

Towards a postcolonial Pentecostal historiography: ramblings from the south

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Abstract

This article focuses on contestations around the birth of Pentecostalism. Azusa Street Pentecostalism is very well documented therefore the bias was tilted in its favour. While this expression of Pentecostalism opened up new frontiers it also displayed some regrettable retreats around the issue of race relations. In stark contrast, both in South Africa and in Brazil, *inter alia*, societal concerns, inclusive of racial issues have been taken up by a new breed of Pentecostals. The current state of Pentecostalism reveals that the majority of Pentecostals live outside of the USA and Canada and that the rapidly emerging churches in the southern world are Pentecostal and indigenous, and function autonomously from Western Pentecostalism. Starting from the eighties, large independent Pentecostal churches have emerged in Africa. African Pentecostalism in South Africa is a relevant, flexible and rapidly increasing Christian formation. Unlike the dualistic tendencies of Western Christian approaches, the African Pentecostal worldview does not separate the physical from the spiritual or the individual from the social. Los Angeles cannot be viewed as the “Jerusalem” from which the “full gospel” imperialistically emanated centrifugally to the world. Other equally significant and simultaneous Pentecostal outpourings have been overlooked. Pentecostalism historiography may have to engage in perhaps one of the most important postcolonial ecclesiastical reconstructions yet.

Introduction

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The Azusa Street Revivals are often regarded as the sole marker of the birth of the Pentecostal movement, but this view has been challenged (Pomerville 1985:48-49; Sepulveda 1992:86-87; Peterson 1996:3). This erroneous perception had been largely created because of its most publicised revival resulting from the writings of Bartleman, the journalist, in particular. Despite this contestation most scholars concede that, since the beginning of the last century, Azusa Street Pentecostalism in the USA has been documented most extensively.

Three prominent figures emerge in the Azusa Street Revivals, namely, Bartleman, Parham and Seymour. Bartleman's hunger for a deeper spiritual experience despite his many hardships and humiliations clearly pervade all the records. The notion of Parham, as the "theological father of this movement", is intriguing. If anything, Parham's penchant for the "practical part of training" should challenge theological training institutions to develop a greater focus on experiential learning or work-based learning. His later links with the notorious Ku Klux Klan pose enigmatic and insurmountable challenges to any researcher of Pentecostalism. Frank Chikane (2006) states this challenge eloquently: "Can a person be a Christian, be baptised in the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues and practise racism?" In Parham's case can one kill in the name of "white supremacy"?

In South Africa, sound exegesis was similarly usurped by the ideological "eisegesis" of politically motivated clergy and, according to Loubser (1991: 321-337), an "Apartheid Bible" emerged. Fortunately, Christianity regained some modicum of respectability when apartheid was declared a heresy. The critical role of religious leaders, with their "vested political interests", has complicated the role of religion in South Africa. When DRC domineers, who spend six years, on average, studying theology, preached that apartheid had a biblical basis, the general membership would be invariably influenced to accept such a viewpoint as being biblically sound. In the USA, and also in South Africa, Biblical sanction was erroneously adduced for the "suspected but baseless perception of the inferiority of other races".

Seymour is generally viewed as the founder of the Azusa Street Revival. Against the backdrop of American racism, Seymour boldly asserted that "Jesus Christ was the only true liberator [of all people]" (Pomerville 1985:49).

How Seymour coped with the discrimination at Houston Bible School is indeed what perhaps made Seymour intriguing. The outsider's view of Azusa Street is interesting with its "weird babble, a new sect of fanatics, wild scenes, gurgle of wordless talk, disgraceful intermingling of races" (Pomerville 1985:50). This "disgraceful intermingling of races" lasted but for a brief period! Segregationists came to Azusa Street and took "their blessings" to their "whites only" church. Most observers of these revivals noted that crying, howling noises, running, jumping, shaking all over, spinning, falling

and kicking were common occurrences. The practice of church services with no fixed time of closure is also interesting. These participants viewed themselves as “hungry after God” and therefore the duration of these meetings was deemed inconsequential.

Regrettable retreats and blazing new frontiers

Any student of early American Pentecostalism will have no difficulty in uncovering instances where Pentecostals failed, and ethical convictions, which were once strongly held and spontaneously practised, gradually fade into an abyss. Some scholars contend that the initial “intermingling of races” did not even last for more than a short while. When the whites returned to their congregations with the “blessing from Azusa Street” they reverted to their former practices of “whites only”. Parham, the “theological father” of Azusa Street, eventually ended up with the Ku Klux Klan, an extreme right wing “whites only” sectarian movement notorious for lynching “negroes” and “negroe-lovers”. So, by 1920, the interracial fellowship in Los Angeles totally gave way to the former separate, predominantly black or white Pentecostal congregations (Land 1993:20). The “honeymoon” period of non-racialism did not therefore even last for 14 years. Sadly, a very short-lived period indeed! In South Africa early spontaneous Pentecostal interracial fellowship also gave way to an explicit acceptance of apartheid (see Chetty & de Kock 1996:68-87).

In stark contrast, a new breed of Pentecostals, albeit small but steadily growing in strength, has surfaced in South Africa. The emergence of the Relevant Pentecostal Witness (RPW) gave expression to this movement. In South Africa the ecumenical churches responded to the apartheid government with the Kairos document, the Evangelicals with the Evangelical Witness in South Africa (EWISA), and the Pentecostals with the RPW (see Chetty & de Kock 1996:68-87).

In Brazil, Pentecostal churches have also been confronting poverty. According to Cecilia Loreto-Mariz (1994:129-146), Pentecostal churches facilitate a new identity and self-esteem for the poor who face poverty, marginalisation and insecurity. They initiate networks for the family, and assist in drug, alcoholism and prostitution rehabilitation. Similarly, a new breed of Pentecostal ministers in South Africa is also becoming more active in these ethical areas of social concern. So, unlike Pentecostals in the northern world, their siblings in the southern world have been readily drawn into the sociopolitical sphere to respond to societal concerns as an authentic form of Christian witness.

Pentecostalism as a renewal movement?

Pentecostalism as a renewalist religious movement focused on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The term “Pentecostal” is derived from a Greek term denoting the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians this festival focuses on the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second chapter of the book of Acts. Pentecostals view their movement as experiencing a similar kind of spiritual power. They also seek to replicate the worship styles, general practices and ethos that prevailed in the early church. Some Pentecostals, who use the terms “Apostolic” or “Full Gospel Church” to describe their denomination, reflect an ardent desire to recapture this early church tradition.

Pentecostalism is an overarching generic term that embraces a plethora of doctrinal and organisational positions. The Pentecostal movement is not led by any centralised structure, as most Pentecostals view themselves as part of larger Christian formations. A significant constituency deem themselves to be Protestants and others also embrace the tag, Evangelical. Yet others prefer the rubric Restorationist. Pentecostalism is doctrinally very close to the Charismatic Movement. From a historical perspective Pentecostalism has influenced the birth of the Charismatic Movement; some Pentecostals even use the two terms (Pentecostals and Charismatics) interchangeably. Pentecostals also display doctrinal variations with some formations revealing Trinitarian and others non-Trinitarian persuasions. Yet it would be safe to deem, at least doctrinally, that most Pentecostal formations identify with Evangelicalism. Furthermore, they focus on the reliability of the Bible and the need for change in an individual's life through faith in Jesus.

One of the cardinal classical Pentecostal doctrines is that of speaking in tongues as “evidence” of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, in Classical Pentecostalism there is a pervasive emphasis on personal holiness, the place of works in the life of the believer, a “cooperating” with the Holy Spirit to “work out your salvation”.

This theme of decolonising the historiography of Pentecostalism would be best advanced with a sketch of the current state of Pentecostalism.

The current state of Pentecostalism

David Barrett and Todd Johnson (1998:26) estimate that, in 1970, there were 74 million “Pentecostals/Charismatics” – 6% of the global Christian population. Almost 20 years later, in 1998, this figure had grown to 461 million or 25% of world Christianity. This figure accounted for more than the global numbers of “Protestants” and “Anglicans” together. Barrett and Johnson estimate that, based on current growth figures, the projections would place the numbers to 740 million or 28% of the world Christianity by 2025 (Barrett & Johnson 1998:26). This places the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement as

undoubtedly the fastest-growing Christian sector. Tinyeko Maluleke (2009) calls this unprecedented religious phenomenon “the Pentecostalisation of Christianity”.

As early as 1988, David Barrett (1988:810-830), apart from identifying 11 000 Pentecostal denominations, 3 000 independent Charismatics, and 800 Pentecostal denominations exclusive to the Third World, startled many outsiders of Pentecostalism by his earlier mentioned predictions. On a worldwide scale, only 29% are white and 71% are not white, and they are more urban than rural, more female than male, more children (under 18 years) than adults, more Third World (66%) than Western world (32%), more living in poverty (87%) than affluence (13%), more family-related than individualist.

Grant McClung (2000: 257-264) says that the “vitality of Christianity has moved from the east to the north, then to the west and now to the southern hemisphere”. The term “southern world”, mooted by McClung is preferred to “Third World”. The newest rubric for an area wider than the “southern world” is “majority world”. This includes Latin America, Africa and Asia (including Oceania) and is home to 75% of the Pentecostal/Charismatic family. Seventy-five percent of the Church of God and 88% of the Assemblies of God global membership live outside the United States of America and Canada. Furthermore, the profile of the southernisation of Pentecostalism matches that of early American Pentecostalism. Robert Mapes Anderson’s (1969:98-113) research on early Pentecostals identifies them as “generally, young, rural, impoverished, and poorly educated”. McClung comments that North American Pentecostalism is “neither really at home with our past nor our future [but] in a chronological parenthesis”, and calls for interdependence, grafting of resources, sharing of richness and contends that northern Pentecostals have something to learn from theology and ministry in daily life from the southern world.

Pentecostalism is currently predominantly a “so-called Third World” occurrence. While it has done reasonably well in North America, nonetheless fewer than 25% of its global membership is “white”. This sector is also on the decline (Land 1993:21). Walter Hollenweger (1986:5-6) contends that the phenomenal increase of Pentecostalism in the southern world is not due to its doctrine, but to its roots in the spirituality of nineteenth century African-American slave religion. The dominant aspects of this spirituality are an oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witnessing, total involvement of the entire community in worship and service, visions and dreams in public worship, and a unique perception of the mind-body relationship revealed by healing through prayer.

Anderson (2000:25) states that the “thousands of AICs in South Africa and throughout the continent are ‘pentecostal’ movements in this sense, where the features outlined by Hollenweger have persisted, although their

form of Christianity is often quite different from Western forms of Pentecostalism”.

Extravagant, architecturally designed churches, some holding in excess of ten thousand worshippers indicate the emerging Pentecostal middle class in sections of the southern world. In contrast to these megachurches, Pentecostals in the southern world are largely grassroots phenomena which are attractive to the disadvantaged and underprivileged in particular. The majority of the rapidly emerging churches in the southern world are Pentecostal and indigenous, and function autonomously from Western Pentecostalism.

While there is ongoing dispute in certain Christian quarters about the theological location of the thousands of African Initiated Churches (AICs), Anderson contends that from a phenomenological perspective the AICs can be classified as a “pentecostal” movement (Anderson 2000:24). He sees the AICs as having given birth to an expression of Christianity markedly disparate from Western Pentecostalism. He further avers that the essence of Pentecostalism has to do with its dynamism and flexibility to adapt and accommodate itself culturally within its varied context because of “freedom in the Spirit”.

African Pentecostals

Starting from the eighties, large independent Pentecostal churches emerged in Africa. Some of these churches established loose networks or associations. Within the African continent they remain the most vociferous growing Christian formations, seeming to attract the younger, better-educated urban population. Unfortunately some of these churches have been under the spotlight for marketing a “prosperity gospel”. This emanated from the shores of North America and peddles North American capitalism with a Christian veneer. However, we should refrain from falling into the trap of generalisations; while some churches may be guilty of such “malpractice” others have been busy with “reconstruction and innovations ... in adapting to a radically different context” (Gifford 1992:8).

Without doubt, African Pentecostalism reflects the fastest growth point of religious formations in South Africa and also within the continent of Africa. Anderson (2000:26) contends that “Pentecostalism has been successfully incarnated into a uniquely African expression of Christianity because of its emphasis on spiritual experience and its remarkable ability to adapt to any cultural background in the world”. The phenomenon of African Pentecostalism in South Africa is a relevant, flexible and rapidly increasing Christian formation.

Definition of the term “African Pentecostals”

Anderson (2000:27) uses the term “African Pentecostal” as an umbrella term for three types of churches [Italics mine]:

... first, it included those churches originating in Western pentecostal mission initiatives [*such as AFM, Full Gospel Church of God (FGC)*].¹ Second, “new pentecostal churches” were not very different from Western pentecostal churches [*examples are Grace Bible Church and Praise Tabernacle Church*], but were initiated and governed by Africans. Third, the type which still forms the great majority of African pentecostal churches was the ‘prophet-healing’ churches ... In this book they are usually referred to as Zionist and Apostolic churches ...

Anderson however continues to add, “My premise continues to be that the vast majority of AICs are ‘pentecostal’ movements, even though they should not be regarded as ‘Pentecostal’ in the Western sense of the word without further qualification”.

In this article the term “African Pentecostals” will embrace the second category, that is, *new churches not very different from Western Pentecostal churches but initiated and governed by Africans*.

The womb of global Pentecostalism was in the African slave religion of the United States and its birth lay in the black-led Azusa Street Revival in a Los Angeles slum. These humble beginnings, coupled with Pentecostalism’s penchant for “freedom in the Spirit”, make it essentially adaptable to various cultural and social situations. These factors also rendered the accommodation of its main beliefs in Africa easier. Harvey Cox (1996:259) succinctly notes that “the great strength of the pentecostal impulse” lies in “its power to combine, its aptitude for the language, the music, the cultural artifacts, the religious tropes ... of the setting in which it lives ...”. The early manifestations of Pentecostalism derive from the religious matrix of the slaves in North America, who preserved their African religious cultural roots. Iain MacRobert (1988:9) contends that black Pentecostalism “cannot be fully understood without some consideration of their African origins and the conditions of slavery under which a black understanding of Christianity was formed”. Therefore we can conclude that in black Pentecostalism we have a

¹ The doctrine that speaking in tongues as the “initial evidence” of spirit baptism is one of the cardinal doctrines of both the Assemblies of God and the Full Gospel Church as classical Pentecostal denominations.

flexible reworking of African religious practices in a distinctly *Christian* context.

In the early history of American Pentecostalism, black spirituality also encouraged maximum participation through a community of interpretation, which included male and female participation. The dynamic milieu in which the early Pentecostals were nurtured was one where the newly sanctified life meant much more than abiding to a set of do's and don'ts (see Hollenweger 1972:399-412). A holistic view of body and mind is reflected by prayer for healing with the laying on of hands, and the role of worship through music and dance. In other words, the black roots of Pentecostalism emphasised the relational (orthopraxis) and expressive (orthopathy) aspects of faith. Land's (1993:15) orthopathy includes contemplation, adoration, praise and thanksgiving. Pentecostalism would do well to relish this spontaneous expression of affections as an indispensable core to Pentecostal spirituality.

Orthopraxis and orthopathy are two aspects of Land's integrated tripartite Pentecostal spirituality of orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxis. Steven J Land (1993:15), in his *Pentecostal spirituality, a passion for the kingdom*, has provided an excellent integrated model for holistic Pentecostal spirituality. Orthodoxy relates to the right praise-confession, orthopathy includes right affections (inclusive of worship) and orthopraxis embraces right praxis. Holistic spirituality has to embrace cognition, affection (worship) and the behaviour which engenders a unified epistemology, metaphysics and ethics. Beliefs, affections (worship) and practice have to be integrated holistically.

A discussion of the concept of praxis might prove to be helpful here. Cheryl Bridges Johns (1993:20) views praxis as action and reflection viewed dialectically. In the late eighties, during the harshest years of apartheid, Chetty (1988:254-315) wrote extensively on the concept of praxis in his attempt to develop a contextual approach for theology and ministry in South Africa. Johns rightly contends that praxis is an insufficient means of knowing God and achieving human transformation. She therefore insightfully integrates praxis with *Yada* to overcome its inherent limitations (Johns 1993:38-41). *Yada* stresses the interrelationship between the knower and the known.

This keyword, praxis, is also vital to Land's trilogy. If proper integration is not achieved in one's spirituality then a false dichotomy arises. This is best illustrated by a theology student of the Dutch Reformed Church asking a visiting professor of theology which would be more easily excusable: to have a correct understanding of doctrine or to be poor in ethical relations with other race groups? This question was broached during the dark days of apartheid, a system that was largely buttressed by the Dutch Reformed Church. This student did not grasp the essence of our faith in loving God *and* one's

neighbour as oneself. The second part of this commandment of our Lord is not negotiable. They both go together and are interrelated. Sound theology, a praxis orientation and a holistic spirituality are the three pillars of an integrated Pentecostal spirituality. The third pillar of orthopraxis should not be neglected in our pursuit of a praxis orientation. This could use a great variety of psychomotor celebration in our affections (worship), that is, our contemplation, adoration, praise and thanksgiving. If Pentecostals were to apply Land's finely balanced framework for authentic spirituality, in his trilogy of orthodoxy, orthopraxis (worship) and orthopraxis, they would undoubtedly have an even greater impact on society. Furthermore, such a holistic and integrated approach has carved an unprecedented respectability for Pentecostal scholarship.

MacRobert (1988:31) also observes that "the influence of African religious ecstaticism and spirit possession is evident not only among black Pentecostals but also in an attenuated form among the white Pentecostals ... Elsewhere I have noted that aspects of ecstaticism and spirit possession have occurred in different permutations among 'Indian' Pentecostals in South Africa" (see Chetty 1995). These manifestations of Pentecostalism did not always meet with the approval of Western missionaries who favoured a more cerebral and less emotive expression of Pentecostal spirituality.

African Pentecostal spirituality is basically supra-rational. Unlike the dualistic tendencies of Western approaches, the African worldview does not separate the physical from the spiritual or the individual from the social. For African Pentecostal Christians the Spirit pervades all of life. The new African Pentecostals, with their nondualistic and holistic people's theology have met the real needs of people where the rubber meets the road. But who are these new African Pentecostals?

The New African Pentecostal Churches

According to Anderson (2000:43) these are the rapidly emerging Pentecostal or Charismatic churches with exclusively African leadership. Very significantly these churches are free of white control. Furthermore, this occurrence is a relatively recent happening and has only surfaced since the eighties. These churches have chosen a loose network arrangement and are in "fellowship" with, *inter alia*, the International Fellowship of Christian Churches (IFCC), formed in 1985, and the Christian Ministries Network (CMN), which began in 1990. It should be noted that the leadership of both the IFCC and CMN was largely white and was initially treated with a degree of misgiving by these new African Pentecostals. Few of these new churches founded their own African umbrella bodies, such as the Evangelical Minister's Association of South Africa (EMASA), located chiefly in the northern provinces, and the Light From Africa organisation (Lifa), focusing on the southern provinces.

This may well have started a trend that others may follow in establishing such cooperative networks to avoid formally fraternising with (or even being dominated by) a rather conservative white formation of Pentecostals or Charismatics.

Like many Pentecostal constituencies these churches focus on the power and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. While many are small independent churches, some are experiencing phenomenal growth. In South Africa in particular this is steadily becoming a national trend. There are a number of these African Pentecostal churches in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal (such as Oasis Christian Fellowship in Mlazi)² and the Eastern Cape (such as Bisho Community Churches, which is led by a University of Fort Hare theology graduate, Smangaliso Matshobane) with a significantly large membership. The Grace Bible Church in Soweto under Mosa Sono had in excess of five thousand members in 1997. This church has branches in Ga-Rankuwa and Mmabatho, which function autonomously of the Soweto church. The Victory Fellowship group of churches was formed in the seventies; it was pioneered by Mandla Mapalala in Kwa-Thema and is devoid of a central structure. In 1992, in Soshanguve, this church experienced a split. According to Anderson (2000:43) as a result of perceived irregularities in the leadership structures the Soshanguve church seceded from Mapalala and assumed the name "Praise Tabernacle Church". The Lifa churches in the Transkei are lead by David Mniki and Joseph Kgobo and have an association with large "so-called" coloured churches from the Western Cape and Bloemfontein. The African Gospel Church is difficult to locate, but it appears to be like the Pentecostal mission churches. IN 1947, this church was led by Job Chiliza followed by his son William. This church was a split from the FGC and the Pentecostal Holiness Churches, and must be one of the oldest churches of its type.

This category of new African Pentecostals, while it is a fast-increasing one, reflects a powerful Western influence in its liturgy and leadership patterns. Popular North American evangelists and "prosperity preachers", for example Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn, are recommended through the marketing of their books, and audio and video cassettes (Anderson 1987:72-83). These churches have a similar ethos as far as their teaching and practices are concerned as the Pentecostal mission churches.

The church government of these African Pentecostal churches differs, however, by being completely African black and reflects considerable local

² These insights of the Oasis Christian Fellowship in Mlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, Bisho Community Church in the Eastern Cape and the Bethesda group of churches are the results of observations and unstructured or interviews with the respective leadership.

independence unlike the Pentecostal mission churches. Is this an alternative to the “evils” of “denominationalism” and the legalism of the older Pentecostal churches? The congregations are led by charismatic, younger, educated men (not necessarily in theology) with exceptional preaching and leadership qualities. This cadre of leadership seems to attract a membership of younger, prosperous and educated families unlike those in the Pentecostal mission churches. These congregations also have a sizeable number of professionals. In common with their Pentecostal mission church counterparts, these members speak of “salvation”, are baptised (usually by single immersion), “speak in tongues” and pray regularly for healing (Anderson 2000:44).

It should be noted that these African Pentecostal churches are also averse to traditional African religious practices, alcohol and tobacco, the use of symbolic objects in healing and the wearing of uniforms. Initially these new Pentecostal churches gathered in school classrooms, halls, cinemas and tents. These churches subsequently obtained sites and established proper buildings for their ministries. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Oasis Christian Fellowship has a huge church building in a strategic position in Mlazi. Bisho Community Church, although it has independent “branches” throughout the country, currently occupies a rented venue. It is, however, in the process of making a bid for the “disused” Amatole Casino Complex. Steadily, an increasing number of these new African Pentecostal churches are erecting larger functional buildings throughout our country.

This article has focused on the new African Pentecostals in a rather sketchy manner. More detailed research is warranted that should also embrace Pentecostals among the other communities and the racially integrated urban expressions of Pentecostalism which are rapidly dotting our cities and towns in South Africa. Let us return to the contestations around the beginnings of Pentecostalism.

Contested origins

Pomerville (1985:48-49), Peterson (1996:3) and Sepulveda (1992:86-87) regard as erroneous the idea that all Pentecostal movements can trace their lineage to Seymour’s Azusa Street mission or to Parham’s initiative. Asamoah-Gyadu (2002:1, 4-33) identifies with this view in asserting that the unique origins of other equally significant and simultaneous Pentecostal outpourings have been overlooked. Furthermore, Anderson, Hollenweger and others remind us of the oral African-American origins of the Azusa Street Pentecostalism (Anderson 1999:105). McClung contends that when Los Angeles is assumed to be the “Jerusalem” from which the new retrieved “full gospel” emanates centrifugally to all the ends of the earth, then the truth is manipulated and smacks of imperialism (McClung 1999:11, 49). Anderson says that there were many “Jerusalems”: Pyongyang (Korea), Beijing

(China), Poona (India), Wakkerstroom (South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria), Valparaiso (Chile), Belem (Brazil), Oslo (Norway) and Sunderland (England), among other centres (1999:120). Everett Wilson has correctly highlighted the fact that Pentecostalism has had many beginnings and there are many “Pentecostals” (1999:107). The significance of Azusa Street was in reminding North American Pentecostals of their nonracial and ecumenical beginnings. Numerous black South African Pentecostals were influenced and Azusa Street missionaries also founded some Pentecostal churches. Tom Hezmalhalch and John G Lake were sent from Azusa Street and Zion City and kept Seymour informed. In 1908 they founded the first Pentecostal church in South Africa, the Apostolic Faith Mission (see Anderson 1999:105).

Towards a postcolonial historiography of Pentecostalism

Postcolonial studies embrace a variety of hermeneutical approaches typified by their political and ideological agendas. This textual politics includes both a hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of retrieval. According to Punt (2004:139) “[p]ostcolonial studies interact with colonial history and its aftermath(s), where a history of repression and repudiation is foregrounded but, since they also deal with ‘expose’, restoration and transformation are part of the repertoire of a postcolonial overture. Postcolonial studies are ... a particular strategy of reading, an attempt to point out what was missing in previous analyses, to rewrite and correct”.

Pentecostalism historiography may have to engage in perhaps one of the most important postcolonial ecclesiastical reconstructions yet. Wilson’s (1999:103-104, 106, 109) paper on Pentecostal historiography cautions against the futility of expecting “to find a homogeneous Pentecostal type at the beginning” or “to assume that the experience of the first set of Pentecostals provide 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 further points out that the future of Pentecostalism lies not with the North Americans but with the autonomous churches in Africa (African Initiated Churches – AICs), Asia and Latin America, whose origins often predate those of the “classical Pentecostals” in the West. Most of Pentecostalism’s amazing expansion in the twentieth century was not primarily by missionaries from North America and Western Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was rather the result of the spontaneous spread of the Pentecostal message by thousands of preachers and “lay-persons” who spanned the continents with a burning new message of the power of the Spirit, healing the sick, and casting out demons. The success of the Bethesda revivals in South Africa was in JF Rowlands

mobilising them as a “lay-led” movement (see Chetty 1995:153; Pillay 1994).

An inclusive postcolonial composite of Pentecostalism remains to be adequately sketched. The work of David B Barrett, Stanley M Burgess and Gary B McGee should be extended, if not juxtaposed, with scholars from the majority world. Perhaps Pentecostals *of the South* should begin to write our history, even if it takes the form of *ramblings from the south*.

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