaller movements started which also emphasised manifestations of the Holy Spirit, like the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of B H Irwin, where he started referring to specific manifestations accompanying baptism with the Holy Spirit as a “third blessing”. He proposed that this was “a separate and subsequent experience to both salvation and sanctification” (Synan 2001a:34). In the fire-baptised movement, extreme physical manifestations accompanied this third blessing: people dropped to the ground, spoke in tongues, and so on. In a sense this movement was an important bridge to the modern Pentecostal movement in that it emphasised a separate and distinct third blessing: a clear and physical manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit.

However, the holiness movement, so strong in the Methodist tradition, started to receive severe opposition in the mid-1880s. More and more criticism was levelled against it as being a novelty and not really Wesleyan. Eventually in 1894 the holiness movement was rejected by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and it effectively ended the holiness movement in the Methodist Church. But it did not stifle the movement at all. It just continued outside of the Methodist fold, and it started to spread its wings more than ever. Countless new and rather independent holiness denominations and churches were created all over the US, especially in the Midwest. Synan (1997:26) remarks that this development took place despite the fact that the machinery such as the National Holiness Association existed to unite the various groups into a single whole; but this never happened. By the turn off the century, in 1900, no fewer than 23 holiness denominations had emerged, all with a particular view of a second blessing, a life of holiness and some sense that the reception of the Holy Spirit would bring with it some physical manifestations. The stage was set for one of the most significant socio-religious events of Christianity.

2.2 It all started with one woman

In 1895 a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Charles Fox Parnham, dissociated himself from the church because of its anti-holiness stance and took a strong anti-denominational view. Parnham started a “divine healing home” in Topeka in Kansas in 1898, where he could pray for those who were sick and in need of healing. Two years later, in 1900, he started the Bethel Bible School with forty students. The theology Parnham taught was a mixed bag gathered from all over the holiness tradition, with influences from Alexander Dowie’s Zion City, A B Simpson’s Christian and Missionary Alliance and Frank Sandford’s The Holy Ghost and Us Church. Of special interest to Parnham was the scriptural evidence for baptism with the Holy Spirit (Synan 1997:91). He felt strongly that the second blessing had to be supplemented by a third experience, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and that there would somehow be confirmation or proof of this. Both Parnham and his students came to the conclusion that the evidence of baptism with the Spirit was “speaking in tongues”, based on the stories in Acts. Over time Parnham came to be credited as the person who formalised the doctrine of speaking in tongues as a distinctive characteristic of the modern Pentecostal movement.

As Parnham and his students were pursuing this on 31 December during a prayer meeting, one of the students, Agnes Ozman, asked Parnham to lay his hands on her so that she could receive the Holy Spirit. Just after midnight on January 1, 1901 Agnes started speaking in “Chinese” and could not speak English for three days afterwards, and when she tried to write she could only produce Chinese characters. This event is commonly accepted as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement in America. The strange happenings in Topeka were widely reported and almost all Parnham’s students started to speak in tongues. Soon afterwards, Parnham closed his school in Kansas and departed on a revival tour which spread the news of the Pentecostal movement and the baptism with the Holy Spirit across the Midwest.

2.3 Azusa Street revivals of 1906

In 1905 Parnham opened another Bible school in Houston, Texas. There were 25 students. A poor, one-eyed African American man, Charles Seymour, who had had contact with the holiness movement and who had moved to Houston to trace lost relatives, expressed an interest in attending classes at the Bible school. Since Seymour could not legally attend classes with white students, Parnham allowed him to monitor classes through the open door while sitting in the hallway (Synan 1997:93). He “attended” Parnham’s classes for several months and although he fully accepted Parnham’s doctrine of speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism with the Holy Spirit, he himself did not receive the gift there. Seymour was well respected and a small independent holiness congregation in Los Angeles, which had had contact with him in Houston, invited him to be the pastor of their church.

Seymour accepted the invitation and arrived in Los Angeles in March 1906. He conducted his first sermon and proclaimed that he believed that speaking in tongues was evidence of baptism with the Holy Spirit. The leaders of the congregation thought his teaching was contrary to accepted holiness traditions and after this first sermon, they barred him from the church. But Seymour continued to preach, initially from a house in Bonnie Brae Street. It was here that Seymour and seven others fell to the ground in ecstasy on April 9, 1906, speaking in tongues. Thereafter, it continued happening at the meetings at the house. News of the strange phenomena spread like wildfire and soon crowds gathered outside to see what was going on. Seymour decided to find a larger facility and relocated to an abandoned African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was here that the modern Pentecostal movement took shape in the form of a massive revival where literally thousands of people, black and white, rich and poor, attended services and started to speak in tongues. As news of this spread, hundreds of thousands of people from all over the US and the rest of the world streamed to the Azusa Street church. The massive revival continued for three-and-a-half years, and three services a day, every day of the week, were held for the entire period. Seymour also published a newspaper called the *Apostolic Faith*, of which 50 000 copies were sent free to readers, helping to spread the message.

It was in these three-and-a-half years, starting in 1906, that the beginning of a global movement was created. It was a new Reformation, set to change the

face of Christianity in a more significant way than the Protestant Reformation four centuries earlier. In many ways this movement was unique in the Christian world, and its peculiar roots and multiracialism helped pave the way for a reformation that would sweep the globe in the 20th century. Synan (2001a:4-5) remarks that

The Azusa Street movement seems to have been the merger of white American Holiness religion with worship styles derived from the African American Christian tradition ... the admixture of tongues and other charisms with southern black and white music and worship styles created a new and indigenous form of Pentecostalism [which] would prove extremely attractive to disinherited and deprived people in both America and other nations ... The interracial aspects of Azusa Street were a striking exception to the racism and segregation of the time.

For a good, recent examination of the Azusa Street revival and its legacy, see Hunter & Robeck (2006).

2.4 Global spread

The one crucial factor in the rise of the Pentecostal movement was that it was able to spread and successfully continue the momentum of the Azusa Street church. Many thousands of pilgrims came to Azusa Street to receive the gift of tongues and baptism with the Holy Spirit, but few remained. They were consumed with a desire for global evangelisation, to proclaim Christ to the nations, and when they journeyed back to their homes, they took the message and the understanding of salvation and the missionary zeal of Azusa Street with them. In the years following the revivals in Los Angeles, Pentecostal missionaries created Pentecostal churches not only in America and Europe, but all over the world: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Asia, China, Africa, India, Japan, Korea, Latin America and the Middle East. In all these contexts Pentecostal Christianity proved to be spectacularly successful in the long run. Many experienced initial opposition and even persecution by mainline churches and denominations, but as the 20th century progressed and as the ability of Pentecostalism to adapt to local circumstances shone through, they prevailed and today, 100 years after the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostals number nearly 600 000 million, and their growth shows no signs of slowing down. In all probability, Pentecostalism will soon replace Catholicism as the most populous Christian denomination on the globe.

Pentecostalism also spread to South Africa through the work of John G Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch, associates of Charles Seymour at Azusa Street. (See also Burger (1987) for an introduction to the spread of Pentecostalism in South Africa.) The South African context was ready for Pentecostalism in many ways: people had been exposed to revivals through the work of people like Andrew Murray in the 1860s, and missionaries of Alexander Dowie's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion City had reached South Africa in 1906, emphasising divine healing, holiness and dedication to God, thereby sensitising many to the message of Pentecost. South Africa was also struggling with the legacy of the Anglo-Boer War, and poverty among both

black and white made a large proportion of the population extremely receptive to a message of hope, unconditional salvation, baptism with the Spirit and a life of holiness. When Lake left South Africa in 1912, he left behind what would eventually become two of the most important Pentecostal groups in South Africa: The Apostolic Faith Mission and the Zion Apostolic Church. After opposition and even active disenfranchisement by the mainline churches in the course of the century, Pentecostalism today accounts for the vast majority of Christians in South Africa (see also Anderson 2000 & 2001).

Synan (2001a:149) says that for the first six decades

Pentecostalism was considered to be outside the pale of respectable Christianity ... The Pentecostals were noisy and to many people disorderly ... On top of this, most Pentecostals were poor, underprivileged, uneducated and out of touch with theological trends that preoccupied most of Protestantism ... Indeed, for the first half of the 20th century there was mutual rejection between the Pentecostals and mainline churches and society at large.

After World War II things slowly began to change. Pastors and ministers of mainline churches who spoke in tongues or propagated aspects of Pentecostalism were usually immediately expelled, but more tolerant approaches soon began to follow. When the so-called charismatic movement started in the 1960s, many mainline churches were also exposed to Pentecostal-charismatic trends and the movement also proved to be successful among the middle classes and the wealthy. This changed the negative perceptions about Pentecostals, and recently McClung (2006:30) could remark: "They now talk about us (and even to us!) on CNN and in the halls of Harvard!"

As we suggested above, what really changed the tide for Pentecostal acceptance was the charismatic renewal which hit mainline churches in the latter half of the 20th century. In 1960 an Episcopalian pastor, Dennis Bennett, spoke in tongues and the subsequent media frenzy around this controversial event brought the phenomenon to the attention of the world (see Synan 2001a:152-153). Bennett had to resign, but he was soon followed in exploring the gifts of the Spirit and speaking in tongues by a host of other ministers and pastors from all the mainline churches, including the Catholic Church, who had had similar spiritual experiences. They formed what was termed the neo-Pentecostal movement. The renewal movement spread, first in the US but soon its effects were felt around the globe. As the renewal spread among mainline churches, the term "charismatic" rather than "neo-Pentecostal" was used more and more. Synan (2001a:177-232) gives a good account of the spread of charismatic renewal among the major denominations. While "charismatic" and "Pentecostal" can in many instances be used interchangeably because they have so much in common, the distinguishing feature of Pentecostalism is the emphasis on speaking in tongues. Charismatics also celebrate the gifts of the Spirit, and speaking in tongues is just one of them, but for Pentecostals speaking in tongues is the proof of baptism with the Holy Spirit. John Dart (2006:25) says that

Believers eventually took the name “charismatics” (from the Greek word for “gift”), partly to distinguish this movement of better-educated, higher-income Christians from that of Pentecostals such as those belonging to the Assemblies of God, the Foursquare Gospel and the Church of God in Christ. Yet no less than the “classic” Pentecostals, the new charismatics saw themselves as reclaiming spiritual blessings of the type cited in the book of Acts ... and in 1 Corinthians 12, which refers to “gifts of the Holy Spirit” such as tongues, prophecy, interpretation and healing.

Today researchers distinguish three “waves” of renewal in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, each significantly greater than the one before (see Barrett, in an individual essay in Synan 2001a:381-383). The first is the early Pentecostal renewal starting in 1906, the second is the charismatic renewal starting in the 1960s and the third is the wave comprising the last few decades of the 20th century, known as the neo-charismatic renewal, where the precise phenomenology of Pentecostalism is present, but where the developments occur independently with no direct affiliation with Pentecostalism or the charismatic movement. They are also called Third Wavers, Independents, Postdenominationalists or neo-Apostolics. The second wave (charismatic renewal among mainline denominations) resulted in an accelerated growth of Pentecostal-minded churches, but it was the third wave, in the latter half of the 20th century, that resulted in spectacular growth worldwide. What is more, while the first wave came from and attracted mainly poor and marginalised people, later in the century adherents still came from those classes, but it also started to attract people of higher socio-economic standing, and Pentecostalism in its many forms became accepted both socially and ecclesiastically as a valid expression of the Christian faith. It also started playing a leading role in many contexts, such as the ecumenical movement, where a South African, David du Plessis, known as Mr Pentecost, played a major role (see Synan 2001a:362). Pentecostalism is today the fastest growing and most vibrant version of the Christian faith and has taken the world by storm in the hundred years since the Azusa Street revival under Charles Seymour.

For an overview of the extent to which Pentecostalism has penetrated various regions of the world, and the way in which the movement has taken root in specific geographical areas, the following are good resources:

On the global spread: see Cox (1995), Synan (1975, 1997, 2001a), Martin (2002), Lewis (2004), Anderson (2004), Macchia (2006); **Latin America:** Westmeier (1999), Corten & Marshall-Tratani (2001), Matviuk (2002); **Africa:** Burger (1987), Asamoah-Gyadu (2003), Anderson (2000 & 2001), Gifford (2004), Amanor (2004), Maxwell & Weiss (2005), Ageboyin (2006); **Brazil:** Martins & de Pádua (2002), Troch (2004); **Korea:** Hong (2006), Kim (2004), Park (2003); **Japan:** Shew (2002); **Surinam** Jap-A-Joe (2005); **Maynmar:** Khai (2002); **Philippines:** Harper (2002); **India:** Burgess (2001); **Vietnam:** Joshua (2001).

2.5 Changing the face of Christianity

The impact of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement on the Christian world has been enormous and it is still far from over. However, what the movement has done is to change the face of Christianity totally. Here we will briefly indicate a few ways in which Christianity has changed because of the Pentecostal influence over the last 100 years.

One of the effects of Pentecostalism was that it resulted in an explosion of new churches worldwide. Synan (2001b:7) estimates that in only one century, more than one million new local churches were founded across the globe. Pentecostals, with their missionary zeal, also changed the face of Christianity in the sense that 100 years ago the vast majority of Christians were white and lived in the northern hemisphere. Today the majority of Christians are people of colour and are located in the southern hemisphere and come from developing countries. Macchia (2006:158) remarks: "As is well known, there is globally a shift occurring toward a 'new Christendom' that has its greatest (though by no means exclusive) strength in the southern hemisphere and that tends to encourage charismatic, widely participatory, and missions minded congregations." Christianity used to be a Western-dominated religion, but not anymore. The weight has shifted significantly. Some of the largest Christian meetings ever held were held in the developing world. For example, Reinhard Bonnke preached to over 10 million people over a period of 6 nights in Lagos, Nigeria (Africa) in 2000, with 1,6 million people attending the last night (Synan 2001b:7). Traditional Christianity has had little impact in Asia. Not so with Pentecostalism: it has taken firm root in Asia in a big way (see Burgess 2001, Joshua 2001, Harper 2002, Shew 2002, Khai 2002, Park 2003, Kim 2004, Hong 2006), with the biggest church in the world, the Yoido Full Gospel Church, consisting of more than 700 000 members, located in South Korea. This is also a good example of another way in which the Pentecostal movement has changed Christianity - through the rise of the independent mega churches. Synan (2001a:374) lists the four biggest churches in the world, with a membership ranging from 145 000 to a staggering 730 000 members. All of them are located in either Asia or the developing world. The strong emphasis on world evangelisation in Pentecostalism also had the effect that the majority of missionaries (80%) now come from developing countries, and no longer from First-World countries (Synan 2001b:4). Pentecostals also revolutionised worship music and introduced music ministry teams, a variety of contemporary instruments and original created music in their worship gatherings. Wagner (1998:13-25) gives an interesting list of "new" features of Pentecostal ("New Apostolic") churches (see also Synan 2001a:377):

- They have a new name ("New Apostolic Reformation")
- They have new authority structures (leaders are called "apostles")
- New ways of leadership training (no seminaries, but volunteers, homegrown staff, local Bible colleges, etc.)
- New ministry focus ("vision driven" [toward the future] rather than "heritage driven" [toward the past])
- A new worship style (keyboards, music ministry teams, lifted hands, loud praise, overhead projectors, etc.)
- New forms of prayer (concert prayer, singing in the Spirit, etc.)

- New way of dealing with finances (“finances are abundant, giving is expected ... beneficial ... cheerful”)
- New ways of outreach (“church planting ... compassion for the poor”, etc.)
- New power orientation (openness to the Holy Spirit and gifts of the Spirit ... healing, demonic deliverance, prophecy, etc.)

All of this resulted in a renewed and reformed form of Christianity which is still growing and expanding rapidly with no signs of slowing down. In one short century the movement has certainly changed the face of Christianity fundamentally and irrevocably. In the next section we are going to briefly examine the reasons for the spectacular success of this new Reformation.

3 REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE NEW REFORMATION

Pentecostals always ascribe their massive success to the workings of the Holy Spirit. However, in this section we are going to examine a few historical and sociological factors which also contributed to the incredible spread of Pentecostalism in the previous century and which still continue to drive it.

3.1 No fixed dogma and theological flexibility

The fact that Pentecostalism has attracted adherents from every Christian denomination since its inception, together with the fact that new Pentecostal churches developed independently and not under the auspices of a specific denomination, allowed the movement, from the start, enormous theological flexibility. In addition, since many of the early Pentecostals were untrained laypeople, spreading the message because of a deep conviction that they were baptised with the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would endow them with the necessary gifts, there was no need for an orthodoxy to guide them and which could force them into a specific mould. It seems that, in general, the idea of baptism with the Holy Spirit, a life based on the gifts of the Spirit and an enormous missionary zeal were the common factors among Pentecostals and charismatics, but there was never any indication of a formal theological orthodoxy. This allowed for enormous theological freedom and adaptability, which enabled the movement to accommodate and address specific local issues, histories and belief systems in the churches that came into being. This is still the case today, and while some of the larger denominations among Pentecostal churches do indeed have some standardised teaching and doctrine, each and every context still seems to generate its own peculiar theological understanding, based on what they express as their experience with the Holy Spirit, and this is accepted among other Pentecostal groups as valid. This allowed Pentecostal churches to grow and flourish in almost any context: its theology was adaptable and could accommodate the local conditions and discourses, and right from the start of the movement until today, this allowed the churches to really become localised churches instead of transplanted churches. This is, of course, very attractive to local people.

3.2 Social location of Pentecostals

McClung (2006:33) observes that

Its adherents came not from the ranks of the privileged, but from the powerless. Most of its outstanding pastors, evangelists, and missionaries were laymen from the ranks of the working classes, with little or no education. They were often met with scorn and ridicule by both the press and professional clergy ... The release and participation of laity is thus one of the most oft-noted marks of Pentecostal/charismatic growth cited by researchers.

This was especially true of the first Pentecostals, and to a large extent Pentecostalism still continues to attract people from the poor and marginalised, especially in the developing world (see Cox 1999:136). The second wave, the charismatic renewal, also brought much more affluent and educated people into the fold of Pentecostalism because it attracted people from the more established and major denominations. However, even today it is still among the poor and the marginalised that the greatest growth is recorded. Martin (2002:1) concurs: "While Pentecostalism has spread primarily among the poor of the non-western world, the charismatic movement has had a more middle class provenance."

In an interesting study, Martin (2002:25-27) gives some reasons for the success of Pentecostals in the developing world especially, and he concludes that Pentecostalism is such an attractive option for many people in marginalised positions and among ethnic groups which are trying to differentiate themselves from the wider culture: "Perhaps suppressed for centuries, as in Latin America and the Philippines, and knowing their culture is dismissed in stereotypical terms as backward, they find in Pentecostalism a chance to leap over their immediate environment to a wider world" (Martin 2002:25-27). Thus Pentecostalism gives many in socially less prominent positions the chance for betterment and acceptance and to become part of larger "imagined communities". This is one of the reasons why so many in the Third World still flock to Pentecostal traditions. In addition, Sjørup (2002:16-25), in an examination of the dynamics among poor women in a suburb of Santiago, argues that Pentecostalism is exceedingly powerful in the sense that it has the ability to empower the powerless and make social ascent possible. Especially in South and Latin America, Pentecostalism displays remarkable growth among the poor. (See also Martins & de Pádua 2002; Westmeier 1999; Troch 2004; Corten & Marshall-Tratani 2001.)

3.3 Indigenisation and cultural adaptability

Closely related to the above is the fact that because Pentecostalism had no fixed central dogma and was theologically quite flexible, it had the ability to become indigenised quite quickly. There was no dogmatic need to retain a certain set of orthodox worship patterns, rituals and practices. Local churches were free to explore their own spirituality which was informed, not by theological dogma and orthodoxy, but by their own particular experiences which, in turn, were informed by the local culture and society. Little wonder wherever Pentecostal churches are founded in many developing contexts, they display a distinct local flavour. Martin (2002:119-131), in an examination

of the spread of Pentecostalism among indigenous people, says that the societal processes at play in the creation of new faith communities have a dual effect. On the one hand they give people a chance to migrate, sometimes physically but also just conceptually. Through adherence to a specific group

The old local solidarities are broken up and people are taken into a wider sphere of commerce and communication ... They are helped to survive and/or initiate change by new priorities and disciplines, by a sense of responsibility, by concern for cleanliness and health. They are also assisted by the restoration of peace in the home and the return of their males to their family responsibilities. They acquire networks of mutual support and these are especially advantageous when they move to the larger urban centers ... [where] they encounter an even wider network through large scale churches with international connections (Martin 2002:130).

Martin further argues that this implies connectedness to external missionary domination. But as people begin to embrace this new sense of identity, they “revive their own culture and assert their independence ... Part of this recovery of ethnic identity occurs through vigorous moral and linguistic conservation ... a bridge is created between tradition and modernity, though traffic across that bridge also involves a certain degree of secularisation in the second generation of converts. Such bridges involve some secularisation at the modern end and notable continuities at the traditional end ... All kinds of continuities are possible” (Martin 2002:130). If these bridges are negotiated successfully, they create churches which are extremely successful and attractive to local and indigenous communities, because they seem to have grown from the context. In remarking on this in an African context, Martin (2002:142) says that it is “this frank acceptance of the power of the old and the embrace of Christian prophylaxis which moved many to secede to the Pentecostals”. Satyavrata (2005:221) say that “Pentecostalism is not culturally autonomous, but dynamic, and can adapt to new circumstances ... It can function effectively in settings as diverse as a small village hamlet, upper-class neighborhood living room, a shack in an urban slum, five-star ballroom, or a traditional cathedral ... The autochthonous character of Pentecostalism thus enables it to take on the culture of a particular people or group.”

3.4 Leadership

The way in which leadership functioned and continues to function in Pentecostalism is very interesting and is also one of the reasons for its massive success. “Although Pentecost is ideally a ‘movement of the Spirit’ and a priesthood of all believers, within the movement there came recognition that certain individuals are endowed with qualities of ministry (charisms) that set them apart from the larger body of believers” (Clark & Lederle 1989:75). In the end, these leaders came to be called “pastors”, which is an indication of a full-time ministry. However, Pentecostalism has also held fast to the belief that what takes place in worship, and even governance, is highly participatory, where “Every Spirit-filled believer has a contribution to make” (Clark & Lederle 1989:76). It is this aspect of participation in worship and prophecy, even of women (who are usually not allowed into positions of pastors), that has also

contributed to the success of the movement. All believers, irrespective of their position in the hierarchy, have the right to contribute to the congregation, as long as it is under the guidance of the Spirit. Throughout the 20th century there have been several women who have had, and continue to have, significant ministries in the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition.

There is another factor in terms of leadership that has made Pentecostalism successful in local contexts. When missionaries initially brought the Pentecostal message to a specific context, the pattern mostly followed was that they made way for local leadership. While many of the leaders were untrained laypeople their zeal and enthusiasm for the church and the fact that they were fully conversant with the local context made them especially suitable to interact with local people. It was part of the indigenisation of the Pentecostal message. (A good example of this is the case of John G Lake who came to South Africa as a missionary and left after only 4 years, leaving the churches he planted in the hands of local leaders [see Burger 1987:190-259].) Especially in rural areas, the way in which the role of the pastor was defined by many Pentecostals helped the churches to find ready acceptance among the locals.

Some authors have pointed out that the patron role of the rural landlord corresponds with that of the influential Pentecostal pastor, thereby implying that this urban religion is successful because it consolidates a feudal framework that in itself is anything but modern; the “clients” have merely changed their patrons. Viewed from this standpoint, Pentecostalism creates no break between rural and urban contexts, but represents continuity instead (Droogers 2001:50).

Pentecostalism in its early days, perhaps because of its humble roots and virtually untrained leaders, relying mostly on only the Holy Spirit’s guidance, had an “anti-academic” or “anti-intellectual” culture where formal qualifications and university study were mistrusted. The reliance on the enthusing of the Holy Spirit was paramount. The attitudes were that the Holy Spirit would provide enough guidance (in the early days many believed that the Spirit would even provide missionaries instantly with the languages necessary to do missionary work abroad), so little formal training was necessary. At most, missionaries and leaders were expected to attend Bible schools and local training centres for a short period of time to prepare them for their roles. As the movement became more mainstream and more sophisticated in respect of the needs of the previous century, this attitude also started to change slowly. Academic learning and formal qualifications began to be considered more and more important. In fact, Regent University in the US even started a postgraduate programme in ministry at the turn of the century and Dr Pieter Gräbe from South Africa was appointed to run the programme. McGrath (2002:120-155) has an illuminating chapter entitled “The two nations: The disillusionment with academic theology”, in which he also touches on the Pentecostal distrust of worldly “knowledge” over and against “spirituality”, and argues that the solution lies in “organic theology” where academic knowledge and excellence co-exist with a spiritually integrated approach. He uses Fuller Theological Seminary as a prime example of an integrated theological

approach. Nanez (2005) pleads in a monograph for an end to the “fragmentation of the mind” in Pentecostalism and for the recognition that the human intellect is also a gift from God and should not be placed in opposition to experience, but that it is possible to integrate spirit and mind, faith and reason, and spirituality and rationality. Speaking about Pentecostalism he says

We have foolishly cast off the church fathers, sneered at the Scholastics, ripped up our Reformation roots, untied the tethers of the Great Awakening, and rerouted our ancient Puritan paths. The head has been separated from the heart, the intellectual has been isolated from the spiritual and we wander - we stagger - in the darkness (Nanez 2005:218).

His solution is not to adopt a view of either Spirit-filled life or knowledge-filled life, but for a reconciliation of the two, which he says is perfectly feasible in Pentecostalism.

3.5 Unrelenting missionary zeal

Since its inception, Pentecostals have had an enormous zeal to bring the Gospel to all nations. It started as a missionary movement and throughout the century it continued to display this as part of its identity. Since the Azusa Street revivals, Pentecostals who had experienced baptism with the Spirit were consumed with a fervour to preach the Gospel to an unsaved world. J Roswell Flower, editor of the newspaper *Pentecost*, writes in the editorial of the August 1908 edition:

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost does not consist in simply speaking in tongues ... It fills our soul with the love of God for lost humanity, and makes us much more willing to leave home, friends, and all to work in his vineyard, even if it be far away among the heathen ... When the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, the missionary spirit comes with it; they are inseparable.

This sentiment is still alive today among all Pentecostal churches and denominations. The church founded by Charles Seymour in Los Angeles in 1906 carried the name Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission Church and, interestingly, the only Pentecostal church on the globe which has retained this name in some way is the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, which was planted by John G Lake, an associate of Charles Seymour from Azusa Street days. The fact that all Pentecostals to this day have this huge sense of mission is one of the factors that has led to its spectacular success worldwide: they never stopped taking their message to the world (see also Westmeier 1999; Asamoah-Gyadu 2002; Kärkkäinen 2005; Lord 2005).

3.6 New forms of church structure

One of the key elements in the success of the Pentecostal movement was its enormous flexibility - not only in its theology, but also in its church structures. Whenever new churches were planted, the specific skills and background of

the missionaries and the needs, expectations, traditions and context of the new congregation dictated which form of church structure would develop. Because there was no central model or central control system, local churches were free to adopt forms which suited them best. "Over the years some Pentecostal churches adopted loose congregational forms of government while others developed highly structured centralised Episcopal forms. Others followed the Presbyterian pattern" (Synan 2001b:6). The main thing was that the format was adapted to suit the local church and was not forced upon them. This immediately made the structures more relevant, more suitable and more acceptable and ultimately more attractive for locals. One innovation in terms of church structure which has had a massive influence on church organisation globally from within the Pentecostal movement is the use of cell groups to supplement the normal worship services. McGrath (2002:64-65) says that cell groups are an important factor in church growth because

They allowed the development of fellowship and sharing of concerns which were not possible within the larger congregation. Many churches found that these small groups became the basis for numerical growth. To put the situation in a nutshell, the groups grew because they attracted additional members; once they reached a certain critical size, the group was no longer "small" and - like an amoeba - it split into two. Many mainline churches reported that small groups seem to be the engines for church growth.

3.7 Innovative use of media

Key to the sustained success of the movement has been its understanding that the use of media in propagating the Pentecostal message is absolutely crucial. It even goes back to the days of Charles Seymour and the Azusa Street revivals. He published a magazine called *Apostolic Faith* which was sent out free of charge to at least 50 000 people all over the US. At the time it was unheard of for a church to do this. Other Pentecostal periodicals and magazines like *Pentecost* also helped to spread Pentecostalism throughout the world. When radio was invented in the first part of the 20th century, it was immediately put to use by Pentecostals in particular, who used it to gather together large congregations by preaching on the local radio stations. One of the first people to do this was Aimee Semple McPherson in 1924 (see Synan 2001b:6). When television was introduced, the same thing happened and Pentecostals and charismatic groups were immensely successful in building huge networks and televangelism reached millions. Oral Roberts, for example, started with radio and in 1953 he pioneered television broadcasts, spreading the message of Pentecostalism. Today there are many major televangelists and broadcasters like CBN and TBN reaching millions across the globe. The same phenomenon has also taken root in other countries where there are many local Pentecostal and charismatic broadcasters and televangelists. (For a discussion of media and imagined communities, see Martin 2002:144-145. For the way in which media is used in Ghana, for example, see Meyer (2006:313-316)). In recent years, other forms of the electronic media have been successful in propagating the message of Pentecostalism: video, CD and DVDs are all powerful media which are used widely and which generate billions of dollars annually (see Percy 2005:303). Today the Internet is also

being used more and more by Pentecostal groups and can reach millions across the globe instantly.

3.8 Innovation and renewal in music and worship

From the start, the roots of Pentecostalism, the merger of a number of holiness church traditions and a variety of black Southern church traditions predicted that unique worship forms would develop. This was indeed the case, and a variety of new more expressive worship formats were introduced into church services, like the raising of hands, loud praise, dancing, singing in the Spirit, and so on. In addition, Pentecostalism has also led to a major renewal in music used in worship. New instruments were introduced and contemporary forms of music were adapted to bring a spiritual message. This resonated especially with the young people, of whom many were attracted to the Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Again, because there is no central control dictating what should be done and sung, the expressions of worship and use of music were not something foreign but something that grew out of the local faith community and which were acceptable and meaningful to them. This means they have a deep connection with music and because it is in tune with the local context, it continues to attract people. Ward (2005:4-5), in examining how evangelical Christianity came to embrace popular music, argues that it was the need to reach young people that ultimately served as an impetus for the appropriation of modern popular music styles for worship in Pentecostal churches:

The pop-culture of the 1960s was taken up for evangelistic ends by groups such as MGO and Youth for Christ ... As the 1960s gave way to the 1970s, a new impetus was given to these groups by the introduction of the style and music of the Jesus Movement ... This cocktail of evangelical Christianity and a new youth style was mixed with the spreading charismatic movement. As these streams flowed together, contemporary worship was born.

3.9 Healing

The practice of healing so prevalent in all Pentecostal groups over the years is another factor that has enhanced the success of the movement in almost all contexts: from rural Third-World contexts to sophisticated wealthy urban mega churches. In almost every context there is need for healing and dealing with illness, and if this is not contrary to medical interventions, it is sure to be very attractive for people from all social strata and cultures. Healing has always been an integral part of the holiness churches in the 19th century, especially in those which came into being because of the rejection of the holiness movement by mainline denominations. Early Pentecostals followed suit and “the message they adopted was thus one of radical faith in God to heal their diseases” (Goff 1990:67). This has continued up to this day.

Pentecostalism tends not to contrast medical healing and divine healing, and the former is not viewed suspiciously or negatively ... [there is] the recognition that although divine healing and medical therapy should not be confused, the latter is a gift of God to

humanity and therefore appropriate for believers to access (Warrington 2005:236).

Throughout its existence, the ministry of healing in Pentecostalism has been and still is an important drawcard to attract new adherents and, as such, it is an important factor in the worldwide appeal of Pentecostals across cultural boundaries (see also Baer 2001).

4 CONCLUSION

The fact that the advent of Pentecostalism a hundred years ago has had a profound effect on Christianity cannot be disputed. We have seen how the movement grew from very humble and lowly beginnings to a massive movement that has swept the globe. We have also asked questions regarding the “why?” and “how?” of the movement. Why was the movement so spectacularly successful and why is it still growing rapidly? We have surmised a number of reasons based on the literature and the nature of the movement. Certainly more reasons and factors can be identified, such as the role of globalisation and the incredible diversity that is possible and present in the movement, but the nine social and historical reasons we have discussed in the above section probably account for much of its global success. However, Pentecostalism is not only an abstract movement, it has also affected the lives of hundreds of millions of people on a very personal level. Perhaps Cox (1997:154) is right when he concludes

I believe Pentecostalism is growing so rapidly because it speaks to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony to the core of human religiousness, into what might be called “primal spirituality”, that largely unprocessed nucleus of the human psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of meaning and feeling of belonging goes on.

By addressing this need, Pentecostalism has unleashed the flood of a new Reformation which, one hundred years after its inception, shows no signs of abating.

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