

“TRUTH ON FIRE”:¹
PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION
AND THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW MILLENNIUM

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

1. Introduction: Pentecostals and the Challenge of
“Transforming Mission”

Pentecostal mission has been successful, extremely successful when we look at the numbers. Whatever reservations one might have with regard to the calculations of D. Barrett² and of others,³ there is no denying the fact that the advance of Pentecostal/Charismatic mission work has been astonishing. “A growth of from zero to 400 mission in ninety years is unprecedented in the whole of church history.”⁴

¹ The first part of the title is taken from L. Grant McClung, “Truth on Fire Pentecostals and the Urgent Missiology,” in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, ed. L. Grant McClung (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1985), pp. 47-55. For ecumenical perspectives on Pentecostal missiology, see my “Pentecostal Missiology in Ecumenical Context,” *International Review of Mission* (July 1999, forthcoming).

² See, David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1999,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23:1 (1999), pp. 24-25.

³ See, e.g., C. Peter Wagner, “Church Growth,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. S. M. Burgess and G. B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 180-95. (This dictionary will be indicated henceforth as *DPCM*.)

⁴ Walter J. Hollenweger, “From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon,” *Concilium* 3, eds. Jürgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (1996), pp. 3-14 (3).

Pentecostals, however, would do well if they, instead of continuing to glory in church growth numbers,⁵ would have another look at the impending challenges as we are crossing into the third millennium. Even during the short history of the movement, the world has changed dramatically, not to speak of mission scenes. The contexts where Pentecostal mission work started in the first decades of this century have been - and are being - replaced by new complex circumstances.

Leading missiologists of our day speak about Christian mission taking place between “danger and opportunity,”⁶ some would even say, under crisis.⁷ The crisis they are referring to is, naturally, not only a crisis in regard to mission. It affects the entire church, indeed the entire world. The developments which affect church and mission as we prepare to cross into the third millennium are obvious: the advance of science and technology; the worldwide process of secularization; the slowly but steadily dechristianization of the West; the effects of history of subjugation and exploitation of peoples of color by the people of “Christian” West; the ever growing gap between rich and poor; the growing refusal of “mission fields” to continue adapting into the cultures

⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 183 urges Pentecostals to stop proclaiming all over how great the growth of the Spirit-movement has been and, instead, start working with some impending challenges facing Pentecostals and others. See also a healthy, self-critical look at Pentecostal missiology by one of the most noted writers in the field, Gary B. McGee, “Pentecostal Missiology: Moving Beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues,” *Pneuma* 16:2 (1994), pp. 275-81.

⁶ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), p. 1.

⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 1 titles his introductory section as “Mission: The Contemporary Crisis.” See also James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization I: Basic Statements 1974-1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), p. xi. James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), p. 21, “The Christian missionary movement today is in a state of *crisis* because the larger community of which it is part is also in a prolonged state of crisis. Gone for the most part are the simple faith, confidence, and activism of the student volunteers, and the conviction inspired by Mott in the Edinburgh 1910 delegates that they could literally accomplish the task of evangelizing the entire world within the generation of those then living.”

of their parent-churches with their yearning for freedom and distinctive identity.⁸

The late South-African missiologist David Bosch, in his seminal work *Transforming Mission* (1991), surveyed mission "paradigms" throughout the history of Christian church starting from the times of the NT, and concluded the tour by a call for a "postmodern,⁹ ecumenical paradigm."¹⁰ The search for a new paradigm is determined by several other developments, besides the examples listed above: (1) we now live in a pluricentric, rather than western-dominated world; (2) structures of oppression and exploitation are today being challenged as before; (3) a profound feeling of ambiguity exists about the value of western technology and development; (4) we inhabit a shrinking global village with finite resources, and this calls for growing mutual interdependence; (5) humans are for the first time aware of their capacity to destroy the earth given to them for inhabitation and cultivation; (6) societies everywhere now seek their own local cultural identities; (7) freedom of religion and greater awareness of other faiths force Christians to re-evaluate their own earlier attitudes toward other faiths.¹¹ Many other

⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 3-4; Josef Glazik, *Mission - der stets grössere Auftrag*. Gesammelte Vorträge und Aufsätze (Aachen: Mission Aktuell Verlag, 1979), p. 152.

⁹ One might be easily fooled to think that the influence of "postmodernism" - whatever this widely used term might mean - is limited to the West. Obviously this is not the case since we live in a global village even with regard to dissemination of ideas. For influences of postmodernism in Asian contexts, see the article of a theologian teaching in Korea, Daniel J. Adam, "Toward a Theological Understanding of Postmodernism," *Cross Currents* 47:4 (1997/98), pp. 518-30.

¹⁰ Part 3 of Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 349-520 outlines the major characteristic of this new emerging paradigm. See also Jan A. B. Jongeneel and Jan M. van Engelen, "Contemporary Currents in Missiology," in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction, Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity*, eds. F. J. Verstraelen and others (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 438-56, for contemporary currents in missiology, and F. J. Verstraelen, et al., "The Ecumenical Development of Missiology: Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity in the Twenty-First Century," in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, pp. 467-72, for a recent appraisal of the most important ecumenical developments in missions.

¹¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 188-89; James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, "Introduction," in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), pp. xi-xiv (xi).

complicating factors could be added to this list, some of them arising from inside the churches, like the role of women in the Church and in the society, the rapidly growing missionary force of the Two-thirds World countries, the call for inculturation and contextualization of the gospel etc.

Christian mission in Asia and Pacific has specific challenges. In the nations that border the vast Pacific Ocean, remarkable developments are going on in politics, culture, economy, social life, and in international influences from and to this area. In some parts of the area, Christian churches in general and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in particular are growing in an amazing way while in most Asian/Pacific countries traditional religions are still in control.¹²

In other words, as we are moving “from an old to a new missionary era,”¹³ to a “new birth” of missions,¹⁴ a host of impending questions await our responses. In this essay, my focus will be on the theological ramifications of mission. My focus is three-fold: First, what is the theological basis of Pentecostal mission? In other words, what, if any, is the distinctive Pentecostal contribution to the theological understanding of mission. What is the role of the Holy Spirit? Second, how should we conceive the relationship between proclamation and social service? What is the theological legitimacy, if any, of social concern? What role does the Spirit play there? And third, the question of religion: how should Pentecostals address the followers of other religions and what are they to think of Buddhism, Hinduism and a host of other living faiths? Other important questions certainly could be added. This article attempts to take look at these three, in that order with a view to construe a viable Pentecostal theology of mission, a “pneumatological missiology.”

¹² See, e.g., William W. Menzies, “Reflections of a Pentecostal at the End of the Millennium,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1:1 (1998), pp. 3-14 (3-4), the editorial of the first issue of the journal.

¹³ Scherer, *Gospel*, pp. 9-50.

¹⁴ Schreiter, “Changes in Roman Catholic Attitudes toward Proselytism and Mission,” in *New Directions*, II, pp. 113-125 (122-24). Cf. the title of the article by Gittins, “Missionary Myth Making,” in *New Direction*, II, pp. 143-47.

2. Holy Spirit and Mission in Eschatological Perspective¹⁵

Two themes have been present in the Pentecostal mission work since the first days: an intensive eschatological¹⁶ expectation and reliance upon the Holy Spirit's power. In the first years of the movement there was even an unwarranted optimism that speaking in tongues (*xenolalia*), a form of glossolalia¹⁷ in which human languages previously unknown to the speaker could be spoken, would be given by the Holy Spirit to help finish the evangelization of the world before the imminent return of Christ.¹⁸ "So intensely did they expect the Second Coming of Christ that envisioning an additional decade - or even another century - for evangelization would have been inconceivable."¹⁹

Pentecostals were generally so busy doing their practical mission and evangelism that they did not bother themselves writing missiological treatises, certainly not academic theological studies. They have been more "doers" than "thinkers." Instead of theological treatises, they have produced tracts.²⁰ Rather than reflecting on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, they have relied on the supernatural dynamics of the Spirit.²¹ What

¹⁵ The latter part of the subtitle is taken from the title for the third session of the first round of the International Dialogue between World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Pentecostal Churches. The first five-year round focuses on mission and related topics.

¹⁶ For formative influences of eschatology to emerging Pentecostal spirituality, theology, and mission, see D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

¹⁷ For an informative, balanced theological, psychological, and cultural assessment of the glossolalia phenomenon, see Russell J. Spittler, "Glossolalia," *DPCM*, pp. 335-41.

¹⁸ Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might, Nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), pp. 9-12 (with quotations from original sources); Gary B. McGee, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions," in *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission: Essays in Honor of Gerald H. Anderson*, eds. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 41-56.

¹⁹ McGee, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Missions," p. 42.

²⁰ Russell J. Spittler, "Suggested Areas for Further Research in Pentecostal Studies," *Pneuma* 5:2 (1983), pp. 39-56.

²¹ For the role of supernatural power in the Pentecostal and pre-Pentecostal mission, see Gary B. McGee, "The Radical Strategy in Modern Missions: The

else could have been expected from a grass-roots revival movement with an eye towards winning the lost before the Second Coming?

Holy Spirit and eschatology are themes that seem to be the most impending for any kind of a distinctive Pentecostal theology of mission.²²

2.1 Toward a Pneumatological Missiology

Given the renaissance of pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in every theological corner of the ecumenical spectrum nowadays,²³ one is struck by the omission of a distinctive pneumatological outlook in modern missiology. Take any standard theology of mission, and you are quite sure not to find much about the role of the Spirit. Sadly, this applies to the magisterial work *Transforming the Mission* of the late South African missiologist David Bosch as well as, e.g., to the recent *Dictionary of Mission*, by Catholic and other writers.²⁴

Linkage of Paranormal Phenomena with Evangelism,” in *The Holy Spirit and Mission Dynamics*, ed. C. D. McDonnell (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), pp. 69-95.

²² I do not lump together theologically “Pentecostals” and “Charismatics” as is often done although they, of course, share many common factors. The reason is that the Charismatic Movements, most of them as part of historic churches, represent such a variety of theologies (e.g., soteriology, ecclesiology) that it does not do justice to either movement to neglect these theological differences. However, I interact with Charismatics and utilize their insights into mission. Whenever this is done, the reader is informed. An interesting effort to construct a Charismatic theology of mission is done by Howard Foltz, “Moving Toward a Charismatic Theology of Missions,” in *Probing Pentecostalism*. Society for Pentecostal Studies 17th Annual Meeting, November 12-14, 1987, CBN University, pp. 73-110. He poses five leading themes for a distinctively Charismatic orientation to mission: 1) Unity of Churches (since the Charismatic movements are represented among various churches); 2) Spiritual Gifts and Ministries; 3) Kingdom and Dominion Theology; 4) Signs, Wonders and Miracles; 5) Faith Teaching. One notes that the themes Foltz proposes are all related to proclamation, none of them specifically relates to social concern neither to relation to other religions. In that sense, the scheme is very typical of earlier Pentecostal and Charismatic orientations in mission.

²³ For a survey, see my “Ecumenical Potential of Pneumatology,” *Gregorianum* 80:1 (1999), pp. 121-45.

²⁴ With the subtitle, *Theology, History, Perspectives*, eds. Karl Müller and others (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996). Jan A. B. Jongeneel, “Ecumenical, Evangelical

One could have expected a distinctive missiology from Pentecostals who otherwise are known for emphasis on the Spirit. Obviously, this has not been the case.²⁵ One reason is obvious: the first missiological writings followed the paths explored by evangelicals.²⁶ It was not until 1991 when the major compendium of Pentecostal missiology titled, *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*,²⁷ came out that some theologically serious perspectives were offered by a younger generation of Pentecostal academics. It has to be admitted, though, that even that monograph does not yet contain much specifically on the Holy Spirit.²⁸

and Pentecostal/Charismatic Views on Mission as a Movement of the Holy Spirit," in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology*, eds. J. A. B. Jongeneel and others (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 231-246 (233) uses a striking term "a-missionary pneumatologies" when speaking about some earlier works on the missiology without a proper perspective on mission. In this subsection I am indebted to Jongeneel's article.

²⁵ The same applies to other areas, like interpretation of Scripture and the doctrine of the church. Curiously enough, Pentecostals have offered little or nothing specifically Pentecostal pneumatology in these crucial areas. See further my "Reading in the Spirit in Which It Was Written: Catholic Interpretation in Dialogue with Pentecostal Bible Reading," *One in Christ* 4 (1998), pp. 337-59; "An Advent of the Spirit: Orientations in Pneumatology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14 (April 1999), pp. 65-80.

²⁶ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, orig. 1953); *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977).

²⁷ Eds. M. W. Dempster, B. D. Klaus and D. Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991). This was preceded by Paul P. A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions: A Pentecostal Contribution to Contemporary Mission Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985) which is geared more towards the role of the Holy Spirit although the distinctive *theological* contribution is still rather meager. See also a recent contribution to Pentecostal theology of mission: Byron D. Klaus, "The Mission of the Church," in *Systematic Theology*, ed. Stanley Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion, 1995), pp. 567-96.

²⁸ Korean missionary and theologian Wonsuk Ma, teaching in the Philippines, recently tried his hand on developing a specifically Asian Pentecostal theology. He interacts mostly with a model which seeks to find balance between divine revelation and human factors. The article is a valuable starting point for further work in the area. The article, however, is flawed to some extent by rather scanty space devoted to pneumatological issues. W. Ma, "Toward an Asian Pentecostal Theology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1:1 (1998), pp. 15-41.

Although Pentecostals have thus far not focused on pneumatological implications of missiology, some Pentecostal exegetes have done serious work in the area of New Testament pneumatology, especially in Luke-Acts, which has a lot of missiological potential. One of the leading ideas of R. Stronstad's *A Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*²⁹ is the transfer of the charismatic Spirit from Jesus to the disciples. The transference of the Spirit at Pentecost means transference of Jesus' own mission to the church.

Pacific Rim missionary Robert Menzies has written on distinctives of Lukan pneumatology with a view to mission. In his *Empowered for Witness*³⁰ he argues that the church, by virtue of its reception of the Pentecostal gift, is a prophetic community of empowerment for missionary service. His line of thought is developed and specifically focused on mission by Australian J. M. Penney in his recent *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*.³¹ Penney contends that the reason why Luke-Acts has been so dear to the Pentecostal is that Pentecostalism - from inception a missionary movement - saw in the Spirit-baptism of Acts 2, a normative paradigm for the empowerment of every Christian to preach the gospel. "Acts is more than history for the Pentecostal: it is a missionary manual, an open-ended account of the missionary work of the Holy Spirit in the church, concluding, not with chapter 28, but with the ongoing Spirit-empowered and Spirit-directed gospel preaching of today."³²

Whatever will be the *Gestalt* of Pentecostal theology of mission, it needs to do justice to the way Pentecostals construct their reality. C. Harvey Cox has offered one way to conceptualize a distinctive Pentecostal construction of reality. He posits that at the heart of the Pentecostal movement is restoration of what might be termed "primal

²⁹ (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984).

³⁰ See also his earlier work, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology with Special Reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

³¹ (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). Although Max Turner, *Power From on High: The Spirit of Prophecy in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), among others, has criticized both Penney and Menzies for a too limited view of the role of the Spirit in Acts - namely, excluding soteriological dimension in favor of empowerment aspect - the basic argument of Penney and Menzies still is valid: Luke-Acts points to the role of the Spirit in empowering the church and believers into mission.

³² Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis*, p. 12.

spirituality.” By it Cox means that largely unprocessed central fabric of humanity where an unending struggle for a sense of destiny and significance rages. For Cox, Pentecostalism represents a spiritual restoration of significance and purpose to lift the people from despair and hopelessness.³³

These New Testament perspectives by Pentecostal New Testament exegetes offer raw material for a systematic theological work in mission. One needs to turn to other directions in order to find some precedents for a pneumatological missiology.

2.2 The Church as the Movement Sent by the Spirit into the World

It is interesting that Pentecostals have made use of the first work, *Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours?* (originally in 1912) of Roland Allen, the Anglican missionary, but have ignored his subsequent works on the relationship between the Spirit and mission. In fact, it was the purpose of Allen to work out a “missionary pneumatology.”³⁴ In his *Pentecost and the World* (1917)³⁵ he argues that there is a dynamic

³³ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1995), pp. 81-83. Cox also speaks about “primal piety” (pp. 99-110) and “primal hope” (pp. 111-22) in relation to distinctive Pentecostal spirituality. My focus on the Pentecostal construction of reality was sharpened by Byron D. Klaus’s paper, “The Holy Spirit and mission in Eschatological Perspective: A Pentecostal Viewpoint” (unpublished, 52 pp.), at Kappel-am-Albis, Switzerland, May 14, 1998, as part of the International Dialogue between World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Pentecostal Churches.

³⁴ Paraphrased by Jongeneel, “Views on Mission,” p. 231. For other works which concentrate on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission, see, e.g., Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961); Alan R. Tippett, “The Holy Spirit and Responsive Populations,” a chapter in his *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), pp. 46-61; James I. Packer, “The Power and Work of the Holy Spirit I: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Conviction and Conversion,” in *Proclaim Christ until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publication, 1991), pp. 100-104; John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1973).

³⁵ Originally Roland Allen, *The Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles*, later appeared in “The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Ministry of the*

relation between the Holy Spirit and Christian mission. He calls the Holy Spirit “dictator and inspirer of missionary work.”³⁶ In his *Mission Activities Considered in Relation to the Manifestation of the Spirit* (1930) Allen sharpens his understanding of “a personal, active, Spirit who works not only in us, as missionaries, but upon all with whom we deal and in all who will receive Him.”³⁷

Dutch missiologist J. A. B. Jongeneel, who has worked in Indonesia, takes lead from Allen and others and makes a substantial contribution to a pneumatological missiology. His contribution can be summarized in these basic theses. First, the origins of mission³⁸ is in the Holy Spirit being sent by the Father:

The most important truth which can and must be attributed to the Spirit is precisely his being sent by the Father and the Son, by which he received the power at Pentecost to send out - in the name of the Father and the Son - both congregations and their members. Therefore, he has both a divine and a messianic mission, which becomes manifest in the dynamic mission of the congregations and their members. In other words: only in a dynamic and personalistic way can people speak adequately about the Holy Spirit as the one who both is sent - by the Father and the Son - and is sending - the congregations and their members.³⁹

Spirit: Selected Writings of Rolan Allen, ed. David M. Paton (London: World Dominion, 1965), pp. 1-61.

³⁶ Quoted in *The Ministry of the Spirit*, p. 20. See Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” p. 233, for discussion on the ambiguity of Allen’s view of the Holy Spirit as “person.”

³⁷ Allen, “Mission Activities Considered in Relation to Manifestation of the Spirit,” in *The Ministry of the Spirit*, pp. 87-113 (110-11); Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” p. 233.

³⁸ The very term “mission” originates from Latin *missere* (“to send”) used in classical trinitarian language.

³⁹ Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” p. 233. The only major reservation that one might want to take with regard to Jongeneel’s presentation is his unapologetic emphasis on *filioque* (i.e., the old dispute of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father [Eastern theology] or also from the Son [in Latin: *et filioque*]). I do not see it necessary for Pentecostals to emphasize the *filioque* since ecumenically it is harmful (and I am surprised that Jongeneel, in an article which explicitly purports to offer ecumenical perspectives on the subject, has this orientation) and is not necessarily part of Pentecostal theology although some early doctrinal formulations (such as Assemblies of God, USA) mention it. See further my

Second, consequently the church needs to be seen as the movement sent by the Spirit into the world. Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit lives and works in the congregations and their members personally and inspires them dynamically.⁴⁰ Jongeneel underlines the meaning of 'person' here and makes a helpful correction to earlier approaches, including that of Allen's: since the church is a missionary movement inspired by the Holy Spirit it "sends out people who *have become persons* in the Christian sense of the word, to approach other people with the message that they also *can become persons* in the Christian sense of the word, by faith in Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit."⁴¹

When the church is understood as a movement in the Spirit sent to the world, mission is not anymore *a task* of the church but, rather, the church is *missionary* in its essence.⁴²

Third, there is equipment for mission as movement of the Holy Spirit: fruit and charismata of the missionary Spirit. Jongeneel is quite right that Pentecostals and Charismatics have laid proper stress on charismata, including more peculiar gifts, signs and wonders,⁴³ but there has been almost a total lack of concentration on the *fruit of the Spirit* in mission.⁴⁴ There needs to be a balance between the "mighty works" of the missionary Spirit, under which Jongeneel also includes God's mighty works in creation,⁴⁵ and a less spectacular, growth oriented fruit of the Spirit. Pentecostal and Charismatic ministry offers too many sorrowful

Spiritus ubi vult spirat: Pneumatology in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue 1972-1989, Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 42 (Saarijärvi: Gummerrus, 1998), ch. 5.

⁴⁰ Jongeneel, "Ecumenical," pp. 234-35.

⁴¹ Jongeneel, "Ecumenical," p. 235. Of course, the term "person" in theology is difficult and ambiguous. In the confines of this article it is neither possible nor necessary to go into details.

⁴² Interestingly enough, this is also the reformulation of Roman Catholic missiology of the Vatican II with its accent on the "missionary nature of the church." See *Ad Gentes* [The Vatican II document on mission], # 2 especially.

⁴³ For a balanced treatment of this issue from a Catholic Charismatic viewpoint, see Norbert Baumert, "Evangelism and Charismatic Signs," in *All Together in One Place*, eds. Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 219-26.

⁴⁴ Jongeneel, "Ecumenical," pp. 236-37.

⁴⁵ Jongeneel, "Ecumenical," pp. 239-40.

examples of the lack of the fruit of the Spirit. Charisma obviously can not replace character.⁴⁶

Furthermore, there is in Jongeneel a helpful highlighting of the importance of *experience* of the fruit and the charismata of the Spirit.⁴⁷ Most mainline missiologies do not speak about experience even with regard to the Spirit. Pentecostals, on the contrary, are known for stressing experience too much. There has to be balance: “A missionary pneumatology must steer clear of the Scylla of a purely objective equipment of the missionary church which entirely lacks experience, and the Charibdis of a purely subjective equipment, which only rests on the charismatic experience of the Spirit.”⁴⁸ A healthy balance here also gives room sufficiently for missionary prayer, Jongeneel contends.⁴⁹

2.3 A Mission Eschatology⁵⁰

As was made clear above, Pentecostal missiology has been pervaded by an intensified eschatological fervor from the outset. Are there any theological/biblical parameters to help us think through the role of eschatology in mission? Pentecostals have traditionally concentrated on end-times calculations rather than on the *meaning* of eschatology. In order to help Pentecostals start thinking theologically about the relation of mission and eschatology, I will discuss a recent contribution by a Charismatic Anglican Andrew M. Lord. The title of his essay is revealing: “Mission Eschatology: A Framework for Mission in the Spirit.”⁵¹ Perhaps Pentecostals can not identify with everything he says, coming from a different theological-ecclesiological tradition as he is, but some helpful orientations certainly can be gained.

Lord argues that for a healthy theology of mission, there is a need to ensure that our eschatology is always missionary in its orientation so that

⁴⁶ Cf. Paul W. Lewis, “A Pneumatological Approach to Virtue Ethics,” *AJPS* 1:1 (1998), pp. 42-61 which highlights the role of the Spirit with regard to ethical concerns. I recommend that Pentecostals would show more interest in this area in the future.

⁴⁷ Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” pp. 237-39.

⁴⁸ Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” p. 238.

⁴⁹ Jongeneel, “Ecumenical,” p. 243.

⁵⁰ For helpful perspectives on mission and eschatology, see P. Bechdolf, “Evangelism and Eschatology,” in *All Together in One Place*, pp. 242-55.

⁵¹ *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (1997), pp. 111-24.

we do not become static or too settled. It is also important for mission to be understood from an eschatological perspective, "enabling us to have a holistic, hope-filled approach to mission."⁵² He quotes with approval Oscar Cullman who stated that the "missionary work of the Church is the eschatological foretaste of the kingdom."⁵³

Out of this framework, Lord attempts to develop a holistic mission paradigm which is comprised of seven leading characteristics related to the coming of the kingdom: 1) people acknowledging Jesus as Lord; 2) healing; 3) justice; 4) unity in diversity; 5) creation set free; 6) praise and worship; 7) love and fellowship.⁵⁴ There are several features here which could inform future Pentecostal developments. First, this model attempts to view mission holistically: mission obviously encompasses activities from proclamation to fellowship to healing to social justice. Nothing else is enough for a pneumatology which seeks to be "realistic."⁵⁵ Second, the time of eschatological expectation is to be active. Rather than calculating on dates when the end comes and the kingdom is ushered in, there should be a comprehensive ministry. Third, praise and worship is included in the program. Most Pentecostals do not, of course, see much linkage between mission and worship. It seems, though, that for New Testament writers, especially to the author of the Revelation, there was an integral relation of mission, worship of the Lamb and the coming of the kingdom. Fourth, both "divine" (healing) and "human" (service) are included into a holistic agenda.

This holistic approach corresponds to what Lord calls two kinds of working of the Spirit in mission: "growing" (of the good things that are already happening in this world) and "inbreaking" (to challenge the way

⁵² Lord, "Mission Eschatology," p. 111.

⁵³ O. Cullmann, "Mission in God's Eschatology," in *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Norman E. Thomas (New York: Orbis, 1995), pp. 307-309 (307) quoted in Lord, "Mission Eschatology," p. 112. I will discuss the kingdom of God aspect with regard to Pentecostal missiology in the next main section.

⁵⁴ Lord, "Mission Eschatology," p. 114, see also pp. 116-17.

⁵⁵ This term is coined by Michael Welker, in his widely acclaimed major contribution to ecumenical pneumatology, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1994) especially. The program of Moltmann's *Spirit of Life* is, of course, to the same direction although the terminology differs a bit. Even if Pentecostal theologians find in both of these works approaches and insights which merit argument, both works are helpful reminders for Pentecostals of the need to enlarge their rather narrow approach to the role of the Spirit.

things are and to usher in the new).⁵⁶ Pentecostals, of course, have opted the latter orientation with their emphasis on supernatural, and rightly so. The only concern is to have a proper balance.⁵⁷

3. Kingdom, Spirit, and Social Concern

One of the most common criticisms against Pentecostal missions is its alleged lack of social concern. Latin American,⁵⁸ African,⁵⁹ and Asian observers,⁶⁰ among others, have often spoken to this effect. Both Marxist and Catholic writers have often attributed the growth of the movement to foreign resources and leadership, and further assumed that Pentecostals are indifferent to and even obstructionist in their attitudes towards the fundamental issues of social injustice, repression, discrimination, corruption, and poverty. One of the reasons for this distrust is the perception that charismatic Christianity represents a completely “other-world” religion - a religion obsessed by its future destination only. Many take it for granted that N. Gerrard’s description of Pentecostal Holiness Churches in the USA apply to charismatic across the board: “...despite

⁵⁶ Lord, “Mission Eschatology,” pp. 114-15.

⁵⁷ Catholic missiology and theology have emphasized the growth aspect with the inherited Thomastic idea of grace fulfilling what is lacking in nature. Pentecostals have approached the nature-grace question from the viewpoint of Reformation theology which sees sharp contradistinction between them. See further my “An Advent of the Spirit: Orientations in Pneumatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* (forthcoming). See further my “Toward a Theology and Ecclesiology of the Spirit,” pp. 65-80.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Judith Chambliss Hoffnagel, “Pentecostalism: A Revolutionary of Conservative Movement,” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism: Case Studies from the Caribbeans and Latin America*, ed. Stephen D. Glazier (Lanham, MD: University Press of American, 1980), pp. 111-21; cf. Luise Margolies, “The Paradoxical Growth of Pentecostalism,” in *Perspectives on Pentecostalism*, pp. 1-5.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Francois G. Wessels, “Charismatic Christian Congregations and Social Justice - A South African Perspective,” *Missionalia* 25:3 (1997), pp. 360-74.

⁶⁰ See discussion in a paper by a leading Asian Pentecostal theologian Simon Chan, “Asian Pentecostalism, Social Concern and the Ethics of Conformism,” *Transformation* 11:1 (1994), pp. 29-32.

their strong feelings about the evils of the world, they are completely indifferent to the social gospel and take no interest in politics."⁶¹

Jürgen Moltmann asks where are the "charismata of the 'charismatics' in the everyday world, in the peace movement, in the movements of liberation, in the ecology movement." He continues, "If charismata are not given to us so that we can flee from this world into a world of religious dreams, but if they are intended to witness to the liberating lordship of Christ in this world's conflicts, then the charismatic movement must not become a non-political religion, let alone a de-politicized one."⁶²

In recent years, the charge that Pentecostals are indifferent to social concern has come under attack by the growing Pentecostal literature on social ethics, social justice, and theology of social concern.⁶³ Pentecostal professor of social ethics Douglas Peters, referring distinctively to the Latin American context, notes that Pentecostalism, rather than being just a movement "for the people," is actually "a social program" in itself.⁶⁴ Pentecostals do not generally have written statements as to the "preferential option for the poor," since most Pentecostal churches are "churches of the poor."

Although Pentecostal mission is focused on evangelization, it is not to the exclusion of social concern, and never has been so... the "broader mission" (holistic) has been part and parcel of the Pentecostal branch

⁶¹ N. L. Gerrard, "The Holiness Movement in Southern Appalachia," in *Speaking in Tongues: A Guide to Research on Glossolalia*, ed. W. E. Mills (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 213-35 (213) quoted in Wessels, "Charismatic Christian Congregations," p. 361.

⁶² Moltmann, *Spirit of Life*, p. 186.

⁶³ For recent major monographs (articles will be referred to in the course of the discussion) to an emerging Pentecostal theology of social concern and social ethics in relation to mission and evangelization, see: Petersen, *Not by Might*; Eldin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992); Frank Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation: The Message of the Blumhardts in the Light of Wuerttemberg Pietism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1993); see also a special theme issue of *Transformation* 11 (January/March, 1994) under the guest editorship of Murray W. Dempster, particularly pp. 1-33.

⁶⁴ Petersen, *Not by Might*, p. 9.

of the family “as an automatic outgrowth of its prioritization” of the Great Commission.⁶⁵

In fact, Pentecostals have worked with the poor for social renewal in unobtrusive ways and have initiated major social reform programs and institutions.⁶⁶

Now, there is no denying the fact that in the formative years of the movement many Pentecostals’ eschatological fervor blurred the meaning of social improvement. Why invest in a world that was believed will fade away? Contrary to what many outsiders have imagined, the recent Pentecostal theology of social concern argues that the eschatological undergirding does not necessarily lead to such a pessimistic attitude toward social ethics. Although tension between those with a view which emphasizes the “other-worldliness” of the hope and those with a view towards improvement of the present still continues among Pentecostals, for most Pentecostals eschatological hope has brought with it optimism about the work they are doing:

...Pentecostals are exceptionally optimistic about both their present and future existence. Their theological conviction that the God who performed mighty works in the New Testament continues to act in miraculous ways through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit provides the great majority of Pentecostal believers with a sense of hope for the present... it is quite clear that the eschatological certainty of eternal life gives freedom to risk one’s present life. The Pentecostals’ personal relationship with a caring and compassionate God encourages them also to celebrate their experience of transformation in the present within a community of mutual love and respect.⁶⁷

This view of the continuing presence of God’s power, naturally, sets Pentecostalism in conflict with the heritage of dispensationalism that holds that miracles and wonders ceased with the ‘dispensation’ of the

⁶⁵ Gary L. McClung, “Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspectives on a Missiology for the Twenty-First Century,” *Pneuma* 16:1 (1994), pp. 11-21 (14).

⁶⁶ William W. Menzies, “Current Pentecostal Theology of the End Times,” *The Pentecostal Minister* 8 (Fall 1988), pp. 9-12 (9).

⁶⁷ Petersen, *Not by Might*, pp. 107-108.

apostles. The marriage between Pentecostals and dispensational theology has been odd indeed, and certainly not without tensions.⁶⁸

3.1 Kingdom Works Remain

Pentecostal theologian Peter Kuzmic of the former Yugoslavia argues that to interpret the impending premillennial return of Christ as a doctrine that paralyzes efforts for social improvement is more a western cultural-theological creation based upon conservative (American) political positions rather than on a clear reading of Scripture.⁶⁹ His colleague, Miroslav Volf, has argued that when Christians create history that is compatible with the kingdom of God, such projects have eschatological significance: what is valid will remain. Volf contends that eschatological continuity between God's present reign and the reign to come "guarantees that noble human efforts will not be wasted."⁷⁰

It is precisely this view of the kingdom of God which has informed Pentecostal social thinking during the last decade. Pentecostal exegete Gordon Fee has been at the vanguard of introducing Pentecostals to the concept of the kingdom of God.⁷¹ God brings his future reign to the

⁶⁸ Gerald Sheppard, "Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship," *Pneuma* 6:2 (1984), pp. 5-33 has shown the incompatibility of Pentecostal theology with dispensationalism, although dispensationalism still plays a significant role in eschatology books of Pentecostals! See also Petersen, *Not by Might*, p. 229.

⁶⁹ Peter Kuzmic, "History and Eschatology: Evangelical Views," in *Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Bruce Nicholls (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 135-64 (146).

⁷⁰ Miroslav Volf, "On Loving With Hope: Eschatology and Social Responsibility," *Transformation* 7 (July/September 1990), pp. 28-31 (29). See also another noted Pentecostal social ethicist, Murray Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice," *Pneuma* 9:2 (1987), pp. 129-53; "Evangelism, Social Concerns, and the Kingdom of God," in *Called and Empowered*, pp. 22-43; "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 51-64.

⁷¹ Gordon Fee, "The Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission," in *Called and Empowered*, pp. 7-21; see also Peter Kuzmic, "Kingdom of God," *DPCM*, pp. 521-26. For the significance of the OT concept of the kingdom of God for Pentecostal theology, see Petersen, *Not by Might*, 209-216. Pentecostal theologians have taken their lead from the writings of the late Prof. George Eldon Ladd of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA. See G. E. Ladd,

present with the proclamation of “Good News to the poor” everywhere.⁷² According to Fee, the “final consummation, our glorious future, has been guaranteed ... by the resurrection of our Lord. But meanwhile, until that future has come in its fullness, we are to be the people of the future in the present age, who continue the proclamation of the kingdom as good news to the poor.”⁷³ The eschatological kingdom has a normative moral structure reflective of God’s own ethical character.⁷⁴ Pentecostals believe that when Christians are empowered with the Spirit of God they are equipped to do “kingdom works” in the midst of human suffering and plight.⁷⁵

Asian and other Pentecostals would be helped by the emerging theological work done by Latin American Pentecostals, especially with regard to social concern. Dario Lopez of Peru, working in the slums of Lima, argues that there are two central theological themes in Luke’s perspective on church’s responsibility towards the world: first, God’s love as a permanent missionary paradigm, and second, the poor and outcasts as subjects and agents of God’s mission.⁷⁶

Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974); *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974).

⁷² Fee, “The Kingdom of God,” p. 16.

⁷³ Fee, “The Kingdom of God,” p. 17. See also Tormod Engelsen, “This-Worldly Realities and Progress in the Light of the Eschatological Kingdom,” in *All Together in One Place*, pp. 192-98.

⁷⁴ Dempster, “Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God,” p. 24; see also Petersen, *Not by Might*, pp. 216-25.

⁷⁵ For an important motif of Pentecostal theology, “the transfer of the Spirit” (from Jesus to apostles to the church), see Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984); Petersen, *Not by Might*, pp. 204-209. For an interesting correlation between the speaking in tongues as a form of empowerment through the Spirit and Pentecostal social action, see M. Dempster, “The Church’s Moral Witness: A Study on Glossolalia in Luke’s Theology of Acts,” *Paraclete* 23 (Winter, 1989), pp. 1-7.

⁷⁶ Dario Lopez Rodriguez, “The Liberating Mission of Jesus: A Reading of the Gospel of Luke in a Missiological Key,” *Transformation* 14:3 (1997), pp. 23-30. See also Villafane, *Liberation*.

3.2 "Divine Embrace": Another Look at Racism and War

One of the key issues of social justice in the modern world, the racial question, has definite roots in the birth of the Pentecostal movement.⁷⁷ In the formative years of the movement the Azusa Street mission was essentially a black church, despite the number of whites initially in attendance, and thus attained a more universal character than was typical of other churches of that time.⁷⁸ The short history of Pentecostalism, however, reflects the similar kind of prejudices, racial segregation, and negative attitudes which have existed in the rest of the churches. Very soon white Pentecostals separated themselves from the Black and colored, and separate constituencies were formed.

Recently, several Pentecostals in the USA⁷⁹ and in South Africa⁸⁰ especially, have expressed their concerns over this racial division as working against the paradigm of Pentecost where people of various nationalities were united.

Miroslav Volf has addressed racial and ethnic issues from a distinctive theological perspective, and suggests the approach of a "theology of embrace" instead of an attitude of exclusion.⁸¹ The

⁷⁷ For a historical perspective on racial unity and division among Pentecostals, see Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "Historical Roots of Racial Unity and Division in American Pentecostalism," at *Pentecostal Partners: A Reconciliation Strategy for 21st Century Ministry*, Memphis, Tenn., October 18, 1994 (typescript, 53 pp.); see also "The Social Concern of Early American Pentecostalism," in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism*, pp. 97-106; "Taking Stock of Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 15:1 (1993), pp. 35-60 (45-51). For other Pentecostal treatments of the subject see: Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 165-84; Ian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

⁷⁸ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, pp. 40-42; Petersen, *Not by Might*, pp. 22-24.

⁷⁹ Arthur M. Brazier, *Black Self-Determination: The Story of the Woodlawn Organization* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), among others.

⁸⁰ Frank Chikane, *No Life of My Own* (Bramfontein, Skotaville, 1988). See also Nico Horn, "South African Pentecostals and Apartheid: A Short Case Study of the Apostolic Faith Mission," in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism*, pp. 157-67.

⁸¹ M. Volf, "When the Unclean Spirit Leaves: Tasks of the Eastern European Churches After the 1989 Revolution," *Cross Currents* 41 (1991), pp. 78-92 (84-86); "Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections in the Wake of 'Ethnic

theological basis is the “divine embrace” between the Father, Son, and Spirit, which is a divine model of human community.⁸² “Embrace, I propose, is what should happen between different ethnic or cultural groups. Instead of seeking to isolate ourselves from other groups by insisting on our pure identity, we should open ourselves to one another to be enriched by our differences,” Volf maintains.⁸³

Along with racial unity, the first Pentecostals were born with the idea of pacifism. A literalist reading of the Bible and an enthusiasm caused by the wonder of God’s Spirit uniting people of different origins, worshipping in the same community, caused Pentecostals to regard war as belonging to the “old age.”⁸⁴ Most Pentecostals soon, however, came to embrace the ideology of the majority of their societies, with a view of legitimate warfare. During the last decade there have been calls to revive the early pacifistic ethos on the basis of early spiritual and theological ethos of the movement.⁸⁵

3.3 In Search of a Holistic Missionary Pneumatology

Pentecostals in Asia and elsewhere might want to take another look at their pneumatology with regard to mission and strive for a more holistic approach to human suffering. Developments in Charismatic theology might offer some clues here.

Cleansing’,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 29:2 (1992), pp. 230-48; “A Vision of Embrace: Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict,” *Ecumenical Review* 48:2 (1995), pp. 195-205; *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

⁸² Volf has developed here some basic thoughts of his Doktorvater Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1991), pp. 191-200 especially.

⁸³ For a documented treatment, see Volf, “A Vision of Embrace,” p. 204.

⁸⁴ For an informed survey and assessment of the idea of pacifism among early Pentecostals, see Joel Shuman, “Pentecost and the End of Patriotism: A Call for the Restoration of Pacifism among Pentecostal Christians,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996), pp. 70-96.

⁸⁵ See M. W. Dempster, “Reassessing the Moral Rhetoric of Early American Pentecostal Pacifism,” *Crux* 26:1 (1990), pp. 23-36; “‘Crossing Border’: Arguments Used by Early American Pentecostals in Support of the Global Character of Pacifism,” *EPTA Bulletin* X:II (1991), pp. 62-78, among others.

A consultation on Charismatic theology sponsored by the World Council of Churches at Geneva in 1980 produced a land mark document *The Church Is Charismatic*.⁸⁶ While mission was not the focus, some interesting developments from a missiological viewpoint were offered. A summary of a theological group, compiled by Hollenweger, suggested that there are three major orientations to the Spirit's role in the world: 1) the Spirit - an ecclesiological approach: the Spirit works for the unity and united witness of all churches; 2) the Spirit - a cosmological approach: the Spirit renews creation and bestows fullness of life; this encompasses physical healing and healing of social relationships as well; 3) the Spirit - sacramental approach: the Spirit is mediated through personal conversion, baptism, confirmation, and ordination as sacramental theologies renew their focus on the Spirit. Even if most Pentecostals would have a hard time with the third perspective, the sacramental dimension, the first two are certainly helpful. The ecclesiological orientation helps Pentecostals be freed from a hyper-individualistic, anti-*koinonia* emphasis while the "cosmological" perspective reminds them of the work of the Spirit in the world and in the nature. The same Spirit of God who was instrumental in creation will also re-create the world.

M. L. Daneel suggests a careful scrutiny of African Independent Church pneumatologies which have developed a rather holistic view of Christian involvement. Of course, the whole context of African independent churches, including Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals, raises a host of legitimate questions and answers - at least to those of us who are outsiders. Still, I believe, we need to hear their distinctive testimony as they live out their Spirit-filled life in African soil. According to Daneel, there are four basic orientations to the role of the Spirit in this understanding: 1) The Holy Spirit as Savior of Humankind; 2) The Spirit as Healer and Protector; 3) The Spirit of Justice and Liberation; and 4) The Earthkeeping Spirit.⁸⁷

In his *Charismatics and the Next Millennium*, Nigel Scotland expresses the hope that Charismatics will overcome their lack of social

⁸⁶ Ed. Arnold Bittlinger (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981).

⁸⁷ M. L. Daneel, "African Independent Church Pneumatology and the Salvation of All Creation," in *All Together in One Place*, pp. 96-126. See also Derek B. Mutungu, "A Response to M. L. Daneel" in *All Together in One Place*, pp. 127-31. Both articles give basic bibliographical guidance for further research.

activism by rethinking their theology.⁸⁸ Another Charismatic, Nigel Wright expresses the hope that the Charismatic Renewal will not simply be absorbed in an individualistic religion of the soul, but will also focus on the whole of God's creation:

In so far as charismatic renewal fails to gain this perspective it will prove to be a capitulation to our culture's desire to privatize religious experience and so domesticate it. This tendency is already clear in some parts of the world where charismatic experience and reactionary politics have become close allied.⁸⁹

4. Is the Spirit Working outside *ekklesia*?

One does not need to be a prophet to suggest that perhaps the most challenging question facing the Christian Church, as it crosses into the third millennium, is relation to other living faiths of our globe. After massive technological, social, and political changes during our lifetime, no Christian can pretend to close one's eyes on that question.

The question of the "theology of religion"⁹⁰ - as it is technically known - is simple: Is there salvation, or at least salvific elements, outside the Church/Christ? One does not need to be a specialist in the area to figure out what have been the possible approaches. *Exclusivists* hold that salvation is available only in Jesus Christ to the extent that those who have never heard the Gospel are eternally lost. In this scheme, non-Christian religions play no role in the history of salvation. For *Pluralists*, other religions are legitimate means of salvation. The mediating group, *Inclusivists* hold that while salvation is ontologically founded upon the person of Christ, its benefits have been made universally available by the revelation of God. The last orientation is the official standpoint of the post-conciliar Roman Catholic Church although, understandably, there are many variations in modern Catholic theology.

Pentecostals have not tackled much with the issue. They have either succumbed to the standard Fundamentalist view of limiting the Spirit's

⁸⁸ With the subtitle, *Do They Have a Future?* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), p. 264 especially.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Wessels, "Charismatic Christian Congregations," p. 362.

⁹⁰ The literature on the topic is vast and growing all the time. For a helpful survey, with an up-to-date bibliography, see, e.g., J. Van Lin, "Models for a Theology of Religion," in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, pp. 177-93.

saving work to the church (except for the work of the Spirit preparing for receiving the Gospel),⁹¹ or have ignored outright the reflection of what their otherwise strong insistence on the principle *spiritus ubi vult spirat* ("The Spirit blows where it wills," John 3:6) might mean in relation to other religions. Furthermore, with other Conservative Christians Pentecostals have been afraid of the dangers of recent liberal approaches to the issue.⁹²

Charismatic theologian Clark H. Pinnock has recently noted: "one might expect the Pentecostals to develop a Spirit-oriented theology of mission and world religions, because of their openness to religious experience, their sensitivity to the oppressed of the Third World where they have experienced much of their growth, and their awareness of the ways of the Spirit as well as dogma."⁹³

⁹¹ A quick survey of Pentecostal manuals shows this clearly: Ernest S. Williams, *Systematic Theology* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), III, p. 15; Ned D. Sauls, *Pentecostal Doctrines: A Wesleyan Approach* (Dun NC: Heritage, 1979), p. 54; Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), pp. 268-70; Aaron M. Wilson, *Basic Bible Truth: A Doctrinal Study of the Pentecostal Church of God* (Jopin, MO: Messenger Publishing House, 1987), p. 115; Mark D. McLean, "The Holy Spirit," in *Systematic Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO.; Logion Press, 1994), pp. 375-96 (392). For this bibliographical note, I am indebted to Cecil M. Robeck, "A Pentecostal Assessment of 'Towards a Common Understanding and Vision' of the WCC," *Mid-Stream* 37:1 (1998), pp. 1-36 (31 n. 40).

⁹² Besides standard monographs (of, e.g., Hicks, Knitter, Samartha, etc.), from a specifically pneumatological perspective see the following among others: Stanley J. Samartha, "The Holy Spirit and People of Other Faiths," *Ecumenical Review* 42 (1990), pp. 250-63; Paul Knitter, "A New Pentecost? A Pneumatological Theology of Religions," *Current Dialogue* 19 (1991), pp. 32-41; George Khord, "Christianity in a Pluralistic World - The Economy of the Holy Spirit," *Ecumenical Review* 23 (1971), pp. 118-28. For a much more constructive approach, something that would help Pentecostals/Charismatics to reflect more deeply on the issue, see Mark Heim, *Is Christ the Only Way? Christian Faith in a Pluralistic World* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1985); *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

⁹³ Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), p. 274. See also his "Evangelism and Other Living Faiths: An Evangelical Charismatic Perspective," in *All Together in One Place*, pp. 208-18 (208).

The major challenge to consider the issue from a Pentecostal perspective has come from the long-standing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.⁹⁴ I will briefly summarize the encounter since it reflects faithfully the general opinion among Pentecostals.⁹⁵

4.1 The Theology of Religion: Questions in the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue

There was a tentative discussion on the possibility of salvation during the second quinquennium (1978-1982) and no unanimity was reached. Although both Catholics and Pentecostals believe that “ever since the creation of the world, the visible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind’s understanding of created things,” (cf. Rom 1:20; Psal 19:1-4), their perspectives diverge over the existence and/or meaning of salvific elements found in non-Christian religions.⁹⁶ Pentecostals insisted that there can not be salvation outside the church.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ There has also been some discussion of the topic in the International Dialogue between World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Pentecostals but no definitive statement has yet come out. It is projected that some kind of final report will be produced at the end of the first five-year round (started in 1996).

⁹⁵ For details, see my, *Ad Ultimum Terrae. Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue 1991-1997*. Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 117 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).

⁹⁶ *Final Report 1991-1997*, #20. (Hereafter, *Final Report* refers to the documents of the International Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, unless otherwise indicated).

⁹⁷ *Final Report 1978-1982*, #14: “There was no unanimity whether non-Christians may receive the life of the Holy Spirit. According to contemporary Roman Catholic understanding, to which Vatican II gives an authoritative expression, ‘All must be converted to Jesus Christ as he is made known by the Church’s preaching’ (*Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, par. 7). ‘The Church... is necessary for salvation’ (*Constitution on the Church*, par. 14). But Vatican II also says that all without exception are called by God to faith in Christ, and to salvation (*Constitution on the Church*, par. 1, 16; *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions*, par. 1, 2). This is brought about ‘in an unseen way... known only to God’ (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, par. 22; *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, par. 7). This theology is seen as a legitimate development of the total New Testament teaching on God’s saving love in Christ. The classical

Most Pentecostals limit the saving work of the Spirit to the church and its proclamation of the Gospel, although they acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, convincing people of sin.⁹⁸ The rationale for this more exclusivist attitude is found in the fallen state of humankind and in the literal reading of the New Testament, which for Pentecostals does not give much hope for non-Christians.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Pentecostals, like many of the early Christians, tend to point out the demonic elements in other religions rather than common denominators.¹⁰⁰

However, there are some Pentecostals who would see a convergence towards the Catholic position in that the Holy Spirit is at work in non-Christian religions, preparing individual hearts for an eventual exposure to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁰¹ Unfortunately, neither the *Final Reports* nor the Pentecostal paper elaborate what this convergence might mean.

4.2 “Not Knowing Where the Spirit Blows...”¹⁰²

In a way, it is not a surprise that thus far the only Pentecostal theologian who has addressed the issue of the theology of religions in any substantial way, comes from Asia. Amos Yong of Malaysia writes his doctoral research on the topic. His presentation at the Society for Pentecostal Studies Meeting 1998 (Cleveland, TN) was titled, “‘Not Knowing Where the Spirit Blows’: On Envisioning a Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions.”

Pentecostal participants do not accept this development but retain their interpretation of the Scripture that non-Christians are excluded from the life of the Spirit: “Truly, truly I say unto you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

⁹⁸ *Final Report 1991-1997*, # 20.

⁹⁹ *Final Report 1978-1982*, # 14.

¹⁰⁰ *Final Report 1991-1997*, # 21.

¹⁰¹ *Final Report 1991-1997*, # 21.

¹⁰² I have borrowed the subtitle from Amos Yong, “‘Not Knowing Where the Wind Blows...’: On Envisioning a Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions,” in *Purity and Power: Revisioning the Holiness and Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements for the Twenty-First Century*, 27th Annual Meeting for the Society for Pentecostal Studies in special session with the Wesleyan Theological Society, March 12-14, 1998, Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee, vol. 2, 21 pp.

Yong wants to explore the possibility of a distinctively Pentecostal/Charismatic contribution to the theme of theology of religions from a pneumatological viewpoint. He believes “that the P/C [Pentecostal/Charismatic] experience of and orientation toward the Holy Spirit gives rise to unique insights which inform a pneumatological theology of religions.”¹⁰³ He freely admits that this is in itself a demanding enterprise since the proposal to formulate a theology of religions from a Pentecostal/Charismatic perspective is a “bold step forward into uncharted territory.” However, according to Yong, such a bold step has to be taken because of three reasons: a) the global presence of the movement; b) *theologia religionum* as an unsettled matter for Pentecostal/Charismatics; and c) the importance of this issue for the ongoing development of Pentecostal/Charismatic identity.¹⁰⁴

Especially in Asia and Pacific, where Pentecostals and other Christians are in a minority position, amidst highly animistic - thus spiritual - cultures, reflection on the relation of Spirit (capitals) and spirits (lower case) is an impending challenge. A related matter is the traditional anxiety over religious syncretism.¹⁰⁵

The Pentecostal/Charismatic experience, according to Yong, makes their Christian life and witness highly relevant for people who live for example in animistic contexts (and, as is well known, almost all religions tend to become more and more animistic,¹⁰⁶ even “atheist” Buddhism).

Yong’s attempt to construct a Pentecostal/Charismatic view of Spirit in the world is to be commended because of both its importance and its realistic approach. Yong, namely, states his purpose with clarity: he is not necessarily championing a (more) pluralistic theology of religion but rather investigating whether the Pentecostal/Charismatic view is biblically and theologically sustainable: “To remain exclusivistic regarding the religions is justified only if P/C(s) arrive at that position after investigating the issues, but not if there is an *a priori* acceptance of the conclusions drawn by fundamentalists and some evangelicals.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Yong, “Not Knowing,” p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Yong, “Not Knowing,” p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Yong, “Not Knowing,” p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ See Sunday Aigbe, “Pentecostal Mission and the Tribal People Groups,” in *Called and Empowered*, pp. 165-79.

¹⁰⁷ Yong, “Not Knowing,” p. 7.

Contrary to what some Pentecostals might think, an attempt to construct a pneumatological theology of religion, does not necessarily - and for Pentecostals *must not* - downplay the importance of evangelization. Yong writes, "Let me straightforwardly declare that a global P/C theology of religions will combine the missionary, evangelistic and dialogic dimensions of encounter - all in healthy tension as it reflects the emphasis on orality central to P/C sensibilities - in affirming her commitment to the Great Commission."¹⁰⁸

5. Instead of Conclusions: Questions for the Future

Pentecostal/Charismatic missiology is faced with some impending challenges as it prepares to cross over into the third millennium. Some of the most critical are the following.

First, what is the role of Spirit-baptism in Pentecostal/Charismatic missions? Is it only for empowerment? What is the relation of gift and fruit? What are its ethical implications? What is the array of spiritual gifts for mission?

Second, what is the relation of proclamation and social justice? Is social justice only a way to get into countries otherwise closed for open proclamation? What is the meaning of the kingdom of God in all of this? What about Spirit and kingdom?

Third, how do Pentecostals understand themselves and their mission in relation to other Christians? Of special importance is the relationship between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics since these two are currently the largest Christian families? How is proselytism understood? Is there any chance for common witness?

Fourth, what will be the specific contribution of Pentecostals/Charismatics to the understanding of Spirit in the world? Are Pentecostals able to combine a more comprehensive view of the Spirit in the world with their strong insistence on evangelization and proclamation?

Fifth, what will be the relation of Pentecostals and Charismatics in the future? Will they become more similar? What about Pentecostals in the West and in the Two-Thirds world? How will all this impact missions? In fact, what will be the meaning of "mission" in the next millennium?

¹⁰⁸ Yong, "Not Knowing," pp. 13-14.

Let the Spirit of the Almighty God help us in all of this so that His Glory will be extended over all the earth!