Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

International Conference on Pentecostal Mission

Feb 2003, Baguio, Philippines

Volume 8, Number 1 (January 2005)

[*AJPS* 8:1 (2005), pp. 5-27]

FULL CIRCLE MISSION: A POSSIBILITY OF PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY[1]

Wonsuk Ma

In the early 1980s, Peter Wagner, a church growth specialist of Fuller Theological Seminary, wrote a book entitled *On the Crest of the Wave*.[2] Typical of Wagner, this is a practical and easy to read book, with each chapter concluding with a "Do Something Now" list. This "one of Wagner's casual writings" has proven to be an extremely helpful book, especially among Christians to whom "mission" is a too familiar word to bother looking up in a dictionary, and yet precisely what it means, or what is not meant, is widely unknown. As an Asian Christian, I suppose this is more so among Asian churches. There are several critical and important concepts found in this book that all churches need to heed to.

This study is a reflection on one particular chapter of the book: "Full Circle: Third-World Mission" (chapter 9), dialogue with the author, and a further application to Pentecostal mission. The thesis is that the Pentecostal mission has a good potential to reach the ideal pattern of Christian mission, which Wagner labels as a "full circle mission." The perspective for this paper is obviously Asian, and mission-field oriented.

1. Basic Considerations

Wagner rightly argues, as anyone would agree, that the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) provides the basis for mission. I would like

---

[1] The original version was presented at the International Consultation of Mission, April 2001, Baguio City, Philippines.

[2] C. Peter Wagner, *On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983). This typical interpretation is found in many commentaries.

to interact in two areas: the goal of mission and the "full circle mission" as Wagner advocates.

1.1 Goal of Mission

As the majority of NT commentators would argue, "going, baptizing, and teaching," being participles, are means to accomplish the ultimate end, "making disciples."[3] However, observing the modern missionary movement, Wagner laments, "*In my judgement, the greatest error in contemporary strategy is the confusion of means and end in the understanding of the Great Commission.*"[4] In his view, missionaries often "baptize" or plant local churches,[5] but fall short of the ultimate goal of mission, disciple-making.

In view of this, the precise definition of "disciple" becomes crucial. According to Wagner, "people are not disciples…even if they are church members,"[6] although the basic New Testament meaning of the term is equivalent to "a true, born-again Christian,"[7] "followers" of Jesus,[8] or more specifically "a disciple is a responsible church member" based on the description in Acts 2:42.[9]

Now the question is: Is this definition sufficient and adequate? Wagner further argues that "part of becoming a disciple is to be disposed to obey Jesus as Lord,"[10] but nowhere does he include witnessing as an essential component of being a disciple. I am beginning to wonder if Matthew makes it clear that the highest task of the Disciples is making disciples, or in other words, reproducing themselves. "Following" has a definite purpose, and this passage indicates that the ultimate purpose of the calling for discipleship is the Great Commission. It is what the Disciples were called for, and their ultimate task was to make nations disciples of Christ, ones who would in turn make others disciples. Then, the Great Commission is given to the disciples of Jesus, including those

---

[3] Wagner, *On the Crest of the Wave*, p. 108. *OCW* henceforth.

[4] *OCW*, p. 109 (italics are not mine).

[5] *OCW*, p. 144.

[6] *OCW*, p. 110.

[7] *OCW*, p. 110.

[8] *OCW*, p. 146.

[9] *OCW*, p. 111.

[10] *OCW*, p. 110.

who would become disciples through this unending reproductive process. This is the utmost test of true discipleship.

1.2 "Full Circle Mission"

Wagner pointedly states a major weakness of the modern missionary movement. "One of the problems is that we have tended to see missions as a straight line" with a starting point and the end.[11] The mission, in Wagner's view, should be a circular movement continuously "turning around and around with no foreseeable end in sight."[12] To make his point further, he presents four patterns of missionary work:

1) 90 degree mission: a missionary is sent and a church is planted.
2) 180 degree: the new church grows and matures but still under missionary control.
3) 270 degree: the church becomes autonomous and the missionary either remains as a partner or leaves for elsewhere.
4) 360 degree: the church becomes mission-minded generating churches in other cultures.[13]

He also points out the fallacy of the indigenous church principle. Often self-supporting is the major goal, and the missionary goal is in truth bringing the church to the level to be "capable of keeping itself alive.[14] Thus, even if there are many "indigenous *churches* and denominations," "indigenous *missions*" is seldom part of the picture.[15]

As a third-world missionary, I concur with him entirely. In all my Christian years, I have never heard a sermon on missions except one delivered by a missionary. This implies that the goal of the mission in their mind was not to produce mission-minded churches, but only churches that can support themselves, so that missionaries could find other places to repeat the process. It is, therefore, the special grace of God that Korean churches began to catch the missionary burden in the late 70s. But there is little evidence that this new movement was motivated by missionary calls issued by missionaries in Korea.

Wagner's observation may have come from practical observations. The assumed traditional goal of mission will perpetuate the need for

---

[11] *OCW*, p. 162.

[12] *OCW*, p. 163.

[13] *OCW*, pp. 165-66.

[14] *OCW*, p. 165.

[15] *OCW*, p. 165. Italics are his.

missionaries, and mission will still be the "white man's burden,"[16] thus implicitly suggesting that mission can be done only by rich nations. However, the new goal of mission and the meaning of discipleship provide the theoretical foundation for this important argument. Mission theologians need to further develop this critical and yet less explored area of study.

1.3 The Role of the Holy Sprit

The shift of Wagner's understanding of the work and role of the Holy Spirit in ministry and mission is rather dramatic. Considering that this book was written in the early 80s, this may be the period around the time of his "paradigm shift."[17] He correctly points out the limitation of the traditional thinking of the Holy Spirit's work, by quoting Harold Lindsell, "We were taught that the power of the Holy Spirit was for living a holy life."[18] Wagner also refers to C. Kraft, "Illness is a matter of theological (not simply medical) understanding in virtually all cultures except those characterized by Western secularism."[19] Wagner argues, like many Pentecostals, "The power of the Spirit was not only for cleaning up the life but for witnessing and winning souls"[20] However, so far the discussions have been centered around signs and wonders that are linked to the work of the Spirit.

---

[16] British poet Rudyard Kipling's poem "White Man's Burden" written in 1899 as exhortation to American to annex the Philippines. For a full text, see Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine* 12 (Feb 1899) also available at http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/kipling.html (checked, April 13, 2002). For a critique, Jim Zwick, "'The White Man's Burden' and Its Critics," in Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935, ed. Jim Zwick (http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling, checked, April 13, 2002).

[17] Although it is possible that Wagner had been going through serious assessment of missions practices, his paradigm shift was motivated by the controversial course, "MC510 Signs, Wonders and Church Growth," taught by John Wimber at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1982, as featured in *Christian Life*, October 1982. The full account is later reported C. Peter Wagner, ed., *Signs and Wonders Today: The Story of Fuller Theological Seminary's Remarkable Course on Spiritual Power*, new expanded edition (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation, 1987).

[18] *OCW*, p. 129.

[19] OCW, p. 129 quoting Charles H. Kraft, Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), p. 305.

[20] *OCW*, p. 129.

However, the Holy Spirit has more to do with mission than miracles and healings, or even power-encounter. The New Testament makes clear that the mission of God is carried out through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Thus, there is a dire need for pneumatological missiology, or missiology which gives intentional attention to the role of the Holy Spirit, which traditional Evangelical theology has overlooked.[21] Pentecostal theology and experience can provide a viable model for pneumatological missiology.

2. Pentecostal Possibility: "Charismatic" Theology

As Max Weber defines, "charismatic" encompasses several components: 1) the supernatural endowment of a leader;[22] 2) a sacred or awesome property of groups, roles or objects;[23] 3) the personal qualities of a leader;[24] and 4) a social relationship between charismatic leaders and followers.[25] To these, one can add that the selection of a leader (or "calling") itself is strictly a divine prerogative.

Pentecostal theology is characterized by this charismatic nature of the spiritual experience commonly called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the unique foundational belief of the Pentecostals.[26] It is important to

---

[21] Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), p. 79 argues that Pentecostal theology can be correctional to traditional Evangelical theology.

[22] For example, Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 3 vols, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich (1925 original, New York: Bedminster, 1968), pp. 241-50, 1112-17. Weber's pagination is consecutive throughout the volumes.

[23] For example, M. E. Spencer, "What is Charisma," *British Journal of Sociology* 24:3 (1973), pp. 341-54.

[24] For example, Bryan Lindsay, "Leadership giftedness: Developing a Profile," *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 1:1 (1978), pp. 63-69.

[25] For example, see Bryman, *Charisma and Leadership*, pp. 22-69.

[26] The "charismatic" nature of Pentecostal theology was elaborated by Roger Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984). Several Pentecostals convincingly argue that the theology of the kingdom of God provides the theological foundation for Pentecostal mission, e.g., Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions*, and Gordon D. Fee, "The Kingdom of God and the Church's Global Mission," in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, eds. Murray A. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 7-21. However, this may be a more elaborate version of Evangelical theology championed by George E. Ladd,

note that, unlike their Evangelical counterpart, Pentecostals believe that baptism in the Spirit is distinguished from the conversion experience. This experience is interpreted as enduement of power for service. This unique belief is often based on the accounts of the Book of Acts, but this "charismatic" nature of the Spirit's presence upon individuals is also found in the Old Testament.

2.1 Old Testament Roots of Pentecostal Charismatic Theology

There are at least seven spirit[27] traditions identifiable in the Old Testament.[28] Among them, two are classified as charismatic traditions: leadership spirit and prophetic spirit traditions. As several sample passages are surveyed, the key elements will be highlighted.

2.1.1 Leadership Spirit Tradition

The Book of Judges and First Samuel provide this important spirit tradition. In this tradition, the presence of the divine spirit serves two functions.

The first is the authenticating function. Considering the unpredictable nature of the emergence of leadership, it became essential for God to authenticate his election of the new leader. A good example is the anointing of Saul by Samuel (1 Sam 10). When the prophet anointed Saul, three signs were predicted by Samuel primarily to confirm the authenticity of God's election of Saul as the king of Israel. One of the three signs was the presence of the spirit upon Saul, as he was to meet with the sons of the prophets (10:5-6, 10). Indeed, Saul met a group of prophets "prophesying" as the spirit of God was upon them. Soon the spirit came upon Saul as well and he began to prophesy along with the prophets. Here "prophesying" is the sign of the spirit's presence, which in turn functioned as a sign for God's election of Saul.

A Theology of the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). For this evaluation, see Gary B. McGee, "Mission, Overseas (North American)," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), pp. 610-25 (622).

[27] For the Old Testament usage, the "spirit" is not capitalized as the idea of Trinity was not yet developed.

[28] For more detailed discussion, see Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 29-32.

It is not difficult to think that the sign was for Saul himself. This also became a sign for Samuel. Even the people were prepared for the subsequent election of Saul (1 Sam 10:17-24) with this sign. A similar function is found in the case of the seventy elders in the wilderness. When the spirit was upon them, they all prophesied, thus publicly authenticating Moses' selection of them (Num 11:16-25).[29]

The second function is empowering or equipping. This function is rather logical, as charismatic leaders are raised by God for a specific task. Well-known cases are three passages regarding Samson's experience. Every time the spirit of God came upon Samson, except for the initial experience (Judges 13:25), he gained superhuman prowess to counter the impending dangers. He tore a young lion on his way to Timnah (14:6), killed thirty Philistines to secure 30 set of festal garments (14:19), and to break the rope around his hands and kill a thousand Philistines with the fresh jawbone of a donkey (14-15). Another good example is found in the second experience of Saul with the spirit in 1 Samuel 11. Unlike the earlier reported experience after the anointing of Saul (1 Sam 10), this time, the coming of the spirit is directly related to the military campaign against the Ammonites. Upon hearing the gloomy threat of the Ammonites, the spirit of God rushed upon Saul, filling him with rage (1 Sam 11:6). He immediately mustered an intertribal army and undertook a sweeping victory. The coming of the spirit in this case is clearly linked to the military campaign and its empowerment function is evident. At the same time, the empowerment itself can have an authenticating role as well.

Thirdly, although less obvious than the first two functions, the "sending" dimension is also under the direction and presence of the spirit of God. The military campaigns of the judges (e.g., Othniel in Judges 3:10; Gideon in Judges 6:33-35; and Jepthah in 11:29-33) and Saul (1 Sam 11:6-11) imply the work of the spirit beyond the "coming" and "empowering" aspects. The successful campaigns take the role of the spirit for granted. A more explicit role of the spirit in "sending" is found at least in two passages for the future leaders. The Servant will go to the nations and coastlands to proclaim the justice and teaching of Yahweh (Isa 42:1-4). The spirit will enable him to persevere against obstacles and difficulties until he fulfills his task.[30] The other text is found in Isa 61:1-

---

[29] For more detailed discussion, see Wonsuk Ma, "If It Is a Sign: An Old Testament Reflection on the Initial Evidence Discussion," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2:2 (1999), pp. 163-175, esp. 166-67.

[30] Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, pp. 29-32.

4, although the speaker's identity is divided between a prophet and a political leader (i.e., king). The presence of the spirit is for a specific task ("to proclaim…"), and the "sending" role of the spirit is clear.

The last element of the charismatic spirit is the double beneficiary. The election, empowerment, and sending of a leader for a specific task is ultimately not for the elected leader, but for a larger group of people, i.e., various tribes, in the case of the judges (Judges 3; 6; 11) and Saul (1 Sam 11), the nations and coastland for the Servant (Isa 42), the poor, blind, and captives for the prophet-king figure (Isa 61). This double feature of beneficiary becomes more evident when other spirit traditions are examined, such as creation spirit, spirit as God's impersonal agent, or personal agent, etc.

2.1.2 Prophetic Spirit Tradition

In a similar way, the prophetic spirit tradition exhibits several aspects of the presence of the spirit. First, it authenticates a true prophet. Perhaps the best illustration is found in 1 Kings 22:19-25. As Miciah, God's true prophet faces the four hundred prophets of Ahab, he discloses his experience of the heavenly court session. By arguing that the lying spirit is upon the four hundred prophets of Ahab, Miciah certainly claims the presence of God's spirit upon him. This is confirmed by Zedekiah's question, "Which way did the spirit of the Lord pass from me to speak to you?" (1 Sam 22:24).[31] In the case of the prophet-king figure (Isa 61), the anointing and the presence of the spirit serves as the proof for his genuine calling. Even the pagan diviner Balaam has the spirit of God as a proof of God's election, at least for the occasion (Num 24:2).

The second is closely related to the first, the spirit's role as the source of the prophetic message and experience. Although with no intention of becoming prophets, prophesying became the evidence of the spirit's presence in the case of the seventy elders (Num 11:25) and Saul (1 Sam 10; 19). Micaiah's claim of the spirit is also the claim of the spirit as the source of his prophecy (1 Kings 22:24). The "sons of the prophet" under Samuel "prophesied" as the spirit of God was upon them (1 Sam 10:10; 19:20, 21). In the coming age, as the spirit of God is poured upon God's people, they will have various prophetic experiences such as seeing visions, and dreaming dreams (Joel 2:28).

The third is the element of empowerment in the course of proclamation. This dimension is less explicit than the first two, and yet

[31] Scripture quotations are from New Revised Standard Version, unless stated otherwise.

essential, partly due to the harsh and difficult setting in which the prophets are often commissioned to deliver a message. Perhaps the only explicit example is Micah's claim, "I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord" (3:8). Here, as he differentiates himself from other prophets to whom "it shall be night…without vision and darkness…without revelation" (3:6), Micah boldly claims not only the spirit of God as the source of his message, but also as the source of his strength and courage to unashamedly "declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (3:8). Such an empowering effect is also seen in the Servant's calling (Isa 42). He will persevere and persistently fulfill the God-given task (42:1-4), because the spirit of God is upon him (42:1).

The fourth is the double-recipient nature of this tradition. It is obvious that a prophetic message is intended to a third party. However, it will be a little difficult to argue the same for the prophetic "phenomenon" as we see in the "sons" of the prophet. This "third-party" orientation of the prophetic vocation is also found in the prophet-king figure(s) such as the Servant (Isa 42:1-4) and the preacher (Isa 61:1-4).

2.2 New Testament: Luke's Charismatic Role of the Spirit

Pentecostals have often been accused of majoring in Luke's writing over Paul's, when it comes to pneumatology. This criticism is certainly true. However, equally true is the Evangelical's bias against non-Pauline corpus. The "quite revolution"[32] in biblical scholarship in the last century has opened a new door for narratives including Lukan literature to be treated as legitimate theological books.[33] This new appreciation of narratives is a significant theological contribution that the Pentecostal movement has brought into the theological world. Lukan pneumatology, among others, significantly emphasizes and further develops the leadership and the prophetic spirit tradition of the Old Testament. Perhaps the most important passage for the Pentecostals in this aspect is Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and

[32] William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 37-45.

[33] For instance, I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970). This view is in contrast with the prevailing Evangelical attitude toward narratives, e.g., Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Steward, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), pp. 94-112.

Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." There are two important features of Lukan theology for Pentecostal missiology.

2.2.1 Charismatic Theology

The charismatic orientation of Lukan theology has long been assumed since the advent of the modern Pentecostal movement. However, the first serious academic attempt was made by Roger Stronstad in his *Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*.[34] This was followed by several others, including Robert Menzies.[35] Luke, when referring to Old Testament sources, most frequently uses the two charismatic spirit traditions: the leadership and prophetic spirit traditions. They are borrowed mostly from the Book of Isaiah.[36]

The charismatic feature of Lukan theology implies not only a drastic manifestation of God's power, such as healing and miracles,[37] but also persevering persistence to fulfill the calling. In fact, Luke seems to stress the latter equally, if not more emphatically, than the supernatural demonstration,[38] and this is natural considering the oppressive setting of the early church. This is also arguable from the Old Testament perspective. The earlier stage of the leadership spirit tradition displays more of the physical and military effect of the charismatic endowment, as in the judges and king Saul. However, the later development emphasizes moral and spiritual aspects, as in the Servant. There is more perseverance and persistence than just the demonstration of supernatural power. Luke understands that the charismatic empowerment of the Spirit is to enable the disciples to go out in power and perseverance. Even this perseverance aspect of Luke in fulfilling the God-given task, is quite different from the Johannine idea of the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

The seemingly most highlighted individual in Acts, besides Paul and Peter, is Stephen. Acts 6-7 lists at least seven phrases indicating the fullness of the Spirit or its effect on the life of Stephen: "full of the Spirit

---

[34]*Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984).

[35]Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

[36] See below for detail.

[37] For a fine study on the nature of the "power," see Manuel A. Bagalawis, "'Power' in Acts 1:8: Effective Witnessing through Signs and Wonders," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3:1 (2001), pp. 1-13.

[38] Robert P. Menzies, "A Pentecostal Perspective on 'Signs and Wonders'," *Pneuma* 17:2 (1995), pp. 265-78, esp. pp. 272-73.

and wisdom" (6:3, for the deacons in general), "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (6:5, specifically for Stephen alone), "full of God's grace and power" (6:8), "[doing] great wonders and miraculous signs" (6:8), "his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he [Stephen] spoke" (6:10), "his face was like the face of an angel" (6:15), and "full of the Holy Spirit" (7:54), in addition to his reference to the Holy Spirit in his long sermon (ch. 7). There are effects of the Spirit that are different from the astonishing demonstration of God's power. It is important to note that early Pentecostal spirituality shows this balance with practices such as "praying through," "tarrying," etc.

2.2.2 Mission Theology

The two books of Luke were written not just to preserve the life and ministry of Jesus, but ultimately to convince "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3, cf. Acts 1:1), presumably a high-ranking Roman official, of Christian faith. Thus, the books were written with a missionary purpose.[39] Here are several points that illustrate Luke's mission-oriented theology.

Luke's gospel presents the ministry of Jesus as initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is expressed not only in the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus in his baptism (Luke 3:22), but also in the public proclamation of his mission by quoting Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:18-19). The book also concludes with a shorter form of the Great Commission ("…repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things," Luke 24:47-48) and his command for the disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they "have been clothed with power from on high" (24:49). Here is a clear connection between the Great Commission and the role of the Holy Spirit.

In the Book of Acts, Luke connects the two books by repeating the concluding statement of the Gospel of Luke: "…he [Jesus] ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). But here, Luke makes an interesting reinterpretation of the popular remark of John the Baptist: "He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (and fire)" (Mark 1:8; Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16). In all the verses, the Holy Spirit (and fire) functions to cleanse people of sins. However, Luke, by placing the same statement right after Acts 1:4, Jesus' baptism in the Holy Spirit acquires an "empowering" function.

---

[39] E.g., recently John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), esp. pp. 18-25.

Thus, in the Book of Acts, the mission of the disciples is initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). The Book of Acts almost duplicates the pattern of Jesus' ministry (initiated and empowered by the Spirit), but this time for the disciples. This apostolic transfer of mission and authority was introduced in Luke's account of seventy disciples. They were assured not only of God's provision for their needs (Luke 10:7), but also of supernatural authority to pronounce peace (vs. 5-6), heal the sick (v. 9), and cast out demons (vs. 17-19). This commissioning with the manifestation of God's power, however, reaches its climax in salvation (v. 20). The Book of Acts makes it clear that the mandate of Jesus was carried out by the disciples through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Acts is a record of the expansion of the church as promised in 1:8. It began in Jerusalem signaled by the coming of the Spirit, which also equipped the disciples for the task (Acts 2:2-4). Then the expansion of the Christian gospel to Samaria is also marked by the coming of the Spirit upon the disciples (8:17), and to Ephesus, the representative of the gentile world (19:6). The coming of the Spirit in Luke has its ultimate goal in the spreading the gospel.

The disciples through the empowerment of the Spirit became not only witnesses but also disciple-makers. Barnaba's discipling of Paul, and Paul's training of Timothy are typical examples. Also the life stories of the major figures in the book mostly follow the pattern established for the Servant in Isa 42:1-4: persevering persistence under the empowerment of the S/spirit. Here, persistence is to fulfill the missionary task, and they include Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Stephen, etc.

Thus, one can call Luke's theology missiological pneumatology or pneumatic missiology. Without the "witnessing" the presence of the Spirit has almost no meaning in Luke. One can say that the Holy Spirit is indeed the missionary Spirit.

3. Pentecostal Mission Practices

In its one-century history, Pentecostals have distinguished themselves in the area of mission. Before any attempt to form a denomination, except those that predated the Pentecostal movement, mission agencies appeared as early as 1909.[40] Even the formation of the Assemblies of God, U.S.A. had a distinct two-fold purpose: "to promote

[40] Horton, *Reflections of an Early Pentecostal*, p. 53.

missions, and to establish a Bible school for the training of ministers and missionaries."[41] It is not an exaggeration to state, "Mission for most Pentecostals has never been merely the dutiful fulfillment of an obligation. The missionary task for many came close to being their movement's organizational reason-for-being."[42] By 1910, only ten years after the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, 185 missionaries from North American Pentecostal groups are reported to be in various mission fields.[43] However, Pentecostal mission has been carried out without much reflection. They were more acts of intuition, often "led by the Spirit." Several unique characteristics have emerged, primarily from stories from various mission fields.

3.1 Democratization of Ministry

Perhaps one of the most cherished Old Testament passages by Pentecostals must be Joel 2:28-29. This passage was quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost to explain the advent of the Spirit upon the 120 (Acts 2:17-18). The passage includes an explicit reference to the democratization of the S/spirit in the last days. It is no longer a small chosen group of people to experience the spirit, but "sons" and "daughters," old men and young men, and male and female slaves. This is not just the experience itself, but it implies God's calling upon them for service.

The experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, for instance, in the Azusa Street Mission, was commonly understood as the empowerment for service. This had a profound implication in mobilizing every believer for ministry, especially for mission. The first observation was the "empowerment" of laity, against the prevailing clergy-centered ministries among the mainline churches. *The Apostolic Faith*, the publication of the Azusa Street Mission, reports many accounts of ministry carried out by ordinary people. Also evident is the active mobilization of women in ministry.[44] V. Synan reports many women, often single, missionaries

---

[41] Horton, *Reflections of an Early Pentecostal*, p. 53.

[42] Everett A. Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide 1960-1990* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), p. 15.

[43] McGee, "Mission, Overseas (North American)," p. 612.

[44] One contemporary example is the mobilization of women for the cell structure in the Yoido Full Gospel Church, Seoul, Korea. Paul Yonggi Cho, "The Secret behind the World's Biggest Church," in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, 99-104 (104). This is particularly significant considering the traditional male dominant culture.

went to foreign fields, and they were called "missionaries with the one way ticket."[45] Although this trend has gradually declined, the active women's participation in mission among Pentecostal denominations continues on. One notable example is Youth With A Mission. Although not a Pentecostal mission by affiliation, its historical roots and its mission practice with successful mobilization of laity (mostly youth) presumes Pentecostal mission theories.[46] The 1860 revival in South India is also marked by the link between the Pentecostal gifts and evangelism. As a result of the revival, a new era began, that "lay converts going forth without purse or scrip to preach the Gospel of Christ to their fellow country-men [sic], and that with a zeal and life we had hardly thought them capable of."[47]

3.2 Strong Commitment

It is rightly argued that early Pentecostal mission was primarily motivated by the eschatological urgency.[48] Borrowing dispensationalistic theology, the advent of the Holy Spirit was interpreted as the "latter rain" blessing immediately before the Second Coming of the Lord. Thus, the "call for harvest" was heard in every Pentecostal gathering. Theological

---

[45] This is the title of the chapter describing the early Pentecostal missionary impetus: Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 129-42.

[46] Carsten Aust, "The Pentecostal Missiological Root of Youth With A Mission" (an unpublished class paper, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines, 2000).

[47] Horton, *Reflections of an Early Pentecostal*, pp. 45-48, esp. 47. Ashton Dibb appeared in *Church Mission Intelligencer* (Aug, 1860), p. 622 quoted by Gary B. McGee, "Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India: Implications for Indigenous Church Leadership" (a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Wheaton, IL, Nov 10-12, 1994), p. 8.

[48] E.g., L. Grant McClung, Jr., "Introduction: Truth on Fire: Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology," in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Mission and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. L. Grant McClung, Jr. (South Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1986), pp. 47-54 (51-52); idem, "'Try to Get People Saved': Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology," in *The Globilization of Pentecostalism::A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999), pp. 30-51 (38-40). Also D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 36-47.

education, accordingly, was to quickly train more harvesters. Tent meetings and evangelistic trips were the norm. Early missions also had a strong eschatological urgency and this made them committed workers.

However, Pentecostal mission did not decline after, let's say, a generation. Their dissonant experience did not discourage the missionary zeal. This proves that Pentecostal mission is not motivated primarily by eschatological urgency. One possible answer is the "empowerment" Pentecostal theology.

As people were baptized in the Spirit, the burden for the lost became intense. Often unusual spiritual experiences enhanced such sensitivity. For instance, Elva Vanderbout, a widow missionary from California, received a missionary call while her husband was still alive. As she was struggling between the missionary call and her family life, the Lord revealed that her husband would no longer be a hindrance. Soon, her husband died and she left for the Philippines.[49] Although still debatable, her commitment to mission reflects her clear understanding of God's calling. She labored among mountain tribes--some of them were known for headhunting--and, as a result of her work, Pentecostal ministry was born and countless communities in the northern Philippines have been changed.[50]

3.3 Expectation of Signs and Wonders

In early days, particularly by Charles Parham, tongue-speaking was understood as the ability to acquire a known language without learning it. This new generation of tongue-speaking missionaries was considered to be a drastic measure of the last harvest before the return of the Lord.[51] This shows a connection between Pentecostal experience of the

---

[49] Inez Sturgeon, *Give Me This Mountain* (Oakland, CA: Hunter Advertising, 1960), pp. 36-47. For a brief summary of her life and the evaluation of her ministry, see Julie C. Ma, "Elva Vanderbout: A Woman Pioneer of Pentecostal Mission among Igorots," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3:1 (2001), pp. 121-40.

[50] "A Pentecostal Woman Missionary in a Tribal Setting: A Case Study" (a paper presented at World Council of Churches Consultation with Pentecostals, Nov, 1997, Bossey, Switzerland), and published in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 3 [1998] [http://www.pctii.org]); Julie Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Ministry among the Kankana-ey Tribe in the Philippines* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), pp. 74-86.

[51] James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields While unto Harvest: Chares F. Parham and the Missionary Origin of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), pp. 15-16, 72-75, 84.

supernatural and mission. In Pentecostal mission, healings and miracles are regularly reported. Even calling was experienced in supernatural ways such as dreams, visions, prophecy, etc.[52] In the non-western world, gods and spirits are expected to demonstrate their power in tangible ways. Often, the missionary message and practice brought the western worldview, causing a clash with the non-western worldview, of the mission fields. This often resulted in "split-level Christianity"[53] or a syncretistic one.[54] In contrast, the Pentecostal worldview is much closer to the animistically oriented non-western worldview.[55] Thus, the Pentecostal message easily opens the minds of people and raises an expectation for God's miraculous work. Perhaps this may partially account for the success of the Pentecostal mission.[56]

Healing or the supernatural work of God causes a "wow" effect in the mind, and it causes a "crack" in their tight worldview reinforced by community life in a tribal setting. It is significantly heightened when a family faces a crisis, such as illness, and their traditional gods and spirits are unable to help them. A tangible experience of the power of God brings changes in numerous areas of personal, family and even community life.[57] Such a healing or miracle plays a decisive role in a

---

[52] L. Grant McClung, Jr., "Introduction: Explosion, Motivation, and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of a Missionary Movement," in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 3-20 (11).

[53] Leni Mendoza Strobel, "On Becoming a Split Subject," *PATMOS* 9 (May 1993), pp. 8-11, 18-21 (19).

[54] E.g., Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Manila: OMF Literature, 1986), pp. 6-16.

[55] For instance, a comparison between the Pentecostal worldview and the tribal Kankana-ey worldview, see J. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirit*, pp. 213-32.

[56] Although Pentecostal mission has advantages in this area, it is still open to syncretism. See, for example, Mathew S. Clark, "The Challenge of Contextualization and Syncretism to Pentecostal Theology and Missions in Africa," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3:1 (2001), pp. 79-99 and Julie C. Ma, "Santuala: A Case of Pentecostal Syncretism," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (2000), pp. 61-82.

[57] Wonsuk Ma, "The Role of Power Encounter in Contextualization among Tribal People: A Case of Kankana-eys in the Philippines" (an unpublished class paper, 1995). Also C. Peter Wagner, ed., *Signs and Wonders Today: The Story of Fuller Theological Seminary's Remarkable Course on Spiritual Power*, New expanded ed. (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation, 1987). A good example of the role of signs and wonders in Asia is collected in Mel Tari with Cliff Dudley, *Like a Mighty Wind* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation, 1972).

mass conversion or people's movement. It is well known that the most effective element of Muslim evangelism is through the supernatural demonstration of God's power.[58]

3.4 Expansion of Pentecostal Churches

Perhaps the most convincing argument for Pentecostal mission theory and practice is the unprecedented growth of the Pentecostal churches worldwide. The latest statistics account for over half a billion Pentecostals/Charismatics (523,767,000) by mid-2000, more than all the Protestant Christians put together (342,035,000), only second to the Roman Catholics (1,056,920,000).[59] For instance, in Korea, ten of fifteen mega-churches are Pentecostal/Charismatic type.[60]

It is, of course, impossible to think that all this expansion is the work of missionaries. It should be credited, more correctly, to the work of nationals. It is known that Pentecostal missionaries began training schools in their early days on the mission field.[61] However, the real secret may not be just schools, but the training itself. The "empowerment"

---

[58] Christian De Wet, "The Challenge of Signs and Wonders in World Mission for the Twentieth Century," in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 161-65.

[59] David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table of Global Mission: 2000," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24:1 (Jan 2000), pp. 24-25 (24). For a comparison, the mid-2001 projected figures are: 533,581,000 Pentecostal/Charismatics; 346,650.000 Protestants; and 1,070,457,000 Roman Catholics, idem, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2001," *IBMR* 25:1 (Jan 2001), pp. 24-25 (24). For observations of Pentecostal church growth, see, e.g., Donald A. McGavran, "What Makes Pentecostals Grow?" in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 121-23; C. Peter Wagner, "Characteristics of Pentecostal Church Growth," in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, pp. 125-32.

[60] Young-gi Hong, "The Backgrounds and Characteristics of the Charismatic Mega-churches in Korea," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3:1 (2000), pp. 99-138 (101, 104). According to his classification, a mega-church has over 10,000 Sunday attendants (p. 100 n. 4). For the Philippines, see George W. Harper, "Philippine Tongues of Fire? Latin American Pentecostalism and the Future of Filipino Christianity," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3:1 (2001), pp. 225-59.

[61] Yeol-soo Eim, "The Roots of Korean Pentecostalism" (A paper presented at the Theological Symposium for Asian Church Leaders at the 18th Pentecostal World Conference, Seoul, Korea in Sept 1988), pp. 48-49 observes that the Korean Assemblies of God began to grow notably only after the opening of its Bible school.

theology may have been the main force behind the explosive growth of Pentecostalism.

3.5 By Illustration

I would like to offer two examples, both taken from Pentecostal congregations. The first is rather a microscopic one representing a local development, while the other is macroscopic representing an international movement. The two are selected to illustrate that a global movement is possible only where there is a local movement. It is like the earth revolves itself, and this provides necessary energy for the earth to circle around the sun.

3.5.1 Local Reproduction

> The Kankana-ey tribe dwells in the rugged mountains of the northern Philippines. Small villages are accessible only by hiking. The average life span is short, since little medical services are available. Often their traditional religious practices, such as sacrifices and funerals, worsen their lifestyle conditions. Buguias is a Kankana-ey municipality of the Benguet Province. Buguias borders with the neighboring Ifugao Province, with the Kalango-ya tribe right behind the Pulag Mountain. Thus, often Kalango-yas trade with Kankana-eys and their children go to schools with Kankana-eys in Buguias. Naturally the Kankana-eys in Buguias have developed an affinity with the Kalango-yas, although traditionally the mountain tribes are known for their headhunting practices.
>
> Balili is an old Kankana-ey "mother church" in this area. As the church grew, members residing in a far distance wanted to have their own "chapel," especially for the long rainy season. Thus, the Sebang Church was born. In Sebang Church, Miss Pynie Bacasen, a young Bible school graduate, naturally motivated several young people to pray for the Kalango-yas over the mountains. One summer, Pynie hiked through the Spanish Trail often infested by Communist guerrillas. When she reached Cocoy after a five-hour hike, she found children all over the mountain villages. She conducted a vacation Bible school, and soon a church was born in this strictly animistic community. Young people from Sebang made almost weekly journeys to Cocoy to strengthen the believers. Through prayer, people were healed, and others were delivered from ominous dreams. In spite of much opposition from the village priest, the church grew steadily. Within a year, the church building was dedicated through the joint work of Balili, Sebang and Cocoy.
>
> At this time, the young people of Cocoy began to pray for another nearby village, Docucan, as all the Cocoy children go to school in this

> community. Pynie led young volunteers from Cocoy, as well as Sebang, in her weekly evangelistic journeys to Docucan. Again, during this time, the young people regularly prayed for healing and deliverance from various spiritual and physical problems. When the church was constructed, the joint workforce consisted of people from Babili, Sebang, Cocoy and Docucan. Before the Docucan building was completed, the newest church had already begun to send their young people regularly to a nearby village, Ambakbak. Already six families there are worshipping the Lord. Now, four churches are "daughtering" this village church and they began to construct the church building and expect to finish it very soon. The ultimate goal for this "chain of daughter churches" is Tinuc, the most influential and sizeable Kalango-ya center in the country. The good news is that already there has been a Bible study at the center of this tribal region. Again, this is a joint ministry participated in by all the "mother" and "daughter" churches: Babili, Sebang, Cocoy, Docucan and now Ambakbak.

3.5.2 International Reproduction[62]

International Charismatic Service (ICS) in Hong Kong is a multi-national and multi-cultural Pentecostal congregation. This became a home for many foreign employees in this bustling city. A significant ethnic group was Filipinos serving in various jobs. The predominant component of the Filipino congregation (later they had their own worship center due to their large number) were women who worked as house helpers. Many of them had left their families and even children behind. Many found Christ in their lonely life in this city.

As a Pentecostal church, members have been deeply committed to missionary works, much interested in reaching Mainland China. In the early 1990s, the church noticed that Mongolia was about to be opened to the outside world. The church sent a 50-member evangelistic team in September, 1992. At least two of them were Filipina workers who gave their precious vacation time (normally spent visiting home and their children) to this missionary cause. The team conducted a one-week open air evangelistic crusade in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of this newly opened country. As a result, the Hope Church was established with a group of 300 new converts of the crusade.

The Hope Church is one of the largest (with around 600 Sunday attendance) and thriving churches. A Bible school in the church has

---

[62] Details of this example were furnished by Kay Fountain on Aug 20, 2002, Baguio, Philippines, and through an e-mail message of Jordan Abellano, "Re: An Information" (icafm@vol.net) (Aug 22, 2002).

produced many workers. As a mother church, the Hope Church is now beginning to reach many rural areas of Mongolia with the gospel.

3.5.3 Summary

These are good examples of "full-circle mission." One can easily observe several unique features in this "four-generation" expansion of God's work within an eight-year span.

1) The churches have been naturally taking the missionary work as part of their Christian calling. This can be easily attributed to the exposure of the members to Pentecostal teaching.
2) In all cases, the major ministry force has been laity. In fact, Pynie is the only trained and licensed worker with the Philippine Assemblies of God for the first example, while the majority of team members were laity for the Mongolian evangelistic crusade.
3) Their commitment is something noticeable, as during the six-month rainy season, they still continue to hike several hours through rugged and stiff mountain trails to minister to the people. Of course, sacrificing their yearly vacation for mission requires a great resolution and commitment.
4) Praying for healing is a regular part of their ministry. Often a story of God's supernatural work provides a breakthrough in evangelism.

There is no doubt that such "empowerment mission" in micro levels can be easily expended into a global scope. And this potential makes the Pentecostal mission unique and promising.

4. Suggestions for Pentecostal Mission

The following suggestions are listed as several practical tips.

4.1 Theoretical Level

In this area, a serious attempt is necessary to articulate the significance of Pentecostal mission. This includes the theological foundations, historical records, and practical/strategic approaches of Pentecostal mission. This attempt should be done at various levels, including Sunday school materials, missionary training manuals, and textbooks for Bible colleges.

For this reason, a networking of Pentecostal missiologists is urgent. Such an international and interdenominational body of Pentecostal missiologists should be able to produce textbooks to be used widely, not only among Pentecostal schools but also Evangelical institutions. Also desirable is an academic journal solely dedicated to Pentecostal mission. Again, the body of Pentecostal missiologists can easily launch such a journal.

This will also require an inter-agency corporation among Pentecostal mission agencies, archives and schools. An interlink among Pentecostal archives will provide a rare resource immediately accessible by anyone interested in Pentecostal history and mission. The publication of historical materials, including life stories of missionaries, will provide a valuable primary source.

Also critical is the training of mission faculty members for Pentecostal schools. Schools and programs which provide training specifically from a Pentecostal perspective should be identified and actively utilized.

4.2 New Role for Western Churches

Pentecostal churches in North America and Europe have greatly contributed to the spread of the Spirit movement all over the world through their missionary work. Most Asian Pentecostal churches are a direct result of their missionary work.

However, as the western Pentecostal churches begin to loose their dynamic, especially due to the decline of their growth, this is particularly true for Pentecostal churches with a congregational polity, as the success or decline of their missionary work is directly linked to the growth or decline of their churches. Local churches need to provide missionary personnel, funds, and influence. Unfortunately, most of the classical Pentecostal churches in the West have either stopped growing or are even loosing their members. The simple and best way to reverse this unfortunate trend is to make their churches grow. The challenge is when this growth does not happen, then is the time to find new constructive ways to “continue” the Pentecostal mission heritage.

First, it is to “mentor” the developing mission forces in the two-thirds world. The growth of the Pentecostal movement in the new century will continue to take place in the non-western world. It is also clear that some of these churches are already sending their missionaries to nearby countries, as Korean Pentecostal missionaries working in Asia, far away, as African missionaries in Asia, or even to the western world. As

mentioned above, in most cases this missionary movement came about from a self-understanding of these churches, rather than an intentional training of western missionaries.[63] This is a time for the western churches to assist the two-thirds world churches to become effective and intentionally Pentecostal mission forces. Some areas can be institutional assistance such as mission structuring, recruitment, training, developing support systems, missionary education in local churches, etc., and while on the field, individual missionaries can mentor, train and partner with missionaries from emerging nations.

Second, the western churches should also train ethnic congregations in their own countries for mission. For instance, the U.S. Assemblies of God has various ethnic groups as part of its congregation. In fact, in the past several years, the net growth of the denomination is attributed to the growth of this sector, while the traditional white congregations have declined. Considering the local church based mission policy, it is imperative to bring the ethnic sector into the mainstream missionary movement.

4.3 The Role of Missionaries

The new role of western Pentecostal missionaries was mentioned briefly above. Pentecostal missionaries have excelled in evangelism, church planting, even in social services in some areas, and distinguished in the area of training. Training schools and programs have greatly contributed to the expansion of the Pentecostal movement in the non-western world.

Now, missionaries, regardless of their origin, and national leaders should work together to actively teach Pentecostal, or full-cycle, mission to local churches. One effective way is to partner with national workers to engage in evangelism, church planting and training, so that national workers will be theoretically and practically oriented to unique Pentecostal mission. This will also require the missionaries to prepare themselves not only in missiology in general, but Pentecostal missiology in particular. In Asia, the educational level of national leaders has been rising steadily and now we are beginning to see many national workers better prepared in theological education than some missionaries. Often a good role model is the best way to teach and train others. With resources

[63] Perhaps this is shown among Korean Pentecostal missionaries now serving in various places whose theology and practice of mission is not different from their Evangelical colleagues.

available to missionaries, they must actively partner with nationals or even with missionaries from other nations in training for future mission.

4.4 Global Networking

In order to achieve these new goals, it is critical to have a broader participation. How various national groups such as denominations can be helped by others was discussed earlier. In addition, regional mission associations such as Assemblies of God Asian Missions Association (AGAMA) should take an active role to network member churches. Also important is the role of regional schools. For instance, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS) in the Philippines has trained numerous top-quality Asian missionaries. What is important is that it provides a natural environment where students develop mission awareness and commitment. Some of the Asian students had almost no ideas about mission, when they first came to APTS. But in the course of their study they developed a strong mission's commitment and eventually became career missionaries and they are still active. However, true networking should take place at the grass roots level among individual missionaries, or between missionaries and nationals.

In closing, it appears that Pentecostal mission holds a unique key to full circle mission. In this aspect, history and theology of Pentecostal mission in the last century is too uniquely significant to be buried in a history book. There has not been sufficient reflection on the theology and strategies of Pentecostal mission. This requires a close working together in academic (reflection), institutional (strategic), and missionary (practical) levels. However, as history tells, perhaps because of human limitation, one particular group is not to continuously hold the tradition, but to mentor another. Here are different roles of Pentecostal churches worldwide. Could it be like a human? There is a time to grow and bear children, but then to nurture, grow and empower them, so that the tradition will continue.