

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies



Volume 13, Number 1 (July 2010)

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 13:1 2010

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
P. O. Box 377
Baguio City 2600, Philippines

www.aps.edu/ajps

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
ISSN 0118-8534
Vol. 13, No. 1 (2010)

Editor
Paul Lewis

Editorial Board: Simon Chan (Trinity Theological College, Singapore), Paul Elbert (Pentecostal Theological Seminary, USA), Gordon D. Fee (Regent College, Canada), Peter Kuzmic (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, USA), Wonsuk Ma (Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, UK), Russell P. Spittler (Vanguard University, USA), Vinson Synan (Regent University, USA)

Book Review Editor: Roli Dela Cruz

Editorial Assistance: Glenda Dutcher, Eveline Lewis, Ruth Wilson (Proofreading)

ASIAN JOURNAL OF PENTECOSTAL STUDIES is published twice per year (January and July) by the Faculty of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 377, Baguio City 2600, Philippines. Part or whole of the current and previous issues may be available through the internet (<http://www.ajps.edu/ajps>). Views expressed in the *Journal* reflect those of the authors and reviewers, and not the views of the editors, the publisher, or the participating institutions.

@ *Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, 2010*

Copyright is waived where reproduction of material from this *Journal* is required for classroom use or course work by students.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS: Educational or research institutions that are interested in participating in the *Journal* ministry are encouraged to write to the *Journal* office. The following are participating institutions of the *Journal*:

Asian Pentecostal Society, Philippines (Dr. Joseph Suico)
Central Bible College, Tokyo, Japan (Dr. Koichi Kitano)
Asia LIFE University, Daejeon, Korea (Dr. Yeol-Soo Eim)
International Theological Institute, Seoul, Korea (Dr. Sam-Hwan Kim)

THE JOURNAL SEEKS TO PROVIDE A FORUM: to encourage serious theological thinking and articulation by Pentecostals/Charismatics in Asia; to promote interaction among Asian Pentecostals/Charismatics and dialogue with other Christian traditions; to stimulate creative contextualization of the Christian faith; and to provide a means for Pentecostals/Charismatics to share their theological reflection.

(Continue on back inside cover)

(Continued from front inside cover)

MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOK REVIEWS submitted for consideration should be sent to *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, P.O. Box 377, Baguio City 2600, Philippines (fax: 63-74 442-6378; E-mail: ajps@agmd.org). Manuscripts and book reviews should be typed double-spaced. Manuscripts should conform in style to the 6th Edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. An additional style guide will be sent upon request. The *Journal* encourages contributors to submit an electronic copy prepared through a popular word processor mailed in a Windows-compatible disk or sent as an email attachment.

BOOK FOR REVIEW: Send to the *Journal* Office.

CORRESPONDENCE: Subscription correspondence and notification of change of address should be sent to the subscription office or email to: Paul Lewis (paul.lewis63@gmail.com)

For the following areas, you may contact the following friends for subscription orders and other inquiries:

For North America: Paul Elbert, Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN 37320-3330, USA (email: pelbert@windstream.net)

For Southeast Asia (except the Philippines) and South Asia:
Mr. Tan Woon Khang, 41 Nadia, 10 Persiaran Residen, Desa Parkcity 52200 Kuala Lumpur (email: tanwk8@yahoo.com)

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES: Annual subscription rates including surface mail are: P300 for the Philippines; US\$18.00 for Asian countries; and US\$23.00 for other countries, including Australia and New Zealand. For more details, see the Subscription/Order form.

THIS PERIODICAL IS INDEXED in *Religion index One: Periodicals*, the *index* to books Review in religion, Religion Indexes: Ten Subset on CD-ROM, and the ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Floor., Chicago, IL 60606 USA, email: atla@atla.com, <http://www.atla.com/>.

Printed in the Philippines
Cover calligraphy @ Shigeo Nakahara, 1997

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

Volume 13, Number 1 (January 2010)

<u>EDITORIAL</u>	1-2
 <u>ARTICLES</u>	
Wessly Lukose	
Pentecostal Beginnings in Rajasthan, India: Part 2	3-19
Panthakan Phanon	
Double <i>Hesed</i> of God in Naomi's life (Ruth 1:19-22)	20-39
Joel Tejedo	
Pentecostal Civic Engagement: How Ilocano Pentecostal Churches Build Poor Communities In the Philippines	41-64
Dhan Prakash	
Toward a Theology of Social Concern: A Pentecostal Perspective	65-97
Roli G. dela Cruz	
Preaching among Filipino Pentecostals and Exposition Through Testimonial Hermeneutics: A positive Contribution of the PGCAAG to Evangelicalism In the Philippines	98-123
Edwardneil Benavidez and Doreen Benavidez	
Truth and Integrity: Considering the Issue of Standard (Judges 9: 7-21)	125-142

BOOK REVIEWS

- Roli dela Cruz: Review of Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüländ, *“Give Jesus a Hand!” Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines* 145-148
- Kay Fountain: Review of Randal Rauser, *Finding God in The Shack* 149-151
- Roli dela Cruz: Review of Harold A. Netland and Keith E. Yandell, *Spirituality Without God?: Buddhist Enlightenment and Christian Salvation* 152-155
- Darrin Rodgers: Review of Tavita Pagaialii, *Pentecost “to the Uttermost”: A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa* 156-157
- Roli dela Cruz: Review of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ed. *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* 158-161

CONTRIBUTORS

162

Editorial

A primary focus of the Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies has been the continuing engagement of Pentecostal scholarship both by Asian Pentecostal scholars and by Pentecostal scholars on topics that are pertinent to the Asia and Pacific Rim region. As such, it is the endeavor of this journal and its editors to actively encourage appropriate writing and research. To this end, in this issue (e.g. Panthakan Phanon; like in previous and forthcoming issues) there are submissions by current theology students or recent graduates. Whereas their submissions must still go through the typical peer-review process, it is noted that these are referred to this journal due to their insight and compelling arguments that further the focus of this journal. It is the hope of the editors that this proactive stance would further the cause of Asian Pentecostal scholarship both now and in the years to come.

In this issue, the first essay is the second part of the two parts on the development of the Pentecost movement in Rajasthan, India. Wessly Lukose, in this part, emphasizes the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan, India. The following essay, by Panthakan Phanon, looks into greater detail of the story of Naomi in Ruth with special reference to Ruth 1:19-22. The author highlights the depth of God's goodness in regards to Naomi.

Joel Tejedo focuses his research on the Ilocano speaking region of the Northern Luzon area of the Philippines. He compares and contrasts through qualitative analysis the highland (in the mountainous region of the Cordilleras) and the lowland Ilocano Pentecostal churches in regards to their perspective and action in Pentecostal civic engagement. The following essay also deals with the issue of civic engagement. Dhan Prakash, an Indian Pentecostal, proposes a framework by which to promote a Pentecostal theology of social concern.

Roli dela Cruz, writing for the Philippine Homiletics Society, delineates how preaching through a 'testimonial hermeneutics' can be used within a Filipino context. A goal of this essay is to both demonstrate the utility of this approach for the Assemblies of God of the Philippines (Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God—PGCAG) and make a contribution to Evangelicalism in the Philippines. The subsequent essay is jointly written by Edward Neil

2 *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 13:1 (2010)

Benavidez and Doreen Benavidez, who propose a reading of Judges 9: 7-21. The focus is on 'Truth and Integrity' of Jotham's speech.

Editors

PENTECOSTAL BEGINNINGS IN RAJASTHAN, INDIA: Part Two

Wessly Lukose

The second part of the study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan discusses contemporary features of the movement including Pentecostal concentration in the state and its socio-cultural status. It also deals with the relationship between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals including the Pentecostal impact on other Christian sectors as well as the ecumenical attempts in the state.

4. Contemporary Pentecostalism in Rajasthan

Although Pentecostals made little advancement in the beginning, Pentecostalism is making a significant progress in the state today. It is true that most pioneer missionaries of Rajasthan were independent workers concentrating mainly on their local churches. However, currently there are a number of Pentecostal organizations working and at least four North Indian Pentecostal organizations have their headquarters in Rajasthan. Although Pentecostals are a minority, they try to involve themselves in various aspects of society and also contribute to the development of the community in several ways. As a result, Pentecostalism has become a significant local religious movement.

4.1. Pentecostal Concentration

As mentioned earlier, the Pentecostal message first came to three districts of Rajasthan, namely Banaswara, Ajmer and Udaipur. However, Pentecostalism expanded to other districts in the course of time. Today there are Pentecostals, at least in small numbers, in almost all 33 districts of Rajasthan, except Baran. The northern districts of Rajasthan were the regions most neglected by Christianity in general

due to their desert climate as well as the repressive religious nature of the people. However, very recently some Pentecostal churches have chosen to concentrate on north Rajasthan. For example, FFCI has launched evangelism and church-planting missions in the districts of Bikaner and Nagaur. Bethel Fellowship began a church-planting mission in the districts of Dhaulpur, Dausa, Karauli, Sawai Madhupur, and Hanumangarh in 2004. Although North Rajasthan does not have a significant Pentecostal presence, all those districts now have a few Pentecostal congregations.

Southern Rajasthan has the greatest representation of Pentecostal Christianity. Three districts, namely Udaipur, Jaipur, Banaswara and Ajmer, have the largest number of Pentecostals. However, these three districts have the greatest representation of Christians generally. Most Charismatic organizations concentrate on these districts, mainly because of the responsive nature of the tribal people there. Another reason is that it is comparatively easy to work where there is some Christian presence, rather than working in a new place. Also, there is a tendency to build on the foundation of others. Although many South Indian pioneer missionaries concentrated only on South Indians in the beginning of their ministry, they have gradually changed their focus to natives. Many Kerala churches also have changed their attention from their own communities to Rajasthanis. For example, until recently, the Rajasthan chapter of IPCoG did not have many local congregations. On 28 February 2007, it inaugurated their mission centre in Jaipur with the aim of reaching the natives.¹ They have also launched a Bible Training Centre with the intention of training Rajasthani missionaries to establish churches locally.

The research shows that Udaipur has the maximum representation of Pentecostals. The change in focus of Pentecostals in Banaswara, Jaipur and Udaipur is very evident. In Banaswara, Pentecostals concentrated their missionary activities on the villages, and tended to neglect urban areas, except for a few congregations, which are focusing on certain linguistic communities. For example, there are four congregations concentrating only on the South Indians, mainly people from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In Jaipur, the Pentecostal focus was the city, and little effort was made until recently to reach villages. The best example is the Alpha church, the largest Pentecostal church in the district. Peter Kuruvila, the founder and senior minister of the church,

¹ 'IPC Rajasthan Mission Centre *Uthkhadanam*,' *Subhashitham* 2, no. 6 (2007): 5

and also a prominent Pentecostal leader, has admitted that his church realized the significance of reaching the villages only very recently.² Subsequently, they have appointed missionaries to a few nearby villages. In Udaipur, Pentecostals seem to have focused both on the city as well as villages. There are a number of churches in the villages under the banner of various organizations, and in most parts of the district there is a Pentecostal church. At the same time there are Pentecostal churches in the city as well. Rajasthan Pentecostal Church (RPC) is the largest Pentecostal congregation in the whole state, with over six hundred members. Calvary Covenant Fellowship is another growing Pentecostal congregation in the city. Most leaders admit that Filadelfia Bible College (FBC) is a major reason for the growth of Pentecostalism in Udaipur. Apart from that, Aravalli Bible Training Centre is established as a daughter institute of FBC, recently expanding its mission to the neighbouring villages. There was no established Pentecostal training school in Jaipur until recently. In brief, it can be argued that since Pentecostals in Udaipur have focused both on the city as well as villages in their mission work, the district has seen the greatest expansion of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. However, Pentecostals in Banaswara as well as Jaipur have failed to maintain a balance between urban and rural mission, but have concentrated on either one or the other. Consequently, Pentecostals did not expand there as much as in Udaipur.

People from existing churches were the first converts of Pentecostalism, as most Pentecostal missionaries began their work among them. Nevertheless, gradually the focus has shifted to the non-Christian natives, and so villages soon became the main focus. Although non-tribals were approached in the early stage of Pentecostal missions, the tribals soon became the primary target as they began to be responsive to the Pentecostal message.

4.2. A Predominantly Tribal Religion

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is a movement of the poor and the marginalized segments of the society, particularly tribals. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is predominantly a tribal movement, in spite of the fact that it has followers from non-tribal backgrounds as well. Pentecostalism has made inroads into many tribal communities in Rajasthan, and so a majority of its followers are tribals.

² Peter Kuruvila, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 08 May 2006.

Twelve out of the eighteen Pentecostal leaders who were interviewed revealed that their focus is on the tribal people. Seven of them said that their mission service is completely among the tribal groups. Six leaders said that they had not yet turned to tribal communities. However, four of the six have only South Indians as members in their churches, and their church services are in their mother tongue, Malayalam. Although the majority of Pentecostals are from the Bhil tribe, as it is the case with Christianity in general in Rajasthan, Pentecostalism has followers from other tribes as well.³

It is important to understand why tribal communities have turned to Pentecostalism. Although the spiritual means like healing and exorcism are the major means for the growth of tribal Pentecostalism, identity concern seems to be an important reason for the tribals turning to Pentecostalism. The identity issue has always been a significant issue in the Indian context among the Dalits and other socially downtrodden people since early times. It is observed that as in the case of the conversion of many Dalits to Buddhism during the time of Ambedkar,⁴ one of the major reasons for the tribal people embracing Pentecostalism is related to the issue of identity. Ambedkar realized the need to have a better identity for Dalits. Balkrishna Govind Gokhale's study reveals that Ambedkar was searching for a total transformation in the lives of his followers into 'a new identity, a new culture,' and that is why they accepted Buddhism.⁵ Many tribal pastors and believers have argued that they have gained a new identity through becoming Pentecostals. Some of them have said that their status and position have improved. One pastor has admitted, 'we were not allowed to sit along with certain groups of the people, but here in the church we have been seated along with great servants of God.'⁶

³ For an understanding of people groups who have representation in various forms of Christianity, see Rajasthan Harvest Network, *To Glorify God by Reaching the Unreached in Rajasthan for Lord Jesus Christ*. (Jaipur, India: Rajasthan Harvest Network, 1998).

⁴ Ambedkar is known as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He had to suffer a great deal from the high castes as he was from a lower caste Hindu background. He, along with many of his followers, embraced Buddhism after considering many alternatives.

⁵ Balkrishna Govind Gokhale, 'Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: Rebel against Hindu Tradition,' in *Religion and Social Conflict*, 21.

⁶ Heeralal, interview by author, Kherwara, Rajasthan, 06 May 06. 'Great servant of God' (*Parameswar ka Mahan Das*) is a common term used by

Anderson's observation regarding the involvement of laity in Pentecostal worship seems to be significant factor that appeals to the masses in Rajasthan. According to him, Pentecostal liturgy with the emphasis on 'freedom in the Spirit' has also been a factor that has contributed to the appeal of the movement. Anderson observes, This spontaneous liturgy, which Hollenweger has identified as mainly oral and narrative, with an emphasis on a direct experience of God through his Spirit, results in the possibility of ordinary people being lifted out of their mundane daily experiences into a new realm of ecstasy, aided by the emphasis on speaking in tongues, loud and emotional simultaneous prayer, and joyful singing, clapping, raising hands and dancing in the presence of God. This made pentecostal worship easily assimilated into different cultural contexts.... Furthermore, this was available for everyone, and the involvement of the laity became the most important feature of pentecostal worship....⁷

Women also have been given a voice in Pentecostal churches. They have said that they were not encouraged to come to the front, but in the church they have been given the opportunity to participate and take responsibility, 'We are allowed to preach, share, and give testimony, and also to lead the choir and prayer groups.'⁸ Practices, such as the holy hug⁹ following the Holy Communion, non-tribal believers and pastors eating along with the tribal believers and pastors, the seating of unschooled and untrained pastors along with the trained and the educated pastors and leaders, the involvement of the entire congregation in worship, Scripture reading, prayer and testimony, were cited by tribal Pentecostals to show that they are welcomed and accepted by the Pentecostal community with little discrimination. They have argued that such opportunities have provided them with a new identity. However, this does not mean that there is no differentiation in the Pentecostal churches, and the tension within the movement is also noticeable.

Pentecostals in North India to address a Christian minister who has a well-known ministry or who is possessed with much power of the Holy Spirit.

⁷ Allan Anderson, 'Global Pentecostalism in the New Millennium,' in *Pentecostals after a Century*, 223.

⁸ Group interview by author, Macadadeo, Rajasthan, 07 May 2006.

⁹ There is a practice in Rajasthan of embracing fellow Pentecostals after Holy Communion, which they call the 'holy hug.' However, one is only allowed to embrace members of the same sex.

What McGavran calls the ‘redemption and lift’ factor also seems to be important in the choice of Pentecostalism by the marginalized.¹⁰ He talks about the spiritual redemption and the socio-economic lift Christianity brings to the masses. At the same time, McGavran argues that the line between ‘redemption’ and ‘lift’ is a thin one, and therefore such ‘separation must not be too rigorously interpreted.’¹¹ However, Peter Wagner underlines that this ‘redemption and lift’ has been taking place among the Pentecostals as well, especially when people from the lower strata of society are converted.¹² A careful look into the Pentecostal Movement in Rajasthan shows that this ‘redemption and lift’ factor is likely to be another reason for the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism among the tribal communities in Rajasthan. The tribal Pentecostals in Rajasthan can be seen as a redeemed and lifted up community. A.T. Cherian’s study shows that there was socio-economic enhancement of tribal people after coming to Christian faith, and his survey included Pentecostals also.¹³ Most people said that they also achieved material prosperity by the power of the Holy Spirit. They shout the slogan that ‘we are not poor, but rich in the Lord.’

4.3. A Growing Christian Sector

Although Pentecostals were initially looked down on as a sect and were not welcomed in Rajasthan, today they are accepted by other Christians. Christian growth was extremely slow in the state. However, with the coming of Pentecostals, the momentum for the growth of Christianity in Rajasthan has increased. Currently, Pentecostals are the fastest growing sector of Rajasthan Christianity despite the fact that they are latecomers in the soil. Many non-Pentecostal leaders have acknowledged Pentecostal impact in the state. According to Chouhan, a leading evangelical leader in Rajasthan, the charismatic expression of Christianity is responsible for the present growth of Christianity in Rajasthan.¹⁴ Post-independence Rajasthan saw the establishment of various Pentecostal organizations and the formation of numerous Pentecostal congregations in diverse parts of the state. Cherian’s

¹⁰ For more details, see Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 209-220.

¹¹ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 212.

¹² C. Peter Wagner, *Look Out! Pentecostals are Coming* (Illinois: Creation House, 1973), 70-71.

¹³ A.T. Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches.’

¹⁴ Chouhan (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 09 May 2006.

research also shows that Pentecostalism has brought expansion to Christianity in Rajasthan and concludes that although missionary work began in Udaipur district in the nineteenth century, there were hardly a hundred local Christian families, but with the coming of the Pentecostal message there are now hundreds of local Christian families in the district.¹⁵

One important question to consider is who Pentecostals are. As mentioned earlier, this thesis follows an inclusive definition of Pentecostalism. A broad definition is needed to refer to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as some of the early classical Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan have now moved closer to the Neo-Pentecostals in response to changing contexts. Using this definition, there are many churches in Rajasthan that believe and practise the spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit emphasis is seen in many churches. There have been changes in worship and preaching styles in several churches, including the main-line churches. However, the task of categorizing the churches in terms of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is not so easy. The issue has two complex aspects. The first one is the hesitation of classical Pentecostals to include other churches as Pentecostal. They think that such an attempt will cause them to have to compromise, and tempt them to dilute many Pentecostal doctrines, which they consider unique.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that many South Indian Pentecostals in Rajasthan have this attitude, and it is not surprising to learn that almost all of them are from a classical Pentecostal background. The second aspect is the unwillingness of non-Pentecostals to align themselves with the Pentecostals. Many non-Pentecostals fear their church leaders. Others say that denominationalism is not the issue; rather the Holy Spirit is to be given His due place in the church, and so they are not interested in categorizing themselves.¹⁷

Although early Pentecostal missionaries worked as independent missionaries without any external support, today there are at least twelve Pentecostal organizations working in Rajasthan, apart from many independent local congregations, in various places. Then there are six other independent local congregations based in cities, but having

¹⁵ A.T. Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival, the Key to Church Growth,' *Filadelfia Jyoti*, Souvenir (Udaipur, India: FBC, 2006), 40. Cherian has done an exhaustive research on Christianity among the Bhils in Jhadol Taluk.

¹⁶ Many Classical Pentecostals in Rajasthan argue that adult baptism, speaking in tongues and holiness are some of the unique doctrines of Pentecostalism, and they need to sacrifice them just for the sake of worship and healing.

¹⁷ For example, the CNI pastor at Beawar has the same opinion.

outstations in the surrounding villages. Three out of the above eighteen Pentecostal organizations are concentrating mainly on South Indians in their missionary activities. Another three out of these eighteen focuses on only Rajasthanis. The other twelve are missionary organizations, with a multicultural focus. Seven out of these twelve have church-planting missions in other states as well. Four of them are based in Rajasthan. FFCI has begun in Rajasthan and has expanded to other states and is one of the largest indigenous missionary organizations in North India, having more than a thousand churches covering at least thirteen North Indian states.

There are seven Pentecostal institutes for theological education in the state today. Filadelfia Bible College, established by Thomas Mathews and Thampy Mathew, is the first and the only established institute that offers programmes that are validated by an accreditation agency. Both the Gospel for Asia Training Centre and the Aravali Bible Training Centre offer programmes, which are approved by their mother theological institutes. There are two schools, which are approved by their parent organization. The other two training centres are run by the respective missionary organizations with an aim to train local workers for church-planting missions. At the same time, both FFCI and Mission India run short-term laity training at regular intervals. As a result of these missionary organizations and theological institutes, there are hundreds of congregations in the state today.

At the same time there are dozens of schools and orphanages aiming at the socio-economic development of local communities. Although Pentecostals in Rajasthan were apolitical, as in many parts of the globe, they have begun to be involved in politics, and so there are village leaders from the Pentecostal community.

4.4. A Rajasthani Movement

As discussed above, missionaries from North Indian states have played a significant role in bringing the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan, and South Indian missionaries have made a decisive contribution to the making of the movement. However, the real impetus of the movement is the multiplication of many local missionaries. Many non-Rajasthani missionaries began to focus on the Rajasthanis in their evangelistic and church-planting activities. The selected converts were sent for training in Bible schools in other states as there were no Pentecostal theological institutes in Rajasthan until FBC was established in 1982. They returned as missionaries, evangelists, pastors,

teachers and social activists. Consequently, thousands have been attracted to and follow Pentecostalism. They in turn went to work in different villages and established churches, and thus made this a movement in Rajasthan. Thus, both the Rajasthani and non-Rajasthani missionaries have their roles in the origin and growth of the Pentecostal movement in the state.

The most significant fact is that today's Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is identified as a Rajasthani movement where local leaders are at the forefront of leadership, and there has been an increase in the number of local pastors. Although many missionary organizations in Rajasthan have South Indian founders and leadership, most of their workers as well as followers are Rajasthanis. Most of the largest Pentecostal congregations are established by local ministers. Many people who are under training in various theological institutes in the state are Rajasthanis. There are two organizations founded by Rajasthani missionaries and having purely local leadership: Calvary Covenant Fellowship Mission founded by Monohar Kala and Covenant Ministries founded by Pathras Masih. At the same time there are a number of local people who are in the senior leadership, even in those missionary organizations founded by South Indians. For example, Jaswant Rana¹⁸ is currently the joint secretary as well as Christian minority representative of FFCI. Tajendra Masih is serving as an executive council member of FFCI, and he served as its Vice president, along with K.V. Abraham, from Kerala for many years. There are a number of other leaders, such as Samson Wilson and Valu Singh, who served as executive council members for FFCI. There are local ministers serving as teachers in various theological institutes. For example, natives like Benjamin A.K., T. Masih, Cornelius Masih and J. Rana are among the faculty members of FBC. There are schools and orphanages run by local Pentecostals. Many Pentecostals are actively involved in the Tribal Christian Welfare Society of India (TCWSI), and many Pentecostal ministers hold significant positions in this Society. In brief, today mainly natives are seen in Pentecostal congregations, institutes and leadership, and thus they have made Pentecostalism a Rajasthani movement.¹⁹ However, this does not mean that Rajasthanis were given due representation in the senior leadership of all Pentecostal organizations.

¹⁸ Although Jaswant Rana hails from Gujarat, his ancestors are originally from Chittorgarh, Rajasthan.

¹⁹ 'Leadership,' here, means mainly pastors of local congregations.

5. Pentecostals and Non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan

There has been a progressive improvement in the relationship between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Although the relationship was not encouraging in the beginning, gradually they have developed a friendly and healthy relationship, and have begun to mutually respect and accept one another.

5.1. Pentecostal and Non-Pentecostal Divide

Pentecostalism as a product of local revivals among the existing Christian community did not mean that Pentecostals received the same degree of welcome throughout its history. Rather, initially they were not considered a part of the Christian community, as in many other parts of the globe and faced opposition and intolerance from other forms of Christianity. Several stories of the mocking, humiliation, rejection and even physical assault they faced from their non-Pentecostal counterparts were narrated by Pentecostals during the fieldwork.

There is a dual aspect to the opposition faced by Pentecostals. The first is the rejection faced by local Christians who had received supernatural spiritual experiences. They were mocked and mistreated by their church leadership and fellow Christians. For example, as seen earlier, during the revival in Banaswara, there took place unusual spiritual experiences in the prayer meetings of the young boys and girls in the hostel run by the UCNI. There were visible manifestations of Spirit revival, such as weeping, confession of sins and speaking in tongues. However, they were forbidden by the church leadership from gathering together. According to Pathras Masih, it was told that they were 'filled by the evil spirit,' and thus the 'spiritual thirst was quenched by the leaders of the church'.²⁰

According to Tajendra, the first local Pentecostal missionary from Banaswara, the resentful attitude of non-Pentecostals towards Pentecostals is seen at the death of Mrs. Jiwa. The Presbyterians did not provide a place for a church burial when Mrs. Jiwa died, insisting that she was a *dubki vali*. Consequently, she was buried outside the cemetery. However, the important point here is that the leadership of

²⁰ Pathras Masih, interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006. Today, he is one of the most influential Rajasthani Pentecostal leaders.

the Presbyterian Church was not indigenous, and Tajendra thinks that if the church leadership had been local, the story would have been different.²¹

The second aspect of the opposition is that the South Indian Pentecostal missionaries, particularly from Kerala, faced rejection, neglect and opposition from the existing churches. The issue of contention was not the Holy Spirit baptism but rather water baptism. The Kerala missionaries emphasized the importance of adult baptism by immersion, and they taught the need for baptism by immersion even for Christians in other churches who did not receive adult baptism. This is how tension was created, and the Pentecostal missionaries were labelled '*dubki vala*' (the immersion people) and sheep stealers. They were also prohibited from entering into the houses of Christians, and there was public declaration in the existing churches to this effect. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan became known as *dubki mission*. The tension continued for many years as many people were converted from existing churches to Pentecostalism. However, Pentecostals eventually realized the need to avoid the process of 'pentecostalization' of Christians in other churches, and this is why they gradually shifted their focus on to non-Christians, and particularly the tribal communities.

5.2. Pentecostal Impact on Christianity

The current study shows that there are three main areas where the Pentecostal influence on Christianity in Rajasthan is evident. The first one is in the area of Christian spirituality, as was the case with the church in India in general. In my work on 'Pentecostals and Indian Church,' I have found that one of the major contributions of Pentecostalism to Indian Christianity is in the spiritual aspect of church.²² It seems that the church in India tends to be moving towards a waning of spirituality, following the direction of western liberalism and secularism. In his preface to *Fire from Heaven*, Cox states that the predictions of many sociologists prompted him to talk of the death of religion in the West, and that is why, in his book *The Secular City*, he proposed a 'theology for the "postreligious" age.' However, three decades later Cox acknowledged that the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism had convinced him that 'it is secularity, not spirituality

²¹ Tajendra, interview, 23 May 2006.

²² Wessly Lukose, 'Pentecostals and the Indian Church,' *Cross and Crown* 35, no.4 (2005): 12.

that may be headed for extinction.²³ Through lively and vibrant worship and fervent prayer, the churches in Rajasthan became spiritually alive. Today, the Pentecostal style of worship is adopted by many non-Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan. Rev. Lora, a CNI pastor, said that they now have a charismatic style of worship in their church.²⁴ However, many young people feel that this is a tactic by the leadership to encourage them to remain in the church because they are attracted by music and the Pentecostal pattern of lively worship. Based upon extensive field research in Udaipur district, A.T. Cherian argues that the chief local leaders of most non-Pentecostal mission organizations have had a charismatic experience, and so they practise charismatic spirituality in their ministry. He also reveals that most of them have some connection with Pentecostalism.²⁵

The second area of Pentecostal influence is in missions. According to Anderson, one of the chief reasons for Pentecostal growth is its 'strong emphasis on mission and evangelism.'²⁶ Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit. This missionary concept of the Holy Spirit drives them to engage in missionary outreach. When Pentecostals began to make an impact upon tribal communities, many non-Pentecostal organizations also followed their example by working among the tribal groups. This does not mean that Pentecostals were the first to work among the tribal communities; rather the 'successful tribal story of Pentecostals' sparked a new initiative among non-Pentecostals to serve the tribal groups more comprehensively. Pentecostal missionary fire ignited a new vigour, zeal and spirit in the missionary

²³ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), xv. He confidently argued that the age of the secular city will soon spread across the globe, and it is an age of 'no religion at all.' 'It will do no good to cling to our religious and metaphysical versions of Christianity in the hope that one day religion or metaphysics will once again be back. They are disappearing forever and that means we can now let go and immerse ourselves in the new world of the secular city.' See Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 3-4. However, after two decades, he confessed that 'the great era of modern theology,' the 'liberal theology' is coming to an end, and he argued that 'the post modern world will require a different theology.' See Harvey Cox, *Religion in the Secular City: Toward a Postmodern Theology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 268.

²⁴ Lora (pseudonym), interview by author, Beawar, Rajasthan, 17 May 2006.

²⁵ Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival,' 38-39.

²⁶ Anderson, Introduction to Pentecostalism, 206.

activities of other churches as well. Many non-Pentecostal churches began to realize the significance of healing and other spiritual gifts in their mission work. As a result, they have changed their strategies to reach the tribal communities. While conducting a marriage ceremony in a village in the district of Banaswara, a prominent non-Pentecostal leader confessed that the Pentecostal approach would be helpful for his church. He came to the conclusion that only ‘the message and method of Thomas Mathews’ would result in successful mission work in Rajasthan. By this he meant the Pentecostal message and practice, as most Christian leaders consider Mathews to be the most effective Pentecostal missionary in the state.²⁷

The third area of Pentecostal influence is in practical theology. There are two particular aspects of the teaching of other churches that have been influenced by Pentecostals. One example is the attitude of CNI towards the immersion baptism of adults. Until recently, only infant baptism was taught and practised by the CNI. Pentecostals were ridiculed as *dubki vala* in the early days of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. There was a time when members of CNI who received baptism by immersion were expelled from the church. However, the teaching and practice on this issue has changed. In the latest By-Laws of CNI there is an amendment to the section on ‘the sacraments of the Church,’ whereby adult baptism by immersion is termed ‘believer’s baptism,’ and is accepted as an ‘alternative practice’ alongside infant baptism.²⁸ However, some CNI priests and laity see it as a measure to stop the exodus of members to Pentecostal churches. R. Masih, a retired CNI priest, has called the move a ‘defence mechanism.’²⁹ Another important change is in the understanding and practice of spiritual gifts. One influential evangelical leader admitted that his organization made changes both in theology and methodology after they realized the significance of healing and other miracles. He said, ‘we only preached about the person of Christ, but we realized that not only the person, but also the power of Christ is to be preached and demonstrated to have an effective work among these tribal people.’³⁰ It is significant that this

²⁷ For further details, see Lukose, ‘Thomas Mathews,’ 24-27.

²⁸ For more details, see *Constitution of The Church*, 17.

²⁹ R. Masih (pseudonym), interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 17 May 2006.

³⁰ Babu (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 22 May 2006. He is the leader of a large non-Pentecostal organization in Rajasthan, having more than 300 congregations.

leader referred to the ‘power of Christ’ rather than ‘the Holy Spirit.’³¹ However, he acknowledged the changes in their understanding of the manifestation of the power of God. At least five non-Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan who were interviewed admitted, rather reluctantly, that their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit has changed after being influenced by the Pentecostal message.

5.3. Pentecostals and Ecumenical Attempt

There is an increasing interest in ecumenism among Christians in Rajasthan today. There have been efforts in various districts of Rajasthan to build up a unity among various Christian sectors. In many cities like Udaipur, Banaswara, Ajmer and Jaipur, they have formed a united Christian Association. In most cases, they have a monthly meeting and annual assembly, apart from gatherings on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. It is very significant that during such meetings the ministers share the platform irrespective of denomination. In Udaipur, it is the practice that a Pentecostal pastor will preach when the meeting is hosted by a Catholic church, and *vice versa*. Ministers are included in the administrative body of this fellowship, irrespective of denominational differences.

Today, Pentecostal pastors and singers are invited to other churches during special gatherings to preach and lead the praise and worship sessions. Such a practice was unimagined until a few years ago. For example, the RPC choir have been leading the worship during the annual convention of the CNI church in Jodhpur since 2001. Pastor Paul Mathews was invited to be the chief judge in the 2005 singing competition in the CNI church in Udaipur. Many Pentecostal preachers are given an opportunity to preach in mainline churches. I myself was invited to be a guest preacher in the annual convention of a non-Pentecostal church in 2004. Isaiah,³² a CNI priest in Udaipur, used to attend the Sunday service at RPC after his own church service, stating that he and his family were interested in the Pentecostal message and worship. Pentecostals used to consider members of other churches to be nominal Christians or unbelievers and were not encouraged to attend their gatherings. However, today they have begun to participate in the meetings of other churches.

³¹ It is likely that his Brethren pneumatology has restricted him from using the phrase ‘power of the Holy Spirit.’

³² Pseudonym.

Christians in Rajasthan organize *Masih Mela* (Christian Festival) in many villages. It is a common event in many regions of Rajasthan, and usually takes place during the Christmas or Easter season. They organize special Christian gatherings, and people come from far distances to attend. These meetings include devotions, Bible study, separate meetings for women, children and youth, and gospel preaching every evening.

The present research has found two major reasons for the increasing interest in ecumenical initiatives among Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan. For most leaders, the chief reason is the increasing persecution of Christians. The intensified persecution from Hindu militant groups has forced Christians to realize the importance of coming together and acting in unity. Christians feel that their rights are not protected and that they are denied justice, and so, in response, they have decided to come together. There are several examples to underline this fact. The most recent one is the 'peace march' in front of the State Assembly in Jaipur by Christians of all denominations in Rajasthan to protest against the attacks of Hindu militants on the Emmanuel church, Kota. Leaders and members of many churches rallied together under one banner in March 2006.

The second reason for this desire for unity is the increasing understanding between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. There was a time when denominational doctrines created barriers between Christians. However, as discussed earlier, people are being exposed to new expressions of spirituality. It is significant that Pentecostals have changed their attitude to Catholics and other non-Pentecostal Christians. There was a time when Pentecostals believed that Roman Catholicism was the religion of the anti-Christ.³³ Pentecostals were known as sheep stealers. However, the charismatic experience provided opportunities for people to participate in each other's activities and to interact more, and thus they have begun to understand each other better. Due to information technology, people have begun to read about, watch and engage in new experiences, and this has promoted a better understanding of each other. Today CD, DVD, audio and video cassettes, books and magazines containing charismatic messages, praise

³³ K.E. Abraham, *Mahathiyam Babylon* [Babylon the Great] (Kumbanad, India: K.E. Abraham Foundation, 1993) is the best example for understanding the early approach of Indian Pentecostals to Roman Catholicism. Abraham tries to establish that the Catholic Church is the 'mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth' as mentioned in Revelation 17:5.

and worship and other Holy Spirit manifestations are available, even for non-Pentecostals.

This does not mean that there is a smooth relationship between various Christian groups in every part of the state. There is reluctance and a degree of tension in some places. For example, in Ajmer, some Pentecostal pastors have complained that they are not included in the administration of the united fellowship in the city, and that they do not have a voice in such an assembly. Also some non-Pentecostal leaders have pointed out that not all Pentecostals are cooperating in these initiatives. In a discussion during an interview about the ecumenical efforts taking place, Rev. Collin C. Theodore, the CNI Bishop of the Diocese of Rajasthan, expressed his concern that not all were equally interested. He presented me with a book entitled *Uniting in Christ's Mission*,³⁴ and stated that 'this is what I am trying to do, to unite all Christian missions in the state.'³⁵

6. Conclusion

This study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan concludes that the Christian message had reached Rajasthan long before Pentecostals came to the state, where Pentecostalism is not a breakaway movement from either the existing churches or the Pentecostal revival elsewhere in India. The origins and growth of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan are due to four major reasons. First, missionaries from other North Indian states, influenced by the indigenous revivals in various places of the country, brought the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan. In this sense, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be viewed as a product of the missionary outreach of North Indian Pentecostals. Second, the local revivals that took place in the existing churches in Rajasthan have created a spiritual thirst among the Christians. From this perspective, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be regarded as a revival movement linked to the spiritual renewal that took place in the existing churches. Third, missionary activities of South Indian Pentecostals played a significant role in the making of the Pentecostal movement as these missionaries took the Rajasthani revival to new heights. Fourth, the involvement of Rajasthani missionaries caused the movement to spread to almost every district. Despite the divide between Pentecostals and

³⁴ Enos Das Pradhan, Sudipta Singh, and Kasta Dip, eds., *Uniting Christ's Mission: Towards a United, Holistic, Evangelistic and Cross-Cultural Mission* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2006).

³⁵ Collin C. Bishop, interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2006.

non-Pentecostals, Pentecostalism has had an impact on other Christians, and the spirit of ecumenicity is on the rise. Although Pentecostalism is a minority religious movement with most of its followers being tribal it has become the fastest growing Christian sector in Rajasthan.

DOUBLE *HESED* OF GOD IN NAOMI'S LIFE (RUTH 1:19-22)

Panthakan Phanon

INTRODUCTION

As human beings who believe in God, sometimes we do not really understand why God allows bad things to happen in our lives. It may cause us to have a negative emotion or feeling towards Him. What should we do? Should we pretend to praise Him and say that He is good? As I read the book of Ruth, the life of Naomi caught my attention about how Naomi could blame God and God still blessed her. She was real in this story as a human being, which made me desire to understand this passage.

In this paper, I will focus on Ruth 1:19-22, which is about Naomi returning to the house of the Lord. I will find out whether Naomi really did blame God. Did she really mean that God did evil to her? Another question that arose was what was the intention of the narrator when he emphasized the beginning of barley harvest? My guiding principle in interpreting the passage will focus on the historical events that relate to the period of the Judges and its social background. This will help us to have a wider picture of the situation in the book of Ruth. In addition, I will consider word study, as well as textual criticism and some grammatical issues that relate to these passages. Through this paper, I will present the double *hesed*¹ of God through Naomi's life from which

¹The word *hesed* (חֶסֶד) in this paper has a common meaning that means goodness or kindness. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 338. My definition of double *hesed* means goodness or kindness that is given to someone in such a way that is beyond the culture and expectation or hope of the person who is waiting for it. The example is that a poor man might ask us for food in order for him to survive but we give him a drink or even a job. Through this paper, we will be able to see the goodness and kindness of God

we can see God in a different picture that may not be seen from other books in the Old Testament.

Many people have a picture of God in the Old Testament as God who holds the Law rather than a God of grace. However, through Naomi's story we will see grace upon her life. I believe that through this paper, we will have a deeper understanding of Naomi's story and her speech, which will lead us to see that God's *hesed* is beyond the Law. Through this paper, we will love God more than before.

LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE TEXT

In this section, I will provide the background of the book of Ruth, including the different views about authorship, date, theme and purpose. This will help us to understand the deeper view of this book. I will explain briefly why I am not considering the issue of the canonicity of this book.

This book is one of the five Festal Scrolls (*Megilloth*), which are grouped together in order to be read at the five major festivals of the Jewish liturgical year. Sakenfeld points out that the five Festal Scrolls, which include Ruth, may have functioned as a sub-collection in the early period, which developed to be a part of the custom in the later period.² In addition, the genealogy at the end of the book is good strong evidence that may have caused this book to be placed in the canon.³ That is why there is no reason for any new argument about the issue of Ruth being in the canon.

The main issue is not about whether the book of Ruth should belong to the canon or not, but rather the issue of the position of the book of Ruth, whether it should belong to the writings (*Kethubim*) or the prophets (*Nebi'im*). According to Bush, the scholars who hold the position of the book of Ruth belonging in the section of the writings (*Kethubim*) often indicate that the book of Ruth must date to the post-

that was shown to Naomi in such a way that she does not expect and hope for it.

² Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Ruth*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, eds. James Luther Mays and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1999), 8.

³ J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1980), 396.

exilic era.⁴ The main arguments of the issues of date and authorship are still ambiguous amongst scholars.

The argument between the postexilic and pre-exilic dating goes on and on, which falls into the ideas of language, style, environment, theology and legal usage.⁵ Even though I cannot give any absolute answer, in order to set the direction of this paper, which highlights the idea of kindness through the feast of Pentecost, I prefer the pre-exilic date.

The Holistic Genre, Purpose and Theme

According to Block, the genre of this book is complex, falling into three types that are a tale, novella and short story. These different genres cause the book to have more than one theme.⁶ Nielsen points out the structure of Ruth, stating that the bottom line of this story is all about David. He mentions that throughout the book of Ruth, we can see a constant movement between Bethlehem and other places: Bethlehem – Moab – Bethlehem -- the field – Bethlehem - the threshing floor Bethlehem – the town gate – Bethlehem. All of this links to David because his town was Bethlehem.⁷

Hubbard also points out a similar picture that its purpose is “to win popular acceptance of David’s rule by appeal to the continuity of Yahweh’s guidance in the lives of Israel’s ancestors and David.”⁸ In addition, Hubbard says that it lets the alien presence under David’s rule know that they are welcome.

However, Bush holds a different position. He believes that Ruth’s genre is a short story, in which the narrator wants to present the major characters of his story as models for his reader to emulate.⁹ Bush

⁴ Frederic W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 9 eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Publishers, 1996.), 7.

⁵ Kirsten Nielsen, *Ruth: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 29.

⁶ Daniel I. Block, *Ruth*, The New American Commentary, vol. 6 ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Brodman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 603-604.

⁷ Nielsen, 2.

⁸ Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *The Book of Ruth*, The International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 42.

⁹ Bush, 42 and 46.

believes that *hesed* is the theme of this book because it is of the utmost significance as presented through the characters of Ruth, Boaz, Naomi and Yahweh.¹⁰

Interestingly, Hubbard also claims that the genre of this book is most likely a short story because one of the features of a short story is to instruct.¹¹ This brings support for the pre-exilic date because it shows why Ruth should be read in the feast of Pentecost, as this story is a way of teaching the Law from Deu. 16 that they should love their neighbors. The character of *hesed* through the lives of Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi, or even Yahweh, was the way that the narrator used to teach the people. After the time of Judges, Israel became a leading nation and governed many countries that used to be their enemies. What would happen if the Jews at the time of David were full of hatred for their neighbors? The Law would not be fulfilled. That is why I quite agree with Hubbard that Ruth has a political purpose.

Theology in Ruth

According to my research from many scholars, I believe that double *hesed* of God is the main theme of this book. First, the name of God appears in the form of the covenant name for Israel's God, "Yahweh" (1:8,21; 2:20). The name *El Shaddai*, which holds the picture of the Creator who rules and supervises the moral order, punishing evil and rewarding good, is also mentioned. All the positive attributes of God are presented in the word *hesed*, which is presented through Boaz's words and life as well. It is important to note that the word *hesed* cannot be explained in one English word because it includes all the aspects of the positive attributes of God.

Even though the narrator may not directly present God's involvement in Ruth's story, the narrator presents "the hidden hand of God" throughout the story.¹² Hubbard also points out a similar picture, but one thing that is different is that God's *hesed* in this story presents His cosmic role as rewarder.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid, 52.

¹¹ Ibid., 47.

¹² Block, 605-608.

¹³ Hubbard, 69.

LaCocque gives a deeper view that the theological core of this book is “*God is greater than his Law*”, which derives from the theme of *hesed* in the story. Even though God prohibits Israel from participating with foreigners, we can see through the stories of Judah and Ruth that God works beyond His rule. Boaz also acted beyond the law of gleaning. It appears that Ruth also presents a double extraordinary measure of *hesed* because she followed the commandment of the Law in order to redeem the name of the death, which she actually did not need to do.¹⁴ Bush makes the same point that the theme of *hesed* in this story presents the picture of a “going beyond the call of duty.”¹⁵

However, we need to be careful when we say that this book presents only God’s *hesed*. Even though we really do not see the other pictures of God clearly in this book, we need to remember that the events in this story happened in the time of the Judges. In the book of Judges, we can see God’s anger (Judg. 2:11-15) and jealousy (Judg. 2:2). We need to be aware of the other pictures of God in the time of the Judges because they help us to understand the speech of Naomi who lived in the time of the Judges.

The background from the time of the Judges helps us to have a better understanding of the worldview of the people and the picture of God in the book of Ruth. By considering that background, we will be able to understand more about the meaning of the speeches and words of Naomi along with the other actors in the story who relate to our passage.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF RUTH’S STORY

In order to understand the story of Ruth, especially the speech of Naomi in chapter 1:19-21, we need to understand and know about life, the social situation and religion during the time of the Judges. These elements are essential to the plot of Ruth. The narrator has set the direction of this story in verse 1, which says “In the days when the judges ruled (Rut 1:1 RSV).” This indicates that the author of Ruth was familiar with this time.¹⁶

¹⁴ Andre LaCocque, *Ruth*, trans. K.C. Hanson, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 29-30.

¹⁵ Bush, 53.

¹⁶ Block, 596.

By understanding the background of the Judges, we will be able to gain some insight into the intention of the narrator who wants to communicate through the character and the speech of Naomi to the audience. This is because “the plot serves to organize events in such a way as to arouse the reader’s interest and emotional involvement, while at the same time imbuing the events with meaning.”¹⁷ Also, as I mentioned above, this book functions as an instruction that serves to teach the people. It indicates that the time of the Judges must be very important for this story, so understanding that time will help us to understand our passage in a deeper way.

Life in the Book of Judges

The book of Judges presents many perspectives on human nature, but one important view that we can see is sin. We can see the idea of sin, not only in Israel or in the nations who lived around them, but also in the lives of the people in the time of the Judges. The Bible says, “Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD ...” (Judg 2:11). They did evil things because “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25). It cannot mean anything other than that the time of the Judges was the time when the people of God did evil.

The word evil (עָוֹן) appears only one time throughout the speech of Naomi, who says, “The Almighty did evil to me” (Rut 1:21, my translation). This is the core of the main plot of this story that is called “problem-based plot.”¹⁸ However, the word evil (רָעָה) that appears in the book of Judges was used to refer to humans, not to God, “And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD” (Judg 10:6 RSV). This can be considered irony if we contrast Naomi’s speech who lived in the time of Judges with the theme of *hesed* of Yahweh in the book of Judges (10:13-16).

¹⁷Shimon, Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Journal for Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 70 eds. David J A Clines and Philip R Davies (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 93.

¹⁸ Bush explains, “In such narratives, a problem or conflict of some kind gives rise to a series of actions and interactions that move toward a resolution, often including a heightening of tension or suspense that reaches a climax at or just before the resolution.” See Bush, 37. By the way, Bush points out this idea of plot from Beekman, Callow, and Kopesec, and agrees with them. See more details in Beekman, J. Callow, and M. Kopesec, *The Semantic Structure of Written Communication* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1991), 4.

Society in the Book of Judges

In terms of social view, Sakenfeld explains that the book of Judges presents the pictures of warfare, violence, and repeated instances of Israel's disobedience, but in Ruth, we can see a peaceful village, orderly public process, and a faithful foreigner.¹⁹ This is because the book of Judges presents the theme that obedience to God brings prosperity but disobedience will bring oppression that comes as God's judgment.²⁰ This is a very important view to help us understand the passage that the narrator relates to the picture of the beginning of barley harvest (Rut. 1:22).

It was hard to plant food or feed the animals during the time of war, which we can see through the book of Judges, especially in Jdg. 6:1-5 when their enemies came, destroyed, and took their food. Jdg. 6:4 says, "Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey" (NKJ). The picture of the beginning of barley harvest indicates to us that it must be a time when one of the Judges ruled for quite a long time because the land was at rest and Israel could plant and wait for the produce of the plants. This is an example of irony because Naomi represents the opposite life, who went out full even though there was a famine, but she came back empty in the time that God has blessed His people. I will talk about this issue later on in this paper.

In addition, Moab was the enemy of Israel in the time of the Judges (Ex. Jdg. 3:12, 15 and 11:17). This is important background information to know when dealing with Ruth 1:22, as the narrator mentions Ruth the Moabitess who came from the land of Moab. What is the thing that the narrator wants to say in this sense? I will deal with this in the next section.

Religion in the Book of Judges

In the book of Judges, Israel followed other gods of the people who lived around them. We need to know that the Moabites had their own gods, such as Chemosh who was a god of warfare and the one who

¹⁹ Sakenfeld, 8.

²⁰ Charles R. Wilson, *The Book of Judges*, Wesleyan Bible Commentary, vol. 1 ed. Charles W. Carter (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 65.

provided for all aspects of daily life. However, they also believed in the gods of the Canaanite, such as Baal.²¹ Field claims that Israel worshiped Baal because they were confused about the name of Yahweh and Baal; both names have a similar meaning.²² In addition, in terms of life, Baal is a god who “has power over rain, wind, clouds.”²³ This shows that Israel lacked faith in God because they added more “insurance”²⁴ by worshipping other gods.

This view helps us to see the significance of the decision of Naomi's family to leave the Promised Land in order to look for help in Moab, the land of evil in the eyes of Yahweh (Num. 25). Fewell and Gunn claim that Naomi knew that Yahweh would be angry, especially when her sons married Moabite wives.²⁵

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF RUTH 1:19-22

After Naomi, her husband and their two sons left their home in Bethlehem because of the famine, they decided to move to the land of Moab. However, her husband and her two sons died, leaving her sons' wives, who were Moabite women, with her. Naomi then heard that God had visited His people by giving food, which made her decide to return to her hometown, Bethlehem. Naomi did not go back alone; she went with her daughter-in-law Ruth, the Moabitess who did not want to

²¹ R. K. Harrison, “Moab, Moabites,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 4 ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 265-266.

²² D. F. Field, “Baal,” in *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1. ed. Douglas, J. D. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 1980), 153.

²³ K. G. Jung, “Baal,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 378.

²⁴ Ralph F. Wilson, “Canaanite Religions and Baal Worship” n.p. [accessed 16 November 2010]. Online: <http://www.jesuswalk.com/joshua/canaanite-religion.htm>.

²⁵ Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Compromising Redemption: Relating Characters in the Book of Ruth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990), 26-27.

depart from her, unlike Orpah, her other daughter-in-law. This is the beginning of the double *hesed*'s story.

Translation

v. 19. And two of them walked until they came to Bethlehem. As they came in Bethlehem, the entire city was excited about them. And they said, "Is this Naomi?"

v. 20. And she said to them, "You do not call me Naomi. Call me Mara because the Almighty made me very bitter."

v. 21. Surely, I went out full but the Lord brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi? Because the Lord testified against me and the Almighty did evil to me.

v. 22. And Naomi returned back with Ruth the Moabitess her daughter, the one who was returning from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Welcome Back to the House of God (v. 19a)

The narrator tells us that Naomi and Ruth went to Bethlehem and it is repeated again in the following sentence that "As they came in Bethlehem" (וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית לְחֶמֶשׁ), although this phrase does not appear in the Septuagint. Even though the Septuagint gives us a shorter reading, we need to be reminded that it is a translated version of the scripture and it does not have the support of any other older manuscripts. In addition, the form that appears in *BHS* is more difficult to read, which is most likely because *BHS* is the original one.

This is important to note why the narrator repeats that they went or came into the city. Brotzman points out that the form of the Masoretic Text (*BHS*) may express some kind of importance by repeating the words for emphasis.²⁶

Why is the word Bethlehem important? In the structure of chapter one, we can see that the narrator intended to present a picture of irony. The word Bethlehem means, "house, granary of bread", but when the

²⁶ Eillis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*, with a foreword by Bruce K. Waltke (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994), 139.

story starts, the city of Bethlehem does not have food.²⁷ According to Hubbard, all of the names in chapter one have meaning, such as the name Elimelek, which can mean, “my God is king.”²⁸ Interestingly, the word Moab (מואב) does not only mean “progeny of a father” or “seed” but also can refer to “water.”²⁹

The point is that the narrator may want to present an irony that God is no longer Elimelek's king, as his name declared, because he went to live his life under other gods who are Baal and Chemosh, the gods who people claimed could help his life and family from the famine.³⁰ In addition, we need to be reminded that these gods were believed to have a role of providing food, as I mentioned above. The name of Moab, which may refer to the picture of water, also gives us the picture of food as well.

This is an important picture that we need to understand because it will give us a clear picture of why the author repeated the word Bethlehem twice in such a short verse (19) in order to emphasize the returning of Naomi. She returned to God, to live her life dependent on Him. As Fewell and Gunn reflect from Naomi's thoughts, “Now what? Probably had better not stay here, she [Naomi] thought. These people weren't going to take care of a foreigner and, without her sons, she had no means of support.”³¹ Gottwald points out the similar picture that a single or widowed woman had no social or economic security at that time because a woman's life depended on a man or husband.³²

²⁷ Hubbard, 85.

²⁸ Ibid., 88. Campbell gives the meaning of the word Elimelek as “The King (Yahweh) is my god.” See Edward E. Campbell, Jr., *Ruth*, The Anchor Bible: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1975), 52.

²⁹ Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, trs. “מואב,” in *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 454. It needs to be noted that I could not find this meaning from other Lexicons.

³⁰ Hubbard has a similar view that “Certainly, given the man's situation, one cannot overlook the irony of this name [Elimelek]: that one whose “god is king” must flee that king's territory because of famine.” See Hubbard, 88.

³¹ Fewell and Gunn, 27.

³² Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Social Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1987), 557.

It is more interesting when the narrator uses the word *הִתְהַלְלָה* to express the situation of the women³³ in the city when they saw Naomi and Ruth. The word *הִתְהַלְלָה* which in Qal stem means murmur, roar, discomfit has many meanings. The Niph stem that appears in the sentence of Ruth 4:19 should be translated as “*be in a stir*.” However, in 1 Sam 4:5, it is translated as “of ground *re-echoing* shout.”³⁴ The problem that we have here is that *הִתְהַלְלָה* has both negative and positive meanings. However, this word that appears in Ruth 1:19 also appears in 1 Sam 4:5 and 1 K. 1:45 in the same stem as in Ruth, both of which give the positive sense.³⁵ This indicates that the women were excited when they saw Naomi and Ruth. Campbell points out from Syriac that it was translated as “rejoice”, which points to the emotion of the women feeling delighted rather than pity. Especially, when it follows the question, “Is it Naomi?” (*הֲזֹאת נְעֻמָּה*), which gives the positive sense.³⁶ However, Muraoka claims that *הֲזֹאת נְעֻמָּה* can be translated as “this is indeed Naomi!” because the particle *הֲ* which is common for questions, sometimes has an exclamatory nuance.³⁷

It is not easy to make any conclusion for the word *הִתְהַלְלָה* until we can explain the issue of the pronominal suffix of *עַל־הֶן*. The pronominal suffix that appears in *BHS* does not agree with the Septuagint, which in

³³ The suffix pronoun of *וְהַתְהַלְלָה* which is 3 f pl dictates the picture of women. Campbell explains that “The women. It is only the feminine plural verb form which shows that it is the townswomen who surround the returning pair; at 4: 14, when this “chorus” returns, they are specifically identified as “the women.” See Campbell, 75.

³⁴ Brown, 223. Tregelles explains that it also can mean “to be disturbed or to be commotion” in Niph stem which gives a more negative sense. See in Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon to the Old Testament Scripture*, 220.

³⁵ According to Hubbard, 1 K. 1:45 is translated as “resounded with joyous excitement” and the earth “echoed” with Israel’s joyful shouts at the arrival of ark of the covenant in its camp. See in Hubbard , 123.

³⁶ Campbell, *Ruth*, The Anchor Bible, 75. Hubbard also agrees with this idea that it should express an exclamation of joyous surprise. See Hubbard, 123. Bush also points out the same idea that the word *הִתְהַלְלָה* is creating the excited commotion expressed. “It is not a real question, expecting a “yes/no” answer, but a rhetorical question having the force of an exclamation.” See Bush, 91. Probably Muraoka is right that this word should be translated as “this is indeed Naomi!” See in T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome, Italia: E.P.I.B, 2006), 574.

³⁷ Muraoka , 574.

the Septuagint, appears in a form of a singular (3 f sg) not plural form as *BHS* (3f pl). It seems likely that the Septuagint adapted the pronoun from verse 20, which only refers to Naomi.³⁸ In addition, there are not any older Hebrew manuscripts to support the Septuagint and *BHS* is more difficult to read. For that reason, I will agree with *BHS* that עָלֵינוּ is most likely an original word. This means that the women in the city were not excited only when they saw Naomi, but also when they saw Ruth. Why were they excited when they saw Ruth, who did not have any relationship with them like Naomi?

For the reason from above, it is most likely to me that עָלֵינוּ carries a positive sense. It is shown through Naomi's speech that she rejected the moment of rejoicing. She did not want the women to call her Naomi, meaning "the pleasant one," rather, she wanted the women to call her *mārar*, which means, "to be bitter."³⁹

For Ruth, we need to look at the historical view that the Moabitess is a descendant of Lot, who was a *relative* (emphasis mine) of Abraham. This indicates that Moab is not truly Israel's enemy because God told Israel to avoid fighting with Moab when Israel came to the Promised Land (Deu 2:9). Also, in the time of Judges, Israel seemed to live peacefully with Moab for three hundred years (Judg 11:25-26). This is reflected throughout the book of Ruth as well, because Ruth the Moabitess has a good relationship with the people of Israel.

This will be my argument that the women did not see Ruth as their enemy who would come and live under the blessing of God. Ruth is their relative who left her gods, land, and family by following Naomi who will live her life dependent on God. I believe that *the narrator wants to create an exciting theme of what will happen with this Moabitess woman in the land of God*. God says in Deut 23:3 that, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever." The idea of the tenth generation is very important in terms of number. The number ten refers to the idea of completeness, completed course of time,⁴⁰ which can indicate that

³⁸ Brotzman, 140.

³⁹ Block, 645.

⁴⁰ John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology: A Basic Study of The Use of Numbers in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968), 122-23.

Moabites would never live in the assembly of Israel;⁴¹ not just to the tenth generation. We can see strong support for the idea of using the number in verse 4:15 that says, "...your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."

The picture of double *hesed* of God has begun here, showing that the love of God is greater than the Law. The exciting moment presents the scene of welcoming of God's people who left Him but now have returned. More than that, it is a welcoming of non-chosen people that God had cut off from Israel, but now the gate of God's house is opened for them to join in His blessing for His people.

Return with Bitterness (vs. 20-21)

These two verses are the main plot of this book, which is a "problem-based plot."⁴² However, not all scholars agree that these passages are about Naomi blaming God. Atkison claims that these verses are about trust in God because blessing is a characteristic of God Almighty (*Shaddai*). We can see more details of his idea from the following quote.

And it is by referring to that aspect of Yahweh's character which is described by 'Shaddai' ('the God who is at his best when man is at his worst', as J. A. Motyer once put it), that Naomi shows the framework to her faith in which she places her pain. It is as though she is saying: You can see the bitterness I have experienced: famine, the bereavements, the questionings, the partings, the apparent hopelessness; but I know God as Shaddai, and I can leave the explanation, and even the responsibility, for this bitterness with him.⁴³

However, I would like to argue that these passages are most likely holding a negative tone that Naomi presented as a fully human being who expressed her emotions and feelings to her God. My focus will be on the idea of the words *Shaddai* (the Almighty) and Yahweh (the Lord) because Naomi referred her problem to both names. It is an A B

⁴¹ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 122-123.

⁴² Bush, 4.

⁴³ David Atkison, *The Message of Ruth, The Bible Speaks Today*, eds. J. A. Motyer and John R. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), 52.

B A pattern, which can be seen as Shaddai, Yahweh, Yahweh, Shaddai.⁴⁴

There are many different interpretations in these two verses, especially the word הָרַע and the phrase עָנָה לְ. However, the plot tells us that Naomi claims that God was the one who stood behind all of the things that happened in her life. That is because Naomi used the word שָׁדַי (*Shaddai*, the Almighty), which refers to the God who has cosmic power to rule and control everything.⁴⁵ This indicates God as a person who caused everything to happen in her life.

Jukes points out the other side of שָׁדַי (*Shaddai*) that primarily means “Breasted,” or the “Pourer-forth” which comes from שָׁד that means “the breast,” or even a “woman’s breast.”⁴⁶ This indicates the picture of God as a Giver who is like a mother that gives her love to her child by feeding her child.⁴⁷ If this idea is in Naomi’s mind, she must see God as a bad mother because the Almighty should have given her milk to comfort her, but she felt the Almighty gave her bitterness instead of milk. The Almighty could have stopped her crying by not allowing her husband and her two sons to die because He who is the Almighty controls everything.

Naomi even spoke that the Almighty did evil to her (V.21). This phrase הָרַע לִי אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי can be translated as “the Almighty has brought calamity upon me” (RSV) or “the Almighty has done evil to me” literally. The root word of הָרַע is רָעַע, which has two different nuances in the meaning “doing an injury, hurt” and “doing evil, wickedly.”⁴⁸ Most scholars have a problem with this phrase that asks how God did evil. We have to remember that this word came from Naomi not God. It expresses her theology about God.

In addition, we can see that Moses and Elijah also said that God did evil to His people (Exod 5:22, Num 11:11 and 1 K 17:20). However, we cannot look at this word in this context by focusing on the meaning alone but we need to understand the worldview of Jewish

⁴⁴ Block, 645.

⁴⁵ Hubbard, 124.

⁴⁶ See more explanation in Andrew Jukes, *The Names of God in the Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1972), 66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁸ Brown, 949.

people about this word. It is because “words do not mean at all! Only people mean, and people do not mean the same thing by all words.”⁴⁹

To understand the speech of Naomi, we have to understand that the idea of the word evil when spoken by Jewish people can refer to an emotive state. It means that the speaker shows something about himself when he calls anything evil, namely that he disapproves of it or does not like it. In addition, it can refer to unhappiness (Gen. 44:34), harm such as famine, diseases, sores, or even hard work. Moreover, the idea of evil can refer to something that departs from a commonly accepted standard.⁵⁰ Wilson points out that it can imply also displeasure, anger, sadness or envy.⁵¹ This helps to interpret and understand the meaning of evil in Naomi’s speech. Naomi did not “hereby ascribe moral evil to God but the disastrous, grievous, misfortune that she experienced.”⁵²

My point is that Naomi truly said that the Almighty did evil to her. However, the idea of evil is all about the death of her family members, which caused sadness that is present through her speech, “the LORD has brought me back empty.” Block mentions that “fullness” gives the idea of family and progeny.⁵³ This is great evidence for us to see the same idea of linking emptiness with the idea of evil. Naomi did not think that God is a bad God, but she expressed her bitterness towards

⁴⁹ Del Tarr, “Preaching the Word in the Power of the Spirit: A Cross-Cultural Analysis” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, eds. Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 127.

⁵⁰ A. D. Verhey, “Evil,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2 ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 206-207.

⁵¹ William Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1978), 150.

⁵² Block, 646. In addition, the word evil in *hiphil* stem can be translated “to cause evil upon me” (my own translation). Naomi did not say that God is evil. Also, in verse 20, according to Block, Naomi expressed that God has made her life very bitter and the word appears in the form of *hiphil* (הִפְתִּיר). This word should be translated as “to cause bitterness.” See Block, 645. These two words help us to see that Naomi saw God as a person who caused bad things to happen in her life.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 647. Hubbard also makes the same point. See Hubbard, 129.

her God about the things that He had done in her life. The translation that I prefer is probably, “the Almighty has brought calamity upon me.” However, I do not think “the Almighty did evil to me” is a wrong translation. It is correct because the people *at that time* understood the meaning of the word evil from Naomi's context.

Through grammar and word study, we can see that Naomi truly has a negative expression toward God. According to Brotzman, the word הִכְנִי appears in the Syriac, Vulgate and the Septuagint as a piel stem in a perfect form, which can be translated as “He humbled me.” However, in *BHS*, it appears in qal stem in a perfect form, which can be translated as “He testified against me,” or “He judged me.” Brotzman gives three reasons why *BHS* is most likely the original one. One of his reasons is that there is a strong possibility that a rare use of a word could have more easily been changed into a normal use because it seems to fit in the context.⁵⁴ I agree with Brotzman because the Syriac, Vulgate and the Septuagint are translations of the Hebrew text, and they lack support from any Hebrew manuscripts. Even though we have a textual problem with הִכְנִי the main idea is still the same, that God is the one who caused everything that happened in Naomi's life.⁵⁵

We can see the interchange of names between the Almighty with the covenant name for Israel's God, Yahweh, in verses 20-21. This indicates to us that Naomi still recognized her God by declaring His name. However, her attitude and her mind toward God were negative. In Naomi's eyes, Yahweh, who had promised to His people that they will receive good life and good future⁵⁶, gave her nothing. She presented the picture of God in a negative view. Block believes that Naomi may come back with faith, but her faith was flawed.⁵⁷

It seems that Naomi did not have a good knowledge about God, which is most likely true. Because she lived during the time of the Judges, which had many wars, the belief of God mixed with pagan teaching and everybody acted according to his or her own desires

⁵⁴ Brotzman, 141.

⁵⁵ According to Hebrew grammar, *Hiphil* stem can express the idea of the causative action that something or someone will cause something to happen. See Muraoka, 144-145.

⁵⁶ See more details in John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel*, vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 369-370.

⁵⁷ Block, 647.

because they had no king.⁵⁸ The strong evidence of religious weakness comes from the story of a young Levite who was supposed to serve God, but he lived with Micah who paid him to be a priest at Micah's house (Jud. 17). Block points out that, "The religious establishment in Israel has been thoroughly infected with the Canaanite disease."⁵⁹ This indicates to me that Naomi probably did not fully know what was wrong in her life that caused Yahweh to testify against her. She was probably an innocent sufferer who returned to God with many questions in her mind.

The Coming of Good Things (v. 21)

This last verse functions as an opening section for the second chapter because it focuses on Ruth, who will be the main actor for the rest of the story. We can see that the narrator reintroduces the identity of Ruth by doubling her identity as Moabite and daughter-in-law.⁶⁰ We can see that the narrator used the definite article הַ to emphasize Ruth the Moabite (הַשֵּׁבִיבָה מִשֵּׂבִיבָה "The one who returned from the land of Moab"). This indicates that the narrator wanted to inform the readers that Ruth was with Naomi, which will connect to the next section. LaCocque claims that the ending that mentions "the beginning of barley harvest" is intended by the narrator to explain why Naomi had to sell the field (4:3), because she came back too late for sowing Elimelek's field.⁶¹ However, the picture of the beginning of barley harvest also gives the theme of joy and happiness, which may indicate that something good is going to happen.⁶²

⁵⁸ Ibid., 37-44.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 490. However, I have a question about the women's situation in the time of the Judges. Did they study or learn something about God? We will have a more concrete picture about Naomi's knowledge about God if we can find the answer.

⁶⁰ Sakenfeld, 36.

⁶¹ LaCocque, 59.

⁶² Hubbard, 130.

Theological Significance

We can see the double *hesed* of God through the life of Naomi as well, if my claim from above is true. That is because God did not respond to Naomi's words in which she blamed Him. In addition, Naomi's attitude when she decided to return to God most likely holds the picture of bitterness toward God rather than joy. However, God rather showed His *hesed* to Naomi by giving her a grandchild. More than that, He gives her a daughter-in-law who is better for her than having seven sons. The number seven is a symbol of fullness, completion, and perfection.⁶³ This shows us that God has given Naomi more fullness than she can handle. This is the great important thing of God's *hesed* toward Naomi. It is because He can turn the bad thing into blessing for Naomi. Ruth, the Moabite who Naomi considered as one of the causes that brought evil to her life became the great blessing for her. *hesed* overflows in her life. That is why at the end of the story Naomi is speechless. The Almighty is still in control of everything.

She is probably like Job who says, "I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted...Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know... therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2-6 RSV). However, even though Naomi did not say anything about repentance in the story, it seems to me that she confessed about her misunderstanding of God silently, as shown through her speechlessness.

Moreover, I see the reason that Naomi was alive, unlike her family members, was due to God's *hesed*. Women at that time lived their lives under their husbands' power. They did not have the right to make decisions over their family. Naomi may have moved to Moab not because she wanted to, but because it was the decision of the head of the family, her husband. However, she did not die; rather she was able to make her own decision to return to God.

Lastly, the blessing of God through the picture of the beginning of barley harvest presents the picture of God's *hesed*. We can see that God used His blessing to draw not only His chosen people back to Him, but also unchosen people such as Ruth. This is because, "The *hesed* is one

⁶³ Davis, 122-123.

to whom God has shown *hesed* and who has been drawn into the divine community.”⁶⁴

Application for the Christian life

Sometimes, we are like Naomi who returned to God with the wrong attitude. However, God still loves and cares for us. He does not respond to us according to our own blindness about Him. God’s *hesed* is beyond our own understanding, as He showed to Naomi. However, through this passage, we can see that God’s *hesed* will fall upon those who return to Him. Naomi’s return may not have been full of joy, but at least she returned to God and surrendered her life under His wing. This picture reminds me of the story of the lost son (Luke 15:11). Naomi’s story is like an early version of that story in the picture of women, because we can see the famine as a main reason that caused the son to return to his father as well (Luke 15:14).

This is a double encouragement to all Christians who backslide from God. He is willing to redeem us from our own mistake *if* we choose to return to Him. The picture of God’s *hesed* in Naomi’s story is beyond the Law of the Old Testament but it did not break the Law. Lastly, this story reminds us that to return to God because we want to reactivate God’s blessing is not wrong. Naomi returned to God because she wanted to live in God’s blessing and God did bless her.

CONCLUSION

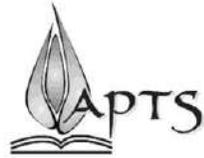
According to my study of Ruth 1:19-22, we can see that the narrator wanted to present the picture of the double *hesed* of God through the life of Naomi who returned to God with her bitterness. We can see through the language and the speech of Naomi that she blamed God as the person who caused everything bad that happened in her life. However, the story tells us that God did not respond to Naomi according to her attitude toward Him. The narrator presented that the women in the city were excited when they saw Naomi and Ruth. This gives us a positive scene of returning to the house of God. Both Naomi and Ruth were welcomed to the blessing of the Lord at the time when God blessed His promised land. This is such a wonderful picture that

⁶⁴ Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible*, tran. Alfred Gottschalk, ed. Elias L. Epstein (Cincinnati: KTAV Publishing House, 1975), 18.

the blessing of God was not only for the people who remained in the land, but also for the people who went out and later made a decision to return to Him. More than that, through Ruth's story, we see that the house of God is welcoming to non-Israelites as well.

Naomi is like many Christians in the world today who do not really understand God in a correct way. Some experiences in their lives may cause bitterness or many questions about God. However, Naomi's life has shown to us that God will not turn Himself away from those who come to live their lives under Him. This is grace's story in the Old Testament that we can see in the life of Naomi, who is like the lost son in the New Testament.

Let us who are God's ministers tell the story of Naomi to people who have turned their lives from God to let them know that God is waiting for them. Even though they have a negative attitude toward God, like Naomi, because of some situations in their lives, God still has great plans for them.



ASIA PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Impacting the Future of the Asia Pacific Church



APTS is committed to education that merges a concern for academic excellence, practical ministry involvement and effective spiritual formation.

Degree Programs

- * Graduate Certificate in Ministerial and Theological Studies
- * M.A. in Ministry
- * M.A. in Intercultural Studies
- * M.A. in Intercultural Studies (Islamic Concentration)
- * M.A. in Theology
- * Master of Divinity
- * Master of Theology in Pentecostal Studies
- * Doctor of Ministry in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministries



PENTECOSTAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: HOW ILOCANO
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES BUILD
POOR COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES¹

Joel A. Tejado

1. Introduction

Social capital has been increasingly recognized as one of the resource capitals available to the poor. Yet, how can religious sectors such as the Pentecostal movement utilize its potential in empowering the poor in rural areas? Ilocano Pentecostal churches are considered to be one of the most influential segments of Pentecostals in the Philippines with a network of churches (873 local pastors, 704 local churches, and 5 Bible Schools) in 14 provinces² in Northern Luzon. The Ilocano Pentecostals is considered one of the largest groups among the Pentecostal churches in the Philippines.³ IP local churches in the rural areas are grappling with many issues of poverty.

¹ This essay is a brief synopsis of my research project, entitled, "Developing a Pentecostal Civic Engagement as a Way of Building Poor Communities in the Philippines: A Case of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals in Northern Luzon Philippines (D. Min. Dissertation, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, 2011).

² These 14 provinces are located in three regional divisions of Northern Luzon. The *Ilocos Region* is comprised of four provinces; namely; Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte. In the *Cordillera Administrative Region* we have the Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, and Mountain province. The *Agaoan Valley Region* includes Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Viscaya and Quirino.

³ For instance, Conrado Lumahan stated that as of 2005, there were 3,800 AOG churches in the Philippines and lately it was claimed that there were 5000 existing local churches within the organization. If this figure is true, then it is correct to assume that the 704 local churches within these four districts represents the larger segment of Pentecostal AOG churches in the organization,

Ilocano local communities where these churches are planted are characterized by a lack of access to economic resources, such as, low income, hunger, unemployment, labor export, superstitions, fatalism and various forms of exploitation. Ilocano Pentecostal Christians in the rural areas are equally poor and they constantly struggle to get out from poverty. Yet, Ilocano Pentecostal local churches, beginning from their inception up to the present, emerged as a vibrant force of Christian witness in Northern Luzon, Philippines.

This research project is centered on answering important crucial questions regarding the social capital of Ilocano Pentecostal local churches: What is the impact on civil society, if any, of the Pentecostal/charismatic religion? What contribution does the study of “spirit-empowered” religion make to our understanding of the role of religion in human society?

Using a participatory approach as a way of enquiry, this study will evaluate the social capital of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostal churches that are serving in the poor communities of Northern Luzon Philippines. In the process of this study, data collections are used through survey questionnaires, statistical examinations, personal visits and interviews, small-group dynamics and field observations.

In this study, I will argue that Ilocano Pentecostal local churches, regardless of their low socio-economic conditions and constant struggle with poverty, are developing a strong social network that enables them to build local communities. Civic engagement is thoroughly examined to investigate the outlook of their social capital.

since the PGCAG is comprised of 21 district councils in the entire archipelago. For further studies on Ilocano Pentecostals in Northern Luzon, see, Conrado Lumahan, “Facts and Figures: A History of the Growth of the Philippines Assemblies of God” *AJPS* Vol. 8. No. 2 (July, 2005): 331-344; available from www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS_PDF/05-2-CLumahan.pdf; Internet; accessed 7 March, 2010; and also, see the work of Doreen Alcoran Bernavidez, “The Early Years of the Church of God in Northern Luzon (1947-1953): A Historical and Theological Overview,” *AJPS* 8:2 (2005): 255-269; available from http://www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS_PDF/05-2-DAlcoran.pdf; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

2. A Search for Theological Framework of Civic Engagement

Defining Pentecostal Social Capital

In this study I defined Pentecostal social capital as a resource for collective movement performed by Spirit-filled believers in their community, in order to actualize, engage and outwork the public meaning of Christian witness for the common good and transformation of the civil society. Pentecostal social capital is a resource embedded in the Christian faith to enable individuals and communities toward a just and loving society.

The Impact of Social Capital in the Civil Society

The concept of social capital, in search for a broader answer to the social ills that confronted various sociological and organizational issues, has increasingly attracted social scientists to examine the philosophical and theoretical concept of social capital and its implications to the socio-economic development of the poor.⁴ Sociological researchers not only acknowledge that social capital is gaining attention from various fields, but it is also becoming a potential resource for economic growth and well being,⁵ providing

⁴ See, R.W. Jackman and R.A. Miller, "Social Capital and Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* (1998): 47-73; A. Portes, & J. Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action," *American Journal of Sociology*, (1993):1320-1350.

⁵ M. Geepu Nah Tiepoh and Bill Reimer, "Social Capital, Information Flows, and Income Creation in Rural Canada: a Cross-Community Analysis," *Journal of Socio-Economics* 33 (2004): 427-448; available at <http://nre.concordia.ca/ftp2004/reports/tiepoh-reimer.pdf>; Internet; accessed 05 February 2010. Also see, Jonathan Fox and John Gershma, "The World Bank and Social Capital: Lessons from Ten Rural Development Projects in the Philippines and Mexico," (UC Sta Cruz: Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, 2000; available from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1vj8v86j>; Internet; accessed 15 February 2010; Yuko Kobayakawa, "The Land Acquisition Program As A Key To Social Capital-Case Study of the Urban Poor Community in Cebu, Philippines," A paper presented at The 13th Philippine Studies Forum of Japan, Doshisha University, Imadegawa Campus 2008; World Bank, *The State in a Changing World* (Washington D.C.: World Development Report, 1997); The World

organizational success⁶ and employment,⁷ facilitating economic action and performance,⁸ creating intellectual capitals and team effectiveness,⁹ facilitating entrepreneurship,¹⁰ strengthening organizational relationships,¹¹ and providing resources for conflict resolution and peace building.¹²

Pentecostals as Producers of Common Good

In recent years, the religious sectors began to apply the concept of social capital in various religious organizations and para-churches, examining the nature and impact of religious groups in a larger network

Bank. *Entering the 21st Century* (Washington D. C: World Development Report, 1999). Available from www.fsa.ulaval.ca/personnel/vernag/REF/Monde/Goad.htm; Internet, accessed 17 December 2010.

⁶ S.M. Gabbay and E.W. Zuckerman, "Social Capital and Opportunity in Corporate R&D: The Contingent Effect of Contact Density on Mobility Expectations," *Social Science Research*, (1998):189-217; M. A. Belliveau, C. A., O'Reilly, III, and J. B. Wade, "Social Capital at the Top: Effects of Social Similarity and Status on CEO Compensation" *Academy of Management Journal*, (1996): 1568-1593.

⁷ M.S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1995): 1360-1380.

⁸ Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 1.

⁹ J. Nahapiet, and S. Ghoshal, "Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage," *Academy of Management Review* (1997): 242-266.

¹⁰ L. Chong and P. Gibbons, "Corporate Entrepreneurship: The Roles of Ideology and Social Capital," *Group and Organization Management* (1998):10-30.

¹¹ B. Uzzi, "Social Structure and Competition in Inter-firm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1997): 35-67.

¹² Allen Toohey, "Social Capital, Civil Society, and Peace: Reflections on Conflict Transformations in the Philippines," *A Paper* (Australia: Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, 2005), 1-19; available from <http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Toohey-Aileen-final.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

of society.¹³ For instance, studies made by Cnaan, Boddie, and Yancey underscore the intrinsic norms of civic engagement within the Christian churches, identifying that religious congregations have long-held and enduring social norms. Such norms are characterized by the way in which people gather for worship and their willingness to become involved in community services.¹⁴

In the studies by Warner¹⁵ and Wuthnow,¹⁶ religious organizations develop a high level of social trust that results in personal involvement and sharing of resources. Evidence shows that the church through collective partnership and networking with government and civic society is instrumental in unmasking the social blight of the poor.¹⁷ This notion is corroborated by the studies of Sanguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in the US, which shows that religious organizations are vitally important community organizations that have played a central role in many of the great social and political transformations in history.¹⁸ Putnam and Feldten critically addresses the issue that religious organizations can be potential tools to organize civic life and teach the values of compassion, forgiveness, fairness, altruism, and respect for the world beyond oneself.¹⁹ In the same manner, religious

¹³ Corwin Smidt, ed. *Religious Social Capital: Producing the Common Good* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁴ Ram A. Cnaan, Stephanie C. Boddie, and Gaynor I. Yancey, "Bowling Alone But Serving Together: The Congregational Norm of Community Involvement," in Corwin Smidt, ed. *Religious Social Capital: Producing the Common Good* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 20.

¹⁵ Stephen R. Warner, "Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993):1044-93.

¹⁶ R. Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 23.

¹⁷ Goschin, Zizi, Constantin, Daniela-Luminita and Roman, Monica "The Partnership between the State and the Church against Trafficking in Person," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, Vol. 8, No. 24 (2009): 231-256.

¹⁸ Robert Putnam and Lewis L. Feldten with Don Cohen, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

organizations can be vibrant voluntary associations that teach people how to organize events, speak in public, and work together toward common ends.²⁰ Studies conducted by Dougherty and his colleagues in 2005 regarding community involvement and political participation of Pentecostals in the US reveals that Pentecostals participate less in community organization and politics than non-Pentecostals.²¹

Recent findings, however, show that there is a growing movement of community and political participation emerging around the globe among Pentecostal people.²² In recent empirical studies done by Miller and Yamamori, Pentecostals are not only an emerging force in world Christianity but through this cohesive and active actualization of their faith to the civil society, they are transforming local individuals and communities.²³ Recently, Professor Douglas Petersen of Vanguard University initiated a joint research on social capital with the partnership of Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative Center for Religion and Civic Culture of the University of Southern California,²⁴ to examine the nature of Pentecostal social capital and its

²⁰ Ibid. 3.

²¹ Kevin D. Dougherty, et al. "Sideline by Religion: Community Involvement and Political Participation of U.S. Pentecostals," Paper presented at 2009 Symposium on Religion and Politics (Department of Sociology: Baylor University, May 12, 2009), 3, 15; available from: <http://search.yahoo.com/search?fr=msgr-buddy&ei=UTF-8&p=Sideline%20by%20Religion>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010.

²² Ari Pedro ORO, "Religious Politicians" and "Secular Politicians" in Southern Brazil, *Social Compass* 2007; 54; 583; available from: <http://scp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/54/4/583>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010; Ahn Bersten, "Pentecostalism in South Africa and its Potential Social and Economic Role," A Comprehensive Research Report of Centre for Development and Enterprise (Johannesburg, South Africa, March 2008); available from: http://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=A0oGkxVDkZdLweYAZZFXNyoA?p=U+nder+the+Radar%3A+Pentecostalism+in+South+A; accessed 10 March 2010.

²³ Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, (Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2007), 1, 99.

²⁴ Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative, "Research Questions" *University of Southern California*, available from <http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/pcr/>; Internet; accessed 05 February 2010.

impact on civic and political society.²⁵ In the words of David Martin of London School of Economics, the Pentecostals are the “little platoons of democracy” – places where often very poor people learn to function democratically, elect their own officers and develop leadership skills.²⁶ Martin also acknowledged that Pentecostals “learn to participate in and run meetings to conduct business to handle money, to budget, to plan, to compromise, to formulate and ‘own’ a course of action.”²⁷

3. Methodology

The research methodology employed for this study is a combination of multiple approaches. First a quantitative survey questionnaire is given to pastors, church workers, Bible school students, and members in order to measure and draw inferences regarding the nature of civic engagement of Pentecostals known as the social capital. The survey is comprised of 29 domains with 5 sets of questions in each domain with a total of 162 questions. The questionnaire is classified into four parts that include the demographic information of the respondent, the self-understanding of the respondent regarding the program and mission of his/her local church, perceptions of poverty and church action in combating poverty, and questions regarding the respondents’ civic participation in the community. The 15 domains of the questionnaire are as follows:

Domains: Civic and Community Engagement

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Family and Social Relationship | 5 |
| 2. Trust Other People | 5 |
| 3. Civic Solidarity | 5 |

²⁵ Douglas Petersen and Magali Negron Gil, “Pentecostals and Social Capital in Nicaragua and Costa Rica,” Unpublished Paper, Judkins Institute for Leadership Studies, Vanguard University of Southern California, Costa Mesa, CA.

²⁶ Centre for Development Enterprise, “Untapped Social Capital Burgeoning under the Radar,” *CDE*, March 12, 2008; available at: http://www.cde.org.za/article.php?a_id=278; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010.

²⁷ Ibid.

4. Leisure and Entertainment	5
5. Public Affairs	5
6. Civic Leadership	5
7. Giving and Volunteering	5
8. Informal Social Ties	5
9. People's Empowerment	5
10. Community Needs	5
Total	50 items

The process by which the questionnaire is given to the respondents is through personal participation in a collective meeting of ministers, with voluntary assistance of selected research staff who administered the survey, letters and emails, and by conducting collective interviews with group respondents such as church members or theological students. The second approach used for this study is descriptive research analysis. Collecting and analyzing the data is not sufficient to understand the nature of Pentecostal civic engagement. The researcher of this study has chosen selected local churches to examine and closely investigate their participation in the community as a pilot project. This process is done through personal visits to these selected local churches to interview local pastors and members and to observe their existing ministries.

Target Respondents and Procedures

The major respondents of this study are focused on two groups of selected local churches of Ilocano Pentecostals: the lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostals. The lowland Ilocano Pentecostals are identified as the people of Ilocos Region and Cagayan Valley. Among the lowland Ilocano Pentecostals, there are 123 respondents represented by 21 local churches, 91 respondents came from the Assemblies of God, and 27 of them came from Independent Pentecostal charismatic members. Among the highland Ilocano Pentecostal churches, respondents are comprised of 121 respondents, 83 respondents came from the Assemblies of God and 38 of them came from independent Pentecostal churches.

Table 1: Summary of the Demographic Information of the Respondents

Sex	N=123 Lowland	N=121 Highland
Male	58	63
Female	65	58
Age		
Under 25	29	62
26-35	28	32
36-45	32	19
46-55	21	5
56 above	13	3
Marital Status		
Single	55	72
Married	67	49
Widow/Separated	1	1
Education		
HS or less	21	29
Vocational	3	4
Some College	48	45
College Graduate	46	36
Graduate or Postgraduate	5	7
Length of Service in the Church		
Below 5 Years	52	70
6-10 Years	23	20
11-15 Years	13	11
16-20 Years	5	6
21-Above	30	3
Church Affiliation		
Assemblies of God	94	83
Charismatic/Independent Pentecostals	29	38

Status in the Church		
Member	27	32
Church Officers or Workers	49	50
Pastors/Administrators	47	39
Current Jobs and Employment		
With business and employment	78	64
Students/No employment	43	57

The processes by which the questionnaire was administered to the respondents used the following procedures. The researcher sent request letters to the office of the organization with the endorsement of the director of the Doctor of Ministry program. When the request was granted, the researcher personally attended the ministers' meetings of these local churches and administered the survey. The survey questionnaire was executed and read in front of the respondents in English and Ilocano and it was administered in 45 minutes to one hour.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data was presented using tables, graphs, and texts. Inferential statistics were used in the interpretation of data. The Microsoft Excel was utilized in the computation of desired output. For the qualitative part that deals with the perceptions of the respondents, the responses were tallied and tabulated. Results were subjected to computations, such as frequency counts, weighted means, and ranking. Frequency tables were constructed; to compute for the weighted means, the following formula was utilized:

$$WM = \frac{\sum (w_1 f_1 + w_2 f_2 + w_3 f_3 + w_4 f_4)}{n}$$

where w_1 , w_2 , w_3 , and w_4 are the respective weights (rating); f_1 , f_2 , f_3 , and f_4 are the respective frequencies per question/indicator; n is the total number of respondents.

4. Presentation of Analysis and Findings

Civic and Community Engagement of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals

Figure 1 is a graphical presentation of the level of civic and community engagement of the lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostal church members.

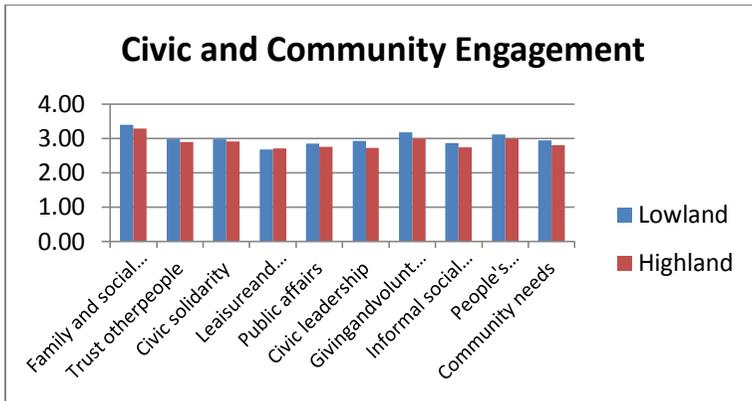


Figure 1

Family and Social Relationship

Family and social network is fundamental to social and economic well-being. In fact, the saying that “It’s not what you know, but who you know,” is so very true and practiced among Filipinos. An individual might not have sufficient financial capital, but if he or she has a network of friends, that relationship with others can be converted or become a potential tool for economic well-being. In this section, respondents were asked if it is normal to help their friends or neighbors when they are in need. They were asked whether members were really taught to love their families and neighbors and show collective concern whenever they are in need. The central issue in this concern is whether the local church is actively participating in helping meet the needs in their immediate context such as their families and neighbors.

Results of the survey show that respondents from LIP and HIP with the mean of 3.49 and 3.29 strongly agree that Pentecostals must demonstrate collectively and concretely deep concern and good works before their families and neighbors. Pentecostals are quick to suggest that whether in devotion or recreation, Pentecostals must first be a witness with their families and neighbors. Developing a close relationship within their immediate families is highly valued by the HIP. While this value is worth pursuing even to the HIP, they also recognized the value of trust and reciprocity in building a strong network and solidarity in the community. Both the LIP and HIP strongly place the family and neighbors as the central venue of developing trust and solidarity.

Table 2. Civic and Community Engagement of the Lowland and Highland Pentecostal Churches

Areas	Lowland			Highland		
	Mean	Desc	Rank	Mean	Desc	Rank
Family and social relationship	3.40	SA	1	3.29	SA	1
Trust other people	2.98	A	4.5	2.91	A	5
Civic solidarity	2.98	A	4.5	2.92	A	4
Media Communication and Public entertainment	2.68	A	10	2.72	A	10
Public affairs	2.86	A	8	2.76	A	7
Civic leadership	2.94	A	6	2.73	A	9
Giving and volunteering	3.19	A	2	3.00	A	3
Informal social ties	2.86	A	9	2.74	A	8
People's empowerment	3.13	A	3	3.00	A	3
Community needs	2.94	A	6	2.81	A	6
Average	3.00	A		2.89	A	

$$t_{\text{stat}} = 1.307$$

$$t_{\text{critical}} = 2.101$$

Interpretation: No significant difference

Trust Other People

Developing trust as a way of building a community is another factor that empowers the social and economic well-being of a society. In this study, respondents were asked to test if Ilocano Pentecostal local churches from the lowlands and highlands generate trust and contribute trust for the increasing reciprocity of communities. Respondents were asked if there are people whom they think deserve to be trusted. Given their friends, neighbors, politicians and fellow believers as examples, respondents were asked if they trusted these people. The goal of the study is to know if there is a significant contribution of Ilocano Pentecostal believers in building trust in the community.

The results of the survey show that LIP has a mean of 2.98 and that HIP has a mean score of 2.91 which demonstrates that both lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostals practice a high degree of trust with their fellow members, neighbors, etc. The survey shows that the people least trusted are the politicians, but perhaps this analysis is based on the disappointment of the church people because of the scandals that plague the political sectors. While the survey is ranked 4.5 and 5 from ten domains of civic engagement, results of the studies show that there is a significant correlation between the perceptions of LIP and HIP with respect to trusting other people.

In contrast, this study greatly differs with the findings of Bergren and Bjørnskov that religiosity discourages trust.²⁸ Ilocano Pentecostals in this case demonstrate that the exponential growth of the movement shows both the increasing development of social trust within and outside the movement. Recent research of American social scientists found a decline of social trust due to the waning voluntary participation from political, social and religious sectors. However, the exception to these findings was the Evangelical-Pentecostal movement, which experienced growth because they tend to focus on developing within the community.²⁹ In a Pentecostal local church with large reservoirs of

²⁸ Nicolas Berggren and Christian Bjørnskov, "Does Religiosity Promote or Discourage Social Trust? Evidence from Cross-Country and Cross-State Comparisons," Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Department of Economics, Frichshuset, Hermodsvej 22, DK-8230 Åbyhøj, Denmark. chbj@asb.dk. October 10, 2009; 4, 21; available from http://www.ratio.se/pdf/wp/nb_cb_Religiosity.pdf; Internet; accessed 17 June 2010.

²⁹ Joseph P. Daniels and March von der Ruhr, "Trust in Others: Does Religion Matter?" *A Working Paper*, Center for Global and Economic Studies,

social capital, members spend more time participating in community organizations, volunteer more often, and are more likely to vote. They are also likely to spend more time socializing with family, friends, and neighbors. They are more likely to trust, not just their intimates, but people in general. Such a Pentecostal church functions better in a wide variety of ways.

Civic Solidarity

Pentecostals are oftentimes thought of as other-worldly. Thus they are perceived as anti-social with not much interest in civic participation. This study recognizes the importance of civic solidarity or a collective cooperation of the people, including the church for a community to attain progress and economic well-being. The surveys under the domain of civic solidarity asked the respondents their perceptions and personal involvement in the development of their own communities. Respondents were asked if they are willing to cooperate with local government officials when asked to conserve water or power supplies. This posed question is to test the degree of cooperation of Pentecostals. Regarding their perceptions of the community, respondents were asked if they felt it was unlikely that they would be victims of crime and if they considered their community a peaceful place to live or if they were considering transferring to another location. This domain ended with a question whether Pentecostals from LIP and HIP believe they can potentially make a contribution in their community to make it a better place.

Results of the survey ranked civic solidarity at a number four level of civic engagement of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals. With a mean of 2.98 for LIP and 2.91 for HIP, it demonstrates that Ilocano Pentecostals have an average level of civic cooperation in their respective villages. While both LIP and HIP agree that local members perceive the role of Pentecostals is to demonstrate collective solidarity in the community, the result shows that this role is not yet fully developed as a practice within the local congregation.

LIP suggests ways to demonstrate civic solidarity and also show the burgeoning interest of LIP to cooperate when the local community asks them to participate. LIP recognizes the importance of mutual help

(*Bayanihan*), voluntary involvement and seeking the best interests of the community as a way of demonstrating authentic solidarity in the community. Moreover, living a godly character expressed by loyalty toward common programs and vision in the community are ways to demonstrate good citizenship in the community. While HIP agrees on the recommendations above, they believe that these actions should be outward manifestations of the practical outworking of the command of Jesus to love our neighbors. In other words, the actualization of one's faith in the community is rooted in the values of the kingdom, which are to love God and to love our neighbor.

Media Communication and Public Entertainment

Communication and entertainment as part of civic and social well-being plays an important role in developing the whole person. Christians are not exempted from it. While Christians believe that God created the world for his creation to enjoy, Christians, likewise, are selective as to what kind of media communication and social entertainment they should engage in. This study supports the idea that Pentecostals should be entitled to interact in the society where they live. They have the right to know and be informed about what's happening in their surroundings. They have the liberty to exercise and practice what is right as long as it will not contradict the Word of God.

In this section, all the respondents—a total of 123 from LIP and 121 from HIP—were asked if they regularly read newspapers to be informed on what is happening in local and national affairs. They were also asked if they watch TV, use the Internet to communicate and network with their friends. The researcher is also interested to know the attitude of Pentecostals toward watching movies and to check if Pentecostal believers consider sports as part of their Christian life and physical well-being.

Results of the survey interviews show that LIP has a mean of 2.68 and HIP has a mean of 2.72 which demonstrate that they agree that Pentecostals should be open to media information, social gatherings such as entertainment and sports. However, the studies also reveal that this activity is ranked number 10 and is considered less likely to be activities that Pentecostals should participate in civic society. Respondents are suspicious that when Pentecostal believers are increasingly immersed in media and entertainment that these will affect their social behavior, especially those who are not rooted in their faith. Some respondents, however, believe that media and entertainment can

be powerful tools for social education. Therefore, when Pentecostal believers use and link themselves in this context, most likely they will be more aware of what is happening in civil society.

Public Affairs

Close participation in the affairs of the community by local Pentecostal churches is another way of bearing witness and helping the poor in the communities. This study believes that Pentecostal churches should be “watchmen” and act as the “moral conscience” of society. The Church contains “the light” and is called to be instrumental in influencing and affecting the moral fabric of the community. In this study, respondents were asked if they were interested in knowing what is happening in community affairs whether related to political issues or to the public community. To test the respondents regarding their close participation, they were asked if they were free to vote for their own candidates and willing to participate in civic meetings. Respondents were also asked if they trust their local and national leaders and would be willing to report to the police anything illegal happening in the community.

Results of the study show that LIP has a mean score of 2.86 and HIP has a mean of 2.76. This demonstrates that both LIP and HIP agree that local Pentecostal churches should closely watch and participate in the happenings of the community. The results of the study however ranked this study as number 7 for HIP and 8 for LIP.

As to how to demonstrate the closer participation of Pentecostal churches in public affairs, HIP has a broader suggestion. For LIP, local churches should positively join and participate in community affairs, show deep concern for the needs of the community and contribute good ideas during community meetings. While these suggestions are strongly supported by HIP, the respondents strongly feel that they were involved closely when they act as law-abiding citizens within the community, wisely voting during elections, and participating voluntarily when the community is in need. When illegal activities are taking place, HIP strongly suggest that Pentecostal Christians should not be afraid to verbalize their sentiments and campaign for righteous governance in the community. HIP positively look at the potential contributions of Pentecostals if they will closely participate and keep track of the activities in the community.

Civic Organizational Membership and Leadership

Civic organizational membership and assuming leadership responsibilities for righteous governance and effective advocacy for the creation of a just and loving society are crucial needs in the community. This study advocates a creation of social justice and equal participation of people in the community. It affirms the importance of godly leadership and the organization of people's groups and associations that look closely at the welfare of the community. Results of the study reveal that LIP has a mean of 2.94 and HIP has a mean of 2.73. The study also reveals that this study is ranked number 6 for LIP while ranked number 9 for HIP. The study reveals a minimal difference with respect to points, but overall, both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should join and assume leadership roles in the community organizations that support social and political reforms.

As to how to develop a strong associational network within the community, LIP agrees that Pentecostals members should participate and if given the opportunity to lead, they should take responsibility. LIP also suggests that to make a greater impact in the community, they should foster strong and positive moral values that somehow impact local communities. To HIP, there is a growing interest in participation in civic leadership. Taking responsibility to lead is an important participation of church members in the community. But contrary to the contemporary practice of civic leadership, Christians should foster servant leadership in their service to others. They strongly suggest that those Christians running for politics should be received positively by local churches and given moral and spiritual support.

Large stocks of community social capital are associated with effective governance and a healthy participatory democracy. A vibrant associational life, whether organized around "private" goals like entertainment, socializing, worship, or organized for specific or local public purposes like erecting a playground, creates a community resource. This organizational resource can be mobilized to meet unforeseen problems or to represent the beliefs and interests of community members to governmental bodies. The broader the web of associations, the more likely all members of the community will have access to government, not just the few "well connected." Also, small local associations give many citizens the chance to assume leadership

roles and learn the vital democratic skills of coalition building, organizing and cooperation.³⁰

Giving and Volunteering

Giving and volunteerism are also important components in building a strong and prosperous community. Giving and volunteerism in this study are not only practices within the church, but to the people of community as well. Historically, giving and volunteerism have been proven as important tools in building conflict resolution and resolving problems in the community. When a community does not have strong ties of sacrificial giving and volunteerism, most likely this community will not prosper and succeed in all its endeavors. To the Filipinos, the culture of mutual help (*bayanihan*) is one of the most powerful in building lives and communities whenever they are in danger or calamity.

Results of the studies show that Lowland Ilocano Pentecostals have a mean of 3.19 while Highland Ilocano Pentecostals have a mean of 3.00. Both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should demonstrate a high level of giving and volunteerism. Giving and volunteerism for LIP ranked number 2 while HIP ranked it number 3. Relatively, there is no significant difference with respect to their perceptions on the given subject.

There are increasing suggestions from LIP that Pentecostals should increase the value of giving and volunteerism whenever their community is in need. Giving and volunteerism should be expressed for the up-building of the community and not for personal reward or profit. HIP, on the other hand, suggest that because Pentecostals are a part of the larger segment of religious bodies or in the community itself, they encouraged greater civic participation through giving of resources and money. Christians should be more expressive in the actualization of their faith through concrete actions in the community. Giving and volunteerism are manifestations of that action.

Informal Social Ties

³⁰ Robert D. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life" *The American Prospect* no. 13 (Spring, 1993) <http://epn.org/prospect/13/13putn.html>; Internet; accessed March 10, 2010.

In this domain respondents were asked if they usually visit their own relatives, socialize with workmates outside their work, hang out with friends in public places, chat with neighbors or play sports with their friends. Results of the survey reveal that LIP has a mean of 2.86 and HIP has a score of 2.74 respectively. Informal social ties is ranked number 9 for LIP while number 8 for HIP. Obviously there was a significant difference with respect to ranking, but both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should develop informal social ties. The results, however, show that informal social ties are less likely to be the strength of Ilocano Pentecostals. This observation is perhaps due to the kind of social capital Ilocano Pentecostals have developed within the movement. This observation also reveals that Pentecostals sometimes tend to develop a “bonding” capital than a “bridging” capital because of strong levels of trust within their religious affiliations. Nevertheless, the survey shows that Ilocano Pentecostals support the developing of a strong network with their peers and workmates.

Moreover, LIP believes that developing an informal social tie can also help and support their relatives and peers in times of need. Participating in sports and other community events can also be a vehicle to develop intentional relationships and network with people in the community. With respect to the social attitudes of HIP, they believe that friends and neighbors are gifts from God and, therefore, should be treasured. HIP encourage Pentecostals to be active and outgoing so as to develop a closer involvement with their neighbors and people in the community.

People’s Empowerment

Pentecostals were distinguished as a religious organization that places importance on being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit builds lives and transforms communities. As a result, Pentecostals within or outside their organization actualize this empowerment in everyday life. Pentecostal adherents believe that the Holy Spirit is not only for spiritual encouragement, but they also affirm the social impact of that empowerment in people’s lives and communities.

The results of the study show that LIP have a mean of 3.13 and is ranked as number 3 among the list of civic participation of lowland Pentecostals. HIP have a mean of 3.0 and equally ranked as number 3 among the most important activity of civic engagement of Pentecostals in the rural areas. While there is little difference with the total mean (.13), both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals as a religious

organization are involved and participating in the empowerment of local people as expressed in their strong advocacy of greater realization of democracy, creation of equal distribution of wealth and resources and the preservation of the environment.

LIP strongly suggests that Pentecostal Christians should make themselves available for those in need. On the other hand, HIP strongly suggests that Pentecostals should increasingly create programs that boost and maximize the potential and talents of the people in the community. By doing so, they should encourage closer participation of their own people in civic affairs, teach social awareness, and foster strong moral values in the community.

Community Needs

Pentecostals advocate a deep burden for the people and strongly believe that for a Pentecostal church to be effective in the ministry they should have a collective vision for the community in which they are called to serve. In fact, a local church that is able to address community needs is mostly supported by the people in the community. Thus, this study believes that a Pentecostal church that develops a program that keeps on track with the needs of the community can be a powerful vehicle of building a just and prosperous community.

Results of the study show that LIP have a mean of 2.94 while HIP has a score of 2.81, ranked as number six in important activities of lowland and highland Pentecostals. This demonstrates that both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostal local churches should have a holistic vision of the community and innovatively develop cutting-edge programs that address the needs of the community.

As to how to demonstrate these activities, LIP strongly suggests that Pentecostals should not be afraid to develop and use technologies that address the multi-faceted needs of the community. By doing so, they should also organize programs and activities that develop the social and economic well-being of the people in the community. Such programs are the creation of people's organization such as cooperatives, learning centers, feeding programs and medical mission for the poor. For HIP, they strongly recommend that Pentecostals be more responsive to the changing needs in the community. While maintaining their Christian values and convictions, they should foster flexibility in tracking the needs of the community.

The t-test was also used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the perceptions of lowland and highland Ilocano

Pentecostal church members. Based on the results, there is no marked difference between the two groups at the 5% significance level, as indicated by the t-statistic of 1.307 which is lower than the tabular value of 2.101. This implies that lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostal church members have the same level of enthusiasm and vigor in engagement in civic and community activities and programs.

5. Recommendations

Develop a Contextual Model of Pentecostal Civic Engagement That Empowers Rural Poverty

Pentecostal ministry from its very nature is characterized by the passion and willingness to interject the gospel into every situation. This Pentecostal involvement depends on the challenges that emerge from a given context. While it is true that Pentecostals are accused of being socially irresponsible because of their futuristic attitude, this concept is rather inconclusive. Therefore, since endemic poverty characterizes the majority of the rural areas, Filipino Pentecostal civic engagement must responsibly correspond to the pressing needs of the poor people in the rural areas.³¹ Any serious civic participation of local church endeavors must not fail to ask the issues the people are asking. A mission that is “divorced from reality,” as Jose de Mesa puts it, “is irrelevant and meaningless.”³² Immanuel Luna reiterates this point when he says:

The lack of involvement of the local churches in the community issues and affairs is a withdrawal from the battle the Lord has called us to fight. Relegating these to the heathen is shunning away from the great mandate for us to rule and be good stewards of the Lord’s creation and affairs.³³

³¹ Carlos Abesamis, “Ano Po Ang Laman ng Mangkok? How (not) To Do Theology in Asia Today” *CTC Bulletin* (January 1999): 1-23; also available from <http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc98-01/preface.htm> ; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010. See also, Melba Maggay, *The Gospel in Filipino Context* (Mandaluyong, Metro Manila: OMF Literature, 1990), 1.

³² Jose M. De Mesa and Lode L. Wotsyn, *Doing Theology: Basic Realities and Processes*. (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1990), 16-17.

³³ Emmanuel Luna, “Paglalatatag ng Aral: Moving on to another Season of Sowing” in *Hasik-Unlad: An Experience in Community Development Training*.

Churches and Theological Schools as Centers of Education for Pentecostal Civic Engagement

Because the concept of social capital known as civic engagement is almost foreign to Pentecostal believers, local churches and theological schools as well as Pentecostal organizations should increase awareness at the local, regional, and national level whereby research and training should be conducted and disseminated.

Fundamental to the development of a Pentecostal form of civic engagement, the task of positioning the local church as a center of social concern should be practice and implemented within the local churches. Pentecostal local churches should not be understood as caretakers and dispensers of spiritual truth and values, but they should creatively integrate in their training and Bible studies the importance of educating the members to participate creatively in the regeneration of their local communities.

The Call for a New Breed of Pentecostal Scholars and Christian Workers for Civic Engagement

Until recently, the concept of social capital was being developed as a “science” of empowering communities. Scholars from different fields have attempted to interpret the philosophical and social implications of the theory in broadening the core values of social capital in their organizations. While volumes of literature have been produced by secular scholars, only a few religious scholars have applied its potential, especially in Pentecostal circles, despite the call of research organizations, calling a new breed of Pentecostal scholars to critically analyze the concept of social capital of Pentecostals and its implications in civil society.³⁴ The concept of social capital until this

(Diliman, Quezon City: Institute for Studies in Asia Church and Culture, 1998). 75.

³⁴ Chris Baker and Hannah Skinner, “The Dynamic Connection between Spiritual and Religious Capital” Final Report of the William Temple Foundation’s Research Project (2002-2005) in

William Temple Foundation. *Regenerating Communities: A Theological and Strategic Critique*. End of Year One Report: Mapping the Boundaries. Manchester: WTF. (December 2003):1-75; also available from

time remains a new field of theological and sociological education for Pentecostals. Thus, it calls scholars within the Pentecostal camp to arise, use, and seize its potentials in empowering civil society.

Proposed Manual and Guidelines for Pentecostal Civic Engagement

Akin to recommendation above, this study suggests the creation of a manual and guidelines of Pentecostal civic engagement in civil society. Pentecostal organizations are taught to act civilly within their organization and with their counterparts, but the shortage of literature that aid Pentecostal believers to link their ministry to civil society is almost foreign. Studies in the past regarding the perceptions of religious organizations to the possible partnership of Christian organization and the government shows that Christian organizations are not ready to build such partnerships because of the fear that the imposition of political agenda and local government might lead to a sense of disempowerment and loss of identity.³⁵ Thus Christian organizations choose to remain independent or even isolated when tracking the needs of the community. While this study acknowledges the concern expressed by churches in how power is practiced in the context of partnership and consultation between religious sectors and government agencies, there is an increasing need for Christian churches to initiate this kind of partnership so as to fast-track the needs of the community through a collective partnership in civil society. Christian organizations, including the Pentecostals, have not developed a policy that enables the church to relate effectively to government sectors and to their communities.

6. Conclusion

At the outset of this study, a research question was posed: what kind of civic engagement are Ilocano Pentecostal churches in Northern Luzon practicing? It was asked whether there was an impact and contribution of Ilocano Pentecostals in the creation of common good in civil society. As a response, this research pointed out noticeable patterns of civic engagement within these selected local churches

<http://www.wtf.org.uk/documents/faith-in-action.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

³⁵ Ibid. 9.

among Ilocano Pentecostals. First, while it was acknowledged that Ilocano Pentecostals were quite late in developing a theology and praxis of civic participation, yet it was enormously demonstrated in the study that Ilocano Pentecostals in the lowlands and highlands are slowly developing a practice of civic engagement rooted in their biblical conviction, Christian values and praxis of ministry. Second, while this research acknowledged that some Pentecostals groups in other parts of the globe are on the sidelines of civic participation, it is becoming more apparent that this is not, in fact, the case in this study. Ilocano Pentecostals both lowland and highland are developing a significant impact in the formation of healthy communities.

The complexities of various contexts where these local churches are placed forced them to act wisely in appropriating their Pentecostal witness in their respective communities. Emerging patterns of civic engagement such as establishing schools, childcare and orphanages, community development projects such as church-based micro-financing and cooperatives, political participation in the form of active engagement in community leadership, are a few of the emerging patterns evidenced by the Ilocano Pentecostals. In light of these examples, Ilocano Pentecostals not only serve as a model for a closer participatory ministry in civil society but they also call the larger community of Spirit-filled believers to increasingly serve as witnesses in their respective communities until Jesus Christ comes.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL CONCERN: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

Dhan Prakash

Introduction

We live in a world full of social oppression, poverty, injustice, war, caste/racial, sexual discrimination and so on. The list can go on and on, but as Christians we need to pause and ask ourselves about our responsibility. As a community of believers and representatives of God's kingdom here in this world what should the church be doing in response to these social evils? When it comes to social responsibility, the church has often come under criticism both from within and outside. The church is accused of "not doing enough, if indeed it is doing anything at all."¹

The Pentecostal church is often criticized for being indifferent to social concern.² Modern Pentecostal scholarship, however, does not agree with these accusations. The basis of this denial is that historically

¹ Larry Christenson, *A Charismatic Approach to Social Action* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), 9.

² This paper assumes that readers are well aware of the definition of *social concern* and difference between *social service* and *social action*, as well as accusations of Pentecostals being indifferent to social action. For the definition of social concern and difference between *social service* and *social action*, see, Heidi Rolland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society: Understanding the Faith Factor in Church-Based Social Ministry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 28-29; Murray W. Dempster, "Evangelism, Social concern and the Kingdom of God," in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, Eds. Murray Dempster, Bryon D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991), 33-38; and Joseph Suico, "Social Concern in Theological Education" *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 15/2 (December 2007): 37-52.

Pentecostals have viewed social concern not in terms of changing social structures but in terms of personal transformation. Because Pentecostals were not so keen on *social action*, their *social service* is largely gone unnoticed within the larger body of Christ for whom *social action* is also equally important.

Pentecostals may deny the charges of being socially indifferent, but the movement has struggled to find a balance not only between evangelism and social concern, but also within social concern (social service and social action) itself. The lack of theological understanding of social concern within early Pentecostalism led to a dichotomy between their beliefs and practices. The basic argument of this paper is, while one should not discredit the early generation of Pentecostals for not developing a theology of social concern, or confining themselves only to popular written communications such as tracts, magazines or sermon books. Maybe this kind of literature was appropriate for that generation or their cause, but the need of the present time is a well developed theology of social concern. The theology of social concern today has become a necessity in Pentecostalism for various reasons. The unprecedented growth of the movement,³ the enormous demand and need for social concern within society, and growing interest and involvement of pentecostals in society in recent times, all calls for a thought-out response from the church. Dempster, while acknowledging that Pentecostals in recent times have been greatly involved in social welfare of the poor and oppressed, also warns that in order to have a staying power these social programs will have to find support from the theology of the movement.⁴

After providing a brief introduction and statement of problem, the paper in chapter two focuses on some of the key issues that theology of

³ The success of Pentecostal revival according to MacDonald calls for “continuous searching for the scripture, careful scholarship, competent shifting of the oral tradition, and comparative study with other Christian traditions.” See, William G. MacDonald, “Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 60.

⁴ Dempster, “Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God,” 22-23; See also, Murray Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspectives: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2 (1993): 52-3; and Shane Clifton and Neil Ormerod, “Pentecostals and Politics,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10/2 (July 2007): 229.

social concern will have to address, chapter three attempts to suggest a theological framework for social concern, and finally in conclusion, the summary of the paper is presented.

The term *social concern* in this paper is used in the broad sense which includes both aspects of ministry, namely *social service* and *social action*. The terms *social concern*, *social engagement* and *social responsibility* are used interchangeably, while the terms, *social service* and *social action* are used more specifically. The term *evangelism* is basically used for verbal proclamation of gospel which involves a call to repentance from sin and accepting Jesus as Lord and savior of one's life.

BACKGROUND

This section does not seek to provide historical survey for the theology of social concern. The attempt here is to look at some of the key theological issues that have had negative influence on social concern in the past. In order for the movement to be effective in the future, its theology will have to address these areas.

Dichotomy between Social Concern and Evangelism

The movement from its inception has found it difficult to integrate its ministry of evangelism and social responsibility. There exists a false dichotomy between spiritual and secular, eternal and temporal. Dichotomization of spiritual with secular not only resulted in "a split Christian mind,"⁵ as Buenting puts it, but it also brought a fierce debate about how Christian mission should be carried out.

Especially in early twentieth century America, the church was faced with a variety of social challenges such as, cultural tension due to

⁵ One of the key figures that influenced the theology of the church according to Debra Buenting, was Augustine (354-430 AD.), who "popularized the idea that Jesus' earthly purpose was to release souls of light from the prison of their bodies." See, Debra Buenting, "Evangelicals and Social Action: YWAM'S Adoption of Kingdom Mission," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26/1 (Jan-March 2009): 14. (Debra Buenting, Ph.D Regent University, is a communication specialist working with Youth with a Mission. She also teaches online graduate courses at Spring Arbor University.)

massive immigration, urbanization, racial discrimination, industrialization, social injustice, poverty and great economic disparity. The church was basically split in two groups. On one side there were churches that engaged themselves in trying to reform society through their works of social service as well as social actions such as feeding the homeless, helping the needy, fighting poverty and trying to change the unjust social structure of the society that were the cause of oppression and social injustice.

However, in the process of trying to bring social change, their message, as Buenting states, “often neglected important Christian themes of personal responsibility, repentance and a relationship with God. Individual change they thought, would result from corporate change.”⁶ These were called *social gospelers*. On the other hand there were churches that promoted hyper individual spirituality. Their primary concern was to save souls, concerned only with personal evangelism and establishing the churches. They were named fundamentalists or conservative Christians. The problem with both groups was that they both got one side of the mission right but missed on the other side.

Understanding the Mission

The crisis of Christianity in recent decades according to Cho “may be summarized theologically as the problem of the definition of the mission of the church.”⁷ Since it is impossible to define mission in this short section, the focus here is to have a working definition of mission appropriate for the purpose of the paper.

In its quest to define mission, the church has basically swung between two extremes. One extreme, known as the old, traditional view, focuses exclusively on verbal proclamation of the word.⁸ The

⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁷ Chongnam Cho, “The Mission of the Theology and Practice,” in *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Bruce J. Nicholls (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 216.

⁸ John Stott *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 15-34; See also, Cho, “The Mission of the Theology and Practice, 215-238; David J. Bosch, “In Search of a New Evangelical Understanding,” in *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Bruce J. Nicholls (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 63-83; According to Johnston “Historically the mission of the church is

other extreme, known as the standard ecumenical viewpoint, or social gospel, the focus shifted to bringing social renewal by liberating people from oppression and economic exploitation. In its quest to bring social renewal, little or no room was left for evangelistic concerns. Both of these extremes according to Stott are unbiblical. The church needs to have a more balanced and biblical view of mission. Mission according to Stott includes everything God wants His people to do in the world He sends them to. This means that both evangelism and social concerns are an integral part of mission. He argues that both, the great commission (Mt.28:18-20), and great commandment (Mk12:31) must be seen together.⁹ The true Biblical mission therefore, must include both social concern, and evangelism as an integral part of its mission. Evangelism and social concern are so intertwined practically that to pull them apart according to Sider “will be silly and fruitless, [and] indeed destructive.”¹⁰ One needs to however, understand that even though both, evangelism and social concerns are inseparably interrelated, they are not identical. The following discussion offers some light on it.

The distinctions, first, they both are distinct in their purpose. While the sole purpose of evangelism is to bring people to Jesus, the basic purpose of social concern, even though it may have evangelistic dimension, is to improve socioeconomic, psychological, physical and political condition of the people here on this earth. Second, they are distinct in their nature. Evangelism is personal in the sense that it is directly related to individuals. Social concern (social action

evangelism alone.” See, Arthur P. Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.,1978), 18; McGarvan defines mission as “*an enterprise devoted to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, and to persuading men to become His disciples and dependable member of His church.*” see, Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing co.,1980),26.

⁹ Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 15-34. The International congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne in 1974 declares that “evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty... the salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities.” quoted in, Cho, “The Mission of the Theology and Practice,”217.

¹⁰ Ronald Sider, *Good News and Good Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 180.

specifically), on the other hand, can be termed as impersonal in the sense that it basically deals with unjust social structures, laws, or corrupt political systems. Even though all these structures are related to humans they in themselves are not human. These structures can be changed but they, by themselves are incapable of responding to any call. According to Sider “only people can be addressed and only people can respond.”¹¹

The interesting aspect of evangelism and social concern is, in spite of these distinctions, they are interrelated, one leads to other. First, Biblical evangelism according to Sider “both results in and aims at social action.”¹² By preaching repentance from both individual and social sins the evangelist is directly dealing with the root of all social evil. Unjust social structures are not the root of the problem. They are simply the fruit. The root is man’s sinfulness. Every evil in the world is rooted in sin. When a person repents and accepts Jesus, it brings not only spiritual transformation but his/her physical, moral and socio-political life is also transformed. A biblically faithful evangelist, according to Sider, “will call on people to repent of involvement in unjust social structures [because] racism, sexism, and economic oppression are an affront to God.”¹³ Thus one can argue that social concern in a sense is a result of evangelism. Second, social concern also produces fruits that are evangelistic in nature. Even though the intentions of social concern are not to convert people to Christianity, when one stands up for the poor by fighting against unjust social structures on their behalf unselfishly, it definitely leaves an impact on their lives. Social action done in true love of Christ will definitely help people to open their hearts to listen to the message and even to respond to it by accepting Jesus in their lives. This leads us to another important issue, the question of priority.

Priority

Where should the church focus the most, evangelism or social concern? Based on his arguments that without having Christians you cannot have Christian social concern, Sider argues that even though “evangelism and social concern are both important aspects of Christian

¹¹ Ibid, 160.

¹² Ibid, 174.

¹³ Ibid, 173.

mission, evangelism nonetheless is primary.”¹⁴ Ideally it might look an easy answer but practically it does not work that way. With the question of priority also comes the question of resources. If evangelism is the primary task of the church does it mean that the church should use its limited resources of time, money and people toward evangelistic activities and social activities are carried *only if* there is spare time and resources?¹⁵

The key to answer this question lies not in the question of importance or priority but in the individual calling. While every believer must be a true witness to the gospel, all are not called to be evangelists. Every one should work within his/her own calling and gifting. We live in a time of specialization. If one is a professionally trained doctor, lawyer, politician, businessperson, social worker or evangelist, s/he does not have to leave his/her profession and be a fulltime evangelist, or social worker. By being effective in his/her field one can be an effective witness of Christ. It is not one’s profession, be it religious, such as, evangelist or pastor, or secular such as, politician, teacher or doctor, which makes one more important than other, but it is one’s faithfulness to the calling that makes the difference. In God’s sight a Christian businessperson who is faithful to his work is of no less value than a pastor or evangelist.

It is also not the question of choosing one from another; neither does it mean that all Christians must engage in both all the time. One must act according to his/her calling. As Stott says, “the doctor must not neglect the practice of medicine for evangelism, nor should the evangelist be distracted from the ministry of the word by the ministry of tables, as the apostles quickly discovered (Acts 6).”¹⁶

A look at the life and ministry of Jesus will reveal that He always gave equal importance to both. He ministered to whole person. For him one was not more important than another. In his teachings Jesus taught that gaining eternal life was more important than gaining anything in this world, but Jesus in his ministry never suggested that inviting people to the kingdom should be the primary task, while attending to their material needs should be done only if there is spare time or

¹⁴ Ibid., 165.

¹⁵ Ibid, 168-71.

¹⁶ Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 28.

resources.¹⁷ Siders argues, “if God incarnate thought he could—no, *must*—devote large amount of potential preaching time to the healing of sick bodies, then surely we are unfaithful disciples if we fail to follow in his steps.”¹⁸ So the church needs to come to a place of balance. On one hand, evangelism should not take precedence over social concern but at the same time the church needs to be careful enough that it does not become another social service agency.¹⁹ The only way to achieve this balance is if the church moves beyond what Yung calls “the inherent dualism of the existing dichotomous understanding of evangelism and sociopolitical concerns, and see[s] these as dimensions of the one indivisible mission of the church.”²⁰

Purpose

Understanding the purpose of social concern is very crucial. Why do we do what we do? Social concern within Pentecostalism often is seen as pre-evangelism. One of the common accusations against Christians is that they use social ministry to allure poor and needy to Christianity or they trick people to Christianity. Social concern according to Clifton often is seen as “a method of selling the ministry of the church to individuals and society as a whole, rather than something intimately connected to the gospel.”²¹ Sider argues that even though social concern often has powerful evangelistic impact, it is not merely pre-evangelism. When it produces evangelistic results we should rejoice in it, but our social concern should not become a psychological manipulation to lure people to Christianity producing ‘rice Christians.’²² There are many other valid reasons for social concerns but due to lack of space we will consider only three of them.

¹⁷ Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 169.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Progressive Pentecostals: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 60.

²⁰ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? : The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford, Eng: Regnum Books International, 1997), 66.

²¹ Clifton, “Pentecostals and Politics,” 233-4.

²² Sider, *Good News and Good works*, 141.

Firstly, God's love. Hogan argues that the only reason we should do social concern is because Jesus Christ did.²³ The sole motivating factor behind the ministry of Jesus in which he healed the sick, delivered the demon possessed, helped poor, orphans and widows, and fed hungry was his unconditional love. In the same way the church, called to emulate Jesus, needs to understand that Christian love should be one of the top motivations for its social concern. Christian love, according to Yung, "cannot be reduced to evangelism alone, but must find concrete expression in midst of the sociopolitical realities of life."²⁴ Hogan states, "if our providing social assistance opens doors that would otherwise be closed to our missionary endeavors ...good! But if not, we will still continue to provide relief."²⁵ Christian love cannot also be restricted to the church alone but it is boundless. Jesus commands his followers to love their enemies. The acid test of the genuineness of our love according to Padilla "is the doing of justice to the poor and oppressed."²⁶ The ministry of social concern of the church must be available to all people irrespective of their religious, socio-political or cultural background, because Christ also loves the church unconditionally.

Secondly, God's grace. Mott argues that "Christian social action, indeed all Christian conduct, properly understood, is grounded in the grace of Jesus Christ."²⁷ This grace of God is manifested to sinful humanity through Jesus Christ. Through obedience to God, repentance from a sinful life by believing in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus, one not only is justified before God but also becomes the recipient of God's grace. This grace of God through Jesus should not only work *for* us, but *in* and *through* us as well. God expects our ethical

²³ J.Philip Hogan, "Because Jesus did," *Mountain Movers* 31/6 (June 1989):11. Hogan argues, if the motive of our social concern is to get access into the countries that are closed to gospel, than it is not them (those hurting people we claim to help) but "we are the one that need help."

²⁴ Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?* , 66.

²⁵ Hogan, "Because Jesus did,"11.

²⁶ C. Rene Padilla, "A Message for the Whole Person," *Transformation* 10/2 (July/September 1993): 3.

²⁷ Stephan C. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1982), 22.

behavior, and Christian social conduct to correspond to that of Christ Himself. God's grace according to Mott works "as God's power in us, [it] gives us strength to be what we cannot be ourselves."²⁸ The realization of one's sinfulness and God's grace reaching down and forgiving one of his/her sinfulness, and being adopted into God's family not only creates an inner affection, feeling of gratitude or a desire to worship and have closer fellowship with God, but it also empowers and motivates one to show the same love and concern for others as well. Grace, according to Mott "is the power which frees one for love and action."²⁹

Thirdly, God's creation. The very fact that every single human being is created by God in His own image (Gen. 1:27-30, 2:15) means that every single human being is entitled to enjoy God's blessings and the privileges alike. The creation doctrine provides a universal base for justice. Since every human being is the divine-image bearer, it means that all humans are of equal value to God and they deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, with all fairness and equality. The concept of *Imago Dei*, according to Dempster, is a key ingredient in the Old Testament concept of Justice. This "parameter of Justice extends to all people, including the displaced farmer, the widow, the orphan, the alien, the stranger, the hired servant, the debtor, the poor and the needy."³⁰

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus ministered to the needs of all humans whether they followed him or not. Sider argues, "if God continues to shower the good gifts of creation on all, regardless of their faith or unbelief, then Christians too should work for physical, social, economic, and political well-being for all."³¹ Helping the needy with the expectation of receiving something from the recipient, be it conversion or any other means is "a violation of the spirit of Christian gospel in which God's grace is unconditional, provided without any reference to our good works."³² All Christian social concern should be

²⁸ Ibid, 27.

²⁹ Ibid, 28.

³⁰ Murray Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of the Social Justice," *Pneuma* 9/2 (Fall 1987):133. see, Ex. 22:21-27; 23:9-11; Deut. 10:18; 15:1-2; 23:19-20; 24:14-22; Lev. 19:9-34; 25:2-7.

³¹ Sider, *Good News and Good works*, 141.

³² Miller and Yamamori. *Progressive Pentecostals*, 59

carried out unconditionally without expecting anything from the recipients.

A FRAMEWORK FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL CONCERN

It is not difficult to find Pentecostal believers struggling to connect their faith with social concern. In many cases even their pastors and leaders find it difficult to help them out. There exists a certain tension between the beliefs and practices. In order to resolve this tension, social concern has to find a strong foundation within the theology of movement. So the purpose of this section is to propose a theological framework for social concern. This relatively small section does not claim to cover all the areas that are foundational for theology. The focus here is narrowed only to theological factors that the present author feels, are at the core of Pentecostal identity.

The Bible

There are two basic reasons why a theology of social concern should be biblical in nature. First, to develop an appropriate, objective, strong and relevant theology of social concern, one will have to see social concern from God's perspective which can only be found in the Bible. Second, like any other structure, theology also needs to be developed on a solid foundation that is reliable and firm. Making the Bible a foundation is like constructing our faith and practices of social concern "on the eternal and unchanging truth that God has revealed about himself, humanity and the world."³³ The Old and New Testament, both provide a strong foundation for social concern.

³³ Benjamin Pwee, "Values Creation: A Practical Theology for the Marketplace," *Church & Society in Asia Today* 12/1 (April 2009): 39-40.

The Old Testament³⁴

Does the Old Testament offer any model for dealing with social issues? Or does God care about the problems of those oppressed and marginalized by the unjust social structures of the society? The answer is *yes*. One of the central themes that run through the Old Testament is God's concern for the poor and oppressed and His desire for peace and justice within the society. The story of Exodus is classic example of God's desire for justice. When God saw that the Israelites were being oppressed and treated unjustly (Exodus 3), He decided to come down and deliver his people through Moses. Exodus according to Massey "was not a religious action but a political act, which included economic and social dimensions as well."³⁵ Throughout the Old Testament one can see God being directly involved in human history.

The Old Testament, according to Dempster, "presents social justice as the will of God for society and mandates the people of God to pursue it."³⁶ One's theology and views of life be it social, political, economical, moral, or ethical are always influenced and shaped heavily by one's view of God. So the true vision of God and knowledge of His nature and character is very important. The Old Testament is the story of God's self disclosure in which through His mighty acts He made Himself known to Israel. This complete understanding of God's nature and character works as a motivating force for social concern. Kaiser claims "the character, will, word, and works of God supply the determining principles and central organizing tenets of the Old Testament ethics."³⁷ Social concern as Dempster points out, is "brought

³⁴ It is impossible to describe in details what the Old Testament says about God's concern for humanity in this section. So the attempt here is to briefly show that God of Old Testament is a loving God who cares for the wellbeing of the Humanity, created in His own image. For a detailed explanation of Pentecostal social concern from Old Testament perspective, See, Murray W. Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern and Biblical Mandate for Social Justice," *Pneuma* 9/2 (Fall 1987): 129-153.

³⁵ James Massey "Oppressed Communities and a Need for Contextual Theologies," *Indian Theological Journal* 2/1 (Jan-June 2008): 9. (Dr. Massey is Director of the Center for Dalit/Subaltern Studies, New Delhi and Faculty of Protestant Theology, the Johann Wolfgang Goethe—University, Germany.)

³⁶ Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 129.

³⁷ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1983), 38.

into existence and kept alive by a deep moral conviction that acts of charity and the pursuit of social justice give tangible witness to God's own ethical character and to God's will for society."³⁸ Dempster outlines five ethical principles of the Old Testament social ethics namely, its theocentric foundation, its concept of the *Imago Dei*, its portrayal of covenant people, its prophetic tradition of social criticism and its Jubilee teachings. These principles according to him can instigate and nurture social concern in the Pentecostal community.³⁹ All five principles portray God's love and concern for those oppressed by the powerful of society.

Based on the biblical understanding of God who has a special concern for the poor, destitute, oppressed, marginalized and weak, Sider argues that "any one who wants to love and obey this Biblical God must share the same concern."⁴⁰ In everything one does, s/he either works with/for Him or against Him. There is no neutral ground. Sider argues that the "Bible says more about God's concern for the poor than it does about prayer, or the atonement, or Jesus' resurrection."⁴¹ Placing great emphasis on God's concern for the poor, the second Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization declared, "the law, the prophets, and the wisdom books, and the teaching and ministry of Jesus all stress God's concern for the materially poor and our consequent duty to defend and care for them."⁴² There is no doubt that

³⁸ Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern," 131.

³⁹ Dempster, "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of the Social Justice," 130-146. Theocentric foundation according to Dempster "links theology, ethics, and social life together." *Imago Dei*, the fact that everyone is the divine image-bearer means that everyone is entitled to be treated justly. As the covenant people of God, Israel was to have a Social Concern for the fair treatment of the hired servant, the stranger, the widow, the orphan and the poor." (Ex. 20:3-11, 20:22-23:33; Lev. 17-26, and the book of Deuteronomy. Prophets by identifying justice as fundamental moral quality of God's character warned the covenant people against their unjust social practices. E.g. Amos 8:4-6; 5:11, 21-24; 6:1. While, "institutions of the Jubilee year, the Sabbath year, the law of tithing, and law of gleaning were established to guarantee a path toward justice for the poor and needy." Lev. 25:2-7, 25-28,33; 19:19-18; Ex. 21:2-3; 23:10-11, Deut 15:1-18, 5:12-15; 26:12-15; 24:19-24.

⁴⁰ Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 139.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 139.

⁴² quoted in Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 140.

the Old Testament is a story of God's concern for the poor and oppressed and His desire for peace and justice within society.

The New Testament

The Old Testament theme of God's desire for peace and justice within society runs throughout the New Testament as well. The New Testament is full of examples of and commands for social concern. Since time and space do not allow for many details, this section will glance through three factors in the life and ministry of Jesus that reveal his heart for mankind. These three factors are *His incarnation, His ministry and His teachings*.

The incarnation of Jesus is the climax of God's involvement in human history. Jesus identified himself with the poor and oppressed of the society, because he himself was born, not among elite of the society but among the poorest of poor. The incarnation of Jesus presents a challenge to the church. If by his incarnation, God the creator of everything including man, was willing to get his hands dirty by involving himself in human history and problems in the world, then the church as the body of Christ has no other option but to follow the example of Christ. Rahtjen rightly says "if the church is truly the Body of Christ, she has no choice but to become involved in the problems of humanity, no matter how sordid they may be."⁴³

The ministry of Jesus is best summarized by Luke in Acts 10:38.⁴⁴ In the Nazareth manifesto (Luke 4:18) Jesus Himself summarizes his mission.⁴⁵ The gospels inform us that He was a friend of the poor, sinners, tax collectors, and those rejected and oppressed by the society.⁴⁶ The hallmark of Jesus' ministry according to Miller and

⁴³ Bruce D. Rahtjen, *Scripture and Social Action* (Nashville, New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), 95.

⁴⁴ "How God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power, and how *he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*" (NIV italics mine)

⁴⁵ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (NIV, italics mine)

⁴⁶ Luke 15: 1-2.

Yamamori “was compassion for the poor and marginalized in society, including interacting with tax collectors and sinners.”⁴⁷

The ‘kingdom of God’ , was no doubt the central theme of His teachings. His teachings were often manifested in his ministry by healing and compassion for the poor, outcast of society, children and prostitutes. Jesus often used stories and parables to teach ordinary people. One of the focal points of Jesus’ teachings according to Massey, was that all persons are equal. Through his teaching, Jesus empowered those religiously outcast and socio-economically poor and marginalized of society. Jesus according to Massey “challenged the dominant groups belonging to every area of life and made clear that claims to consider themselves superior or higher than others has no foundation and is contradictory to the divine will.”⁴⁸ There is no doubt that the poor and oppressed were always at the heart of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit

Given the fact that Pentecostalism is a missionary movement with emphasis on baptism of Holy Spirit one of the most distinctive feature of Pentecostal theology,⁴⁹ one could expect a distinctive Pentecostal theology of mission with special emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. But this, according to Karkkainen, has not been the case. In fact, Karkkainen goes on to argue that any standard theology of mission, be it David Bosch’s *Transforming Mission, Called and empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, “the major compendium of Pentecostal missiology,” or the recent Dictionary of Mission by Catholic and other writers, “and you are quite sure not to find much

⁴⁷ Miller and Yamamori. *Progressive Pentecostals* ,59

⁴⁸ Massey, “Oppressed communities and a Need for Contextual Theologies,”10.

⁴⁹ Edin Villafane, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmanns Publishing Co., 1993), 202, see also Howard Kenyon. “An Analysis of Ethical Issues in the History of Assemblies of God (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1988), 408ff; Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Ad Ultimum Terrae: Series in Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity*; Vol. 117(Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 1999), 160; and Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “Truth on Fire: Pentecostal Theology of Mission and the Challenges of A New Millennium,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3/1 (2000): 37-38.

about the role of Holy Spirit.”⁵⁰ One can argue that Pentecostals by nature have been more ‘doers’ than ‘thinkers,’ so instead of reflecting on and developing the doctrine of Holy Spirit, they were satisfied with relying on the supernatural dynamics of the Spirit.⁵¹ But Pentecostal theology through its belief in the availability of God’s supernatural power and presence, which is foundational for Pentecostal faith, can actually make a great contribution to the church at large.

Pentecostal experience of baptism of the Holy Spirit is not mere emotionalism⁵² as understood by many, but an encounter with God, in which God through His Spirit “practically invades the believer, takes possession of him or her, as he fills his or her life with new meaning.”⁵³ It brings spiritual sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the word of God comes alive, prayer becomes more of a relationship with God than daily routine, there is conviction of sin, a passion for holy life, and a greater hunger for mission. One needs to however, understand that the experience in itself cannot equip one for the task of mission, it has its own limitations. This is where theology can play a greater role. One of the tasks of theology would be to provide a theological framework that will help Pentecostals to interpret their experience in relation with the world, and help them to understand the limitation of their experience especially in relation to social concern.

Relationship with the World

For many Pentecostals it is difficult to relate their ‘pneumatological spirituality’ as Wenk calls it, with socio-political

⁵⁰ Karkkainen “Truth on fire,” 38-9. see also, Wonsuk Ma, “Toward an Asian Pentecostal Theology,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1/1 (1998): 29.

⁵¹ Karkkainen, “Truth on fire,” 37; God according to Wenk “is not so much ‘systematically studied’ among them [Pentecostals] but rather encountered.” see, also Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “Pentecostal Theology of Mission in the Making,” *Journal of Belief & Values*, 25/2 (August 2004):167; and Wenk “The Holy Spirit as transforming Power,” 139.

⁵² Emotionalism according to MacDonald “consists of the seeking and stimulation of emotions as ends in themselves, and not as the by-products of real experience in truth and in God.” MacDonald, “Pentecostal Theology,” 65.

⁵³ Juan Sepulveda, “Reflections on the Pentecostal Contribution to the Mission of the Church in Latin America,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992): 100.

realm. Works of the Spirit for them relate only to the spiritual realm. Both spiritual and socio-political realms are perceived as mutually exclusive. The domain of the Spirit is often considered the 'inner person,' while the socio-political realm deals with issues of the external world.⁵⁴ Johns' statement, "Pentecostal experience does not cause men and women to withdraw from the world in which they live"⁵⁵ portrays the very fact that Pentecostals tend to see their experience as individual spiritual experience. In their quest to individualize their experience, Pentecostals according to Macchia, actually "confine the Spirit's work to miraculous activity that is unrelated to the liberating affects of God's grace in the context of social liberation."⁵⁶ But the fact that both conversion experience and Spirit baptism take place in a social context, one cannot interpret them as individual otherworldly experiences.⁵⁷ Pentecostal experience, according to Sepulveda, "is not a solitary experience; it is given in the framework of a community."⁵⁸ Moberg's argument that "religion is never purely personal," leads to a logical conclusion that spirituality can never be limited to relationship with God alone; it always involves relationship with other humans.⁵⁹ The church, according to Kock is both a sign and instrument of the presence of God in the world. "Christ is present in the church and the church is

⁵⁴ Matthias Wenk, "The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power Within a Society: Pneumatological Spirituality and its Political/Social Relevance for Western Europe," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 11/1 (2002): 130-31.

⁵⁵ Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the oppressed* (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 96.

⁵⁶ Frank Macchia, "The Spirit and the Kingdom: Implications in the Message of the Blumhardts for a Pentecostal Social Spirituality," *Transformation* 11/1 (January/March 1994):5 [1-5]

⁵⁷ Macchia, "The Spirit and the Kingdom," 5. "true spirituality according to Hogan, is physically lived and tangibly demonstrated." Hogan, "Because Jesus did," 10.

⁵⁸ Sepulveda, "Reflections on the Pentecostal Contribution to the Mission," 102.

⁵⁹ David O. Moberg, *Inasmuch: Christian Social Responsibility in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 13.

present in the world through the empowerment of Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰ So the church has a mission to represent Christ in the world. The only way the church can fulfill this mission is by engaging itself in the world, not by being an obscure entity on the fringe of the society.

The illusion of living a pure Christian life in isolation or in a convent or hermitage, according to Ellul, is not possible. No one can claim that s/he lives outside of the world. Every Christian “is in solidarity with others, whether he wants to be or not, and this fact is much more true materially speaking, in the current world than in the past civilizations.”⁶¹ Living in solidarity also means that “*everyone lives with the consequences of the failure of all the rest.*”⁶² Neutrality toward social issues is both impossible and unbiblical. Impossible, because all Christians make their living and raise their family in society.⁶³ Unbiblical, because many Bible passages either imply or clearly state that Christians must be concerned and involved in societal issues.⁶⁴ Being in solidarity with others also means that all Christians are part of social structures directly or indirectly.⁶⁵ This awareness should not only keep Christians from spiritualizing their experience but force them to ask of their responsibilities in the society. The following recommendations can be of some help.

Firstly, the Church needs to play a prophetic role in the society. The prophets, according to Ramachandra, brought a word of

⁶⁰ Wynand J. de Kock, Pentecostal Power for a Pentecostal Task: Empowerment through Engagement in South African Context,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2000): 113.

⁶¹ J. Ellul, *Presence au Monde Moderne* (Geneva: Editions Roulet, 1948), 19. Quoted in Robert Davis, “What about Justice? Toward an Evangelical Perspective on Advocacy in Development,” *Transformation* 26/2 (April 2009):93.

⁶² quoted in, Davis, “What about Justice? 93.

⁶³ John H. Yodder, *The Christian Witness to the State* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1964/2002), 20, quoted in Davis, “What about Justice?” 96.

⁶⁴ Moberg, *Inasmuch*, 14.

⁶⁵ Based on Ellul’s argument on Christian solidarity with others Davis argues that “we all participate in the sinful structures that lead to the poverty, oppression and exclusion that our development efforts seek to remedy.” Davis, “What about Justice? 93. (Dr. Robert Davis teaches at Eastern University and has over 20 years experience in Maternal and Child Health with a focus on West Africa and South Asia.)

condemnation against sin, injustice and oppression in society and a word of encouragement from Yahweh when people repented of their sins, but they also identified with the people when they were going through suffering.⁶⁶ The church should reflect its concern for the poor not only in its message but by living out that message among the poor and oppressed on an everyday basis. Our call for social concern should reflect the way we live as a community of faith among our larger society.⁶⁷

Secondly, the movement needs to receive what Johns calls a ‘true vision of reality’ that sees spiritual as well as social needs of humankind. This vision can be received only by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit energizes the church for evangelism and social justice.⁶⁸ The concept of empowerment for mission is the heart of Pentecostal pneumatology. Pentecostals depend heavily on Luke-Acts for their concept of empowerment.⁶⁹ The focus of this section is not to discuss

⁶⁶ Vinoth Ramachandra, “The Prophetic Role of Christians in Society: Some Reflection,” *Church & Society in Asia Today* 12/1 (April 2009):7. (Dr. Ramachandra is an Anglican lay theologian, writer, teacher and human right advocate) He argues that The prophets condemned when people lived a lifestyle “of indifferent or openly contemptuous of Yahweh’s passion for justice,” but when people suffered under Yahweh’s judgment the prophets did not “run away into heavens of private security,” but identified themselves with the people. In the same way the church “is called to bring before the public gaze the ‘forgotten’ people in our world—the poor the unemployable, the refugees, the disabled, the unwanted fetus and the unproductive elderly—both in its public proclamation of a different humanness and its demonstration of it in the church’s own social practices.” see pg 7.

⁶⁷ Arguing that the church have a right to speak to others regarding any given problem within the society only, if the church demonstrates it by ethically working in that direction in society Davis stats, “the agency that is not walking with and engaging deeply in an identification with the poor has no basis for witness to the state about structural injustice that keep the poor in poverty.” See, Davis, “What about Justice? 97

⁶⁸ Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 97. see also Veli-Matti Karkkainen “Spirituality as a Resource for Social Justice: Reflection from the Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6/1 (2003):84.

⁶⁹ Luke according to Robert Menzies “consistently portrays the gift of the Spirit as a prophetic endowment which enables its recipient to participate effectively in the mission of God.” see, Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke—Acts* (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 45;

the soteriological or empowerment dimension of the Spirit, but to show that the concept of empowerment within Pentecostalism is understood narrowly. The ‘empowerment’ more often is understood for evangelism, while social concern, the equally important dimension of mission is often neglected.

Based on Stronstad’s concept of transfer of the charismatic Spirit from Jesus to disciples which is basically the transfer of Jesus’ mission to the church,⁷⁰ one can argue that Pentecostals would be on the forefront of social concern, because they have access to the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit played an important role both in Jesus’ and early church’s ministry. Mission of Jesus (as seen earlier) was not only to proclaim the good news to the poor but it was a holistic mission (Luke 4:18-19). If the transfer of the Spirit really means the transference of Jesus’ own mission to the church, as Stronstad states, then Pentecostals need to be more holistic in their approach to the mission. The role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts according to Wenk is not limited only to inspiring to missionary proclamation, but Spirit manifestation had a direct bearing on the social structure.⁷¹ Luke has

Penney argues that Acts is more than a history for Pentecostals. “It [Acts] is a missionary manual, an open-ended account of the missionary work of the Holy Spirit in the church, concluding not with ch. 28, but with the ongoing Spirit-empowered and Spirit-directed gospel preaching today.” See, John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 11. While both Menzies and Penney have been criticized for limiting the role of the Spirit only to empowerment aspect, Karkainen contends that “basic argument of Menzies and Penney is valid: Luke-Acts points to the role of the Spirit in empowering the church believers into mission.” See, Karkainen, “Truth on fire,” 40 n.31. For the criticism of Menzies and Penney see, Max Turner, *Power From on High: The Spirit of Prophecy in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁷⁰ Pentecost narrative according to Stronstad “is the story of the transfer of the Charismatic Spirit from Jesus to the disciples. In other words, having become the exclusive bearer of the Holy Spirit at His baptism, Jesus became the giver of the Spirit at Pentecost ... By this transfer of the Spirit, the disciples became the heirs and successors to the earthly charismatic ministry of Jesus; that is, because Jesus has poured out the charismatic Spirit upon them the disciples will continue to do and teach those things which Jesus began to do and teach.” See, Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984) 49.

⁷¹ Wenk, “The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power within a Society,” 134-36.

special concern for the poor, the marginalized, helpless and outcast of the society which can be seen in different Lukan narratives.

Thirdly, Wenk argues that there is a need to have “theocentric outlook of a Pneumatological spirituality.” The fact that God, the sovereign ruler and creator of everything in the world, has chosen to show His favor to oppressed, marginalized, helpless and the poor of society, can actually free Pentecostals from their commonly felt political and social powerlessness because they have access to the ultimate ruler of the world. Pentecostals, Wenk argues, “can discuss with him [God] all their concerns, be they of social or political nature, related to their health or the politics of their country, or to any other aspect of life.”⁷² Their sociopolitical involvement however, should be based on their experience of God and not on any other source.

Fourthly, Pentecostal social concern should be grounded in a clear sense of identity. When it comes to Christian identity, two positions according to Kenyon have found varying favor within Pentecostalism. First, that Christians are primarily citizens of heaven which commands their foremost loyalty which means all other commitments, “including commitment to earthly authority are secondary and subservient.” Second position, that Christians are dual citizens of heaven and earthly state. “As dual citizens, Christians are responsible for both God and country.”⁷³ Being a dual citizen, a Christian needs to know his/her responsibility in each city and live according to the norms of those cities.

With dual citizenship comes the question of loyalty. This is where one needs to find a true balance. On one hand a Christian must know s/he is not *for* or *of* this world, but at the same time s/he must not forget that s/he is still living in this world. Living in this world also means that one has a social life and responsibility.⁷⁴ One must always live in

⁷² Wenk, “The Holy Spirit as Transforming Power within a Society,” 138.

⁷³ Kenyon, “An Analysis of Ethical issues in the History of the Assemblies of God,” 297-98.

⁷⁴ A Christian according to Ellul “is a citizen of a nation, she has a family, she has a job and must work to earn money. She lives her life according to the same rules as other men and women and with them. She is of the same natural state and lives in same condition. Everything she does in the word she must do seriously, because she is in solidarity with others and cannot neglect the responsibilities of any women because she is like all the others.” Davis, “What about Justice,” 95-96.

realization that s/he is an alien and stranger, traveling through this world (I Peter 2:9-11, Hebrews 11:13) from which God has rescued him/her and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Colossians 1:13-20), but this realization must not become an excuse to escape from the responsibilities of this world. Paul's statement that we are ambassadors of Christ (II Cor. 5:20), adds an interesting dimension to this identity. As an ambassador of Christ we represent policies, practices and interests of the kingdom, but we do so by living in obedience of the laws of the nation we are living in, unless the laws of the nation we are living are against the interests of the kingdom we are representing. The life of obedience gives us right to plead with people of nations to be reconciled and become the citizen of the kingdom we represent.

It also helps broaden our understanding of spirituality and takes out any fear about this worldly dimension of our spirituality. We realize that our spirituality or salvation, freedom, peace and justice in Christ are not merely otherworldly realities but they have this worldly dimension also. This realization further provides "a strong rationale for walking with and speaking out on their behalf: we understand their plight because it is our own."⁷⁵ Christ being our peace (Eph. 2:14), Wenk argues, is not mere "inward tranquility" but it includes a socio-economic dimension as well.⁷⁶

Limitation of the Experience

Idealistically "the confession of being Spirit baptized should lead to a passionate concern about justice, enhancing public morality and changing the plight of the underprivileged and marginalized,"⁷⁷ but in reality it does not work that way. Every new convert needs to be taught what the Bible expects from his/her spiritual, moral, ethical and social aspects of life. To expect new believers to automatically get involved in

⁷⁵ Davis, "What About Justice," 96.

⁷⁶ Wenk, "Holy Spirit as Transforming Power, 141. Jesus, according to Wenk, "did not project salvation, freedom, peace and justice only as otherworldly reality."

⁷⁷ Murray Dempster, "The Structure of a Christian Ethic Informed by Pentecostal Experience: soundings in the Moral Significance of Glossolalia," in *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Russell P. Spittler*, eds. Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 109.

social concern according to Sider is “naïve nonsense.”⁷⁸ One needs to understand that experience has its limitations. Pentecostal experience according to McDonnell “will not, by and of itself, supply one with socio-political awareness... it does not endow people with a new passion for political and social justice.”⁷⁹ The limitation of experience actually calls for an intentional approach to develop its theology and ongoing process to teach and disciple its adherents in regard to social responsibility.

Arguing that Spirit baptism is an “independent variable,” Quebedeaux states, “if the newly baptized Pentecostal believer is socialized (that is, taught and ‘discipled’) in a group committed to social change, he too, will probably move in that direction... but if the new pentecostal is socialized in a conservative community of faith, he or she will most likely come to share *its* position there.”⁸⁰ A Pentecostal theology of social concern will have to provide what Dempster calls “an interpretive framework” for the Pentecostal experience, providing the essential connection between social concern and baptism of the Holy Spirit. It will also need to create a social conscience that will encourage social engagement in such a way that it reflects God’s work in the world. Lack of essential theological framework according to Dempster will lead people to interpret their Pentecostal experience and its significance including the socio-ethical significance either by the “theological frame of reference they bring into Pentecostal experience or by a theological system that they adopt after the fact.”⁸¹ Every human experience needs to be interpreted because no human experience according to the Dempster is, self-interpreting.

⁷⁸Sider, *Good News and Good Works*, 174.

⁷⁹ Kilian McDonnell, “Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation,” *Dialog* 9 (winter, 1970): 51. quoted in Dempster, “The Structure of a Christian Ethic Informed by Pentecostal Experience,” 109.

⁸⁰ Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics II* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1983), 166-67.

⁸¹ Dempster, “The Structure of a Christian Ethic Informed by Pentecostal Experience,” 109.

Eschatology⁸²

This section does not seek to define Pentecostal eschatology,⁸³ but focuses on the role of eschatology in social concern. The doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus has often been criticized for its negative influence on the ministry of social concern. In spite the movement's claim of coming of age, the emphasis on social ministries according to Dempster still raises uneasy tension within the movement. The doctrine of the imminent return of Jesus is "still very much at the core of Pentecostal identity at the conceptual level."⁸⁴ One's eschatological view has direct effect in one's conception and practice of social involvement. One's view of eschatology according to Kuzmic "determines one's view of history. And one's view of the purpose and

⁸² Many scholars argue that even though Spirit baptism is an important Pentecostal theme the main focus of the movement is the second coming of Christ and not baptism of the Holy Spirit. See, Clark describes Pentecostalism as "an apocalyptic movement, in its self understanding and in ideology." Mathew Clark and Henry Lederle, *What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology?* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1983), 90; Land describes it as "the driving force and galvanizing vision of the entire movement." Steven Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (London: Sheffield Academic Press,2003),61; Eschatology according to Damboriena "belongs to the essence of Pentecostalism," Prudencio Damboriena, *Tongues As of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity* (Washington, D.C: Corpus Books, 1969), 82; For Anderson "second coming of Christ,' not the 'Spirit-baptism' that was the focus of pentecostal message," Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: Making of American Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 79-97.

⁸³ For detailed definition of Pentecostal eschatology see, Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark, 2008),309-323;William Menzies, "Current Pentecostal Theology of the End Times," *The Pentecostal Minister* 8/3 (Fall 1988): 6-10; Grant McClung Jr. "The Forgotten Sign of the Times," *The Pentecostal Minister* 8/3 (Fall 1988): 11-14; D. J. Wilson, "Eschatology, Pentecostal Perspective on," in *The New Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 601-605;Julie Ma, "Eschatology and Mission: Living in the 'Last Days' Today," *Transformation* 26/9 (July 2009):186-98.

⁸⁴ Dempster, "Christian Social Concern," 53.

goal of history as pointing to the eschaton definitely modifies one's attitude toward this-worldly historical realities."⁸⁵ Since the Second Coming of Jesus within Pentecostalism is often associated with the rapture of the saints and "apocalyptic destruction"⁸⁶ or "the annihilation"⁸⁷ of the world, there is little doubt why early Pentecostals did not pay much attention to social concern.

Christian theologians, according to Volf, basically hold two views about eschatological future of the world. One view sees radical discontinuity between the present and future orders because they believe that God will completely destroy the present world at the end of the age and create a world that is completely new "*ex nihilo*." Another view sees "postulated continuity between the two, believing that the present world will be transformed into the new heaven and new earth."⁸⁸

The eschatological orientation, which sees radical discontinuity between this age and age to come, does not see much potential "for a positive understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in creation, culture

⁸⁵ Peter Kuzmic "Eschatology and Ethics: Evangelical Views and Attitudes," in *Mission as Transformation*, eds. Vinay Samuel & Chris Sudgen (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 135. Wilson argues that the eschatological view of Pentecostal "governs their view of current events. Their interpretation of prophecy has had a very significant effect on their perception of the world historical events and on their political and social response to those events." Wilson, "Eschatology, Pentecostal Perspective on," 264.

⁸⁶ Clifton, "Pentecostals and Politics," 234,

⁸⁷ Dempster, "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective," 59. According to Peter Kuzmic this 'sensational eschatology' with emphasis on impending premillennial return of Christ, that discourages social involvement is based on "western Cultural moods and fads as well as American conservative politics than to the clear teaching of scripture." see, Peter Kuzmic, "History and Eschatology: Evangelical Views," in *Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Bruce Nicholls (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 146.

⁸⁸ Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 89. While Volf sides with transformation, Rodman Williams argues for complete renovation. See, Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: the Church, the Kingdom and Last Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 397ff.

or society.”⁸⁹ Social concern within this view does not find much prominence because such works have no eschatological significance. Theologically also this view seems inconsistent with social concern. There are two reasons for that.

Firstly, theologically it will be difficult to affirm the goodness and intrinsic value of creation and at the same time expect its eschatological destruction. Volf argues “what God will annihilate must be either so bad that it is not possible to be redeemed or so insignificant that it is not worth being redeemed.”⁹⁰ If the world is not intrinsically good then there is little if any, theological basis for social involvement, the only motivation would be to merely provide temporal rest for the soul from the suffering of the world with no ultimate significance. As Volf points out “*without a theologically grounded belief in the intrinsic value and goodness of creation, positive cultural involvement hangs theologically in the air.*”⁹¹

Secondly, the annihilationist view of Christ’s second coming according to Dempster “most often presupposes, and coalesces with, the notion that the kingdom of God is an idealized state of future ahistorical bliss,”⁹² or something like heaven, eternal life or “the land beyond the river.”⁹³ These presuppositions are in contrast with ‘already-not yet’ character of the kingdom, which according to Fee is primarily matter of “time rather than space.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Frank Macchia, “Theology, Pentecostal,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 1138, see also Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 89-91, Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective,” 59.

⁹⁰ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 90-91. Volf argues that the belief in eschatological destruction is against “Jude-Christian belief in the goodness of divine creation.” See Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 95-96.

⁹¹ Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 91.

⁹² Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective,” 60.

⁹³ Ronald J. Allen, “Signs of the Reign of God,” *Brethren Life and Thought* 30 (Spring 1985), 95. Quoted in Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective,” 60.

⁹⁴ Gordon D. Fee, “The Kingdom of God and the Church’s Global Mission,” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* eds. Murray Dempster, Bryon Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 8. The kingdom of God according to Fee “refers

The picture changes radically when eschatological future is seen in terms of eschatological transformation. Clifton argues that eschatology can actually become a motivating force for social concern, if seen in terms of transformation.⁹⁵ This section looks at two reasons how eschatological transformation encourages social engagement. Firstly, when eschatology is interpreted within what Dempster calls *Pentecost-kingdom association*⁹⁶ or *presence of future*⁹⁷ as Chan calls it, then apocalyptic act at the end of this age “will not be one of the total *annihilation* of the world but one of total *transformation* of the world.”⁹⁸ Dempster also argues that Jesus’ own mission, ministry and

primarily to the time of future—the Eschaton (“End”) when God would finally exercise his kingly rule over the whole of his created order.” pg 8.

⁹⁵ Both Clifton and Volf view eschatological future of the world in terms of transformation and fulfillment and not annihilation. See, Clifton, “Pentecostals and Politics,” 236; and Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 88-102.

⁹⁶ For the definition of the kingdom of God and to understand the *already, not yet* character of the kingdom of God in detail See, George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 89-90; Peter Kuzmic, “Kingdom of God,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds., Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 521-26; Fee, “The Kingdom of God and the Church’s Global Mission,” 7-21; Dempster, “Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God,” 22-43; Murray Dempster, “A Theology of the Kingdom—Pentecostal Contribution,” in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of Whole Gospel*, eds Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 45-75; Graham Cray, “A Theology of the Kingdom,” in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of Whole Gospel*, eds Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 26-44; and Kuzmic, “Eschatology and Ethics,” 134-165.

⁹⁷ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 186. The presence of future according to Chan shows that God intends to transform the world, not to destroy it.

⁹⁸ Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective,” 61-62. Hunter argues that “The biblical testimony to the earthly locale of the kingdom of God speaks indirectly in favor of the belief in the eschatological transformation of the world rather than its annihilation.” Harold D. Hunter, *Some Ethical Implications of Pentecostal Eschatology*, Paper presented at the 10th EPCRA conference in Leuven, Belgium, 10, available on

message, and the earthly hopes of the Hebrew prophetic tradition (Isa 11:6-10, 65: 17-25), both indicate eschatological continuity. The early church viewed the second coming of Christ differently than it is viewed in modern Pentecostal circles. It was not seen as an event that triggered the annihilation of the world but it was seen as the final consummation of the already present kingdom of God.⁹⁹ This hope led the early church to consciously get involved in society.¹⁰⁰

Secondly, the belief in eschatological continuity brings intrinsic value and ultimate significance to the human efforts in the society. Knowing that their noble efforts will not be wasted but through their modest and broken human efforts they are contributing toward God's kingdom gives a strong motivation for social involvement.¹⁰¹ Since the world to come is in some way already present, Chan argues that Christians should be more committed socially to the world. The "commitment to the world is based on attachment to the kingdom of God present in the world rather than on detachment from the snares of the world."¹⁰² When seen from kingdom perspective, the second

http://www.epcra.ch/papers_pdf/leuven2/hunter_2001.pdf . Commenting on Rom. 8:21, Bruce argues that "if words mean anything, these words of Paul denote not the annihilation of the present material universe on the day of revelation, to be replaced by a universe completely new, but the transformation of the present universe so that it will fulfill the purpose for which God created it." F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 170.

⁹⁹ The return of Jesus Christ in the early church according to Dempster was not seen as a "promising escape from a world doomed for annihilation, [but an] event that solidified the believing community in the hope of God's future eschatological reign. Dempster "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective," 63.

¹⁰⁰ The social concern of early church can be seen "in its conscious attempts to create economic *koinonia*, to share in giving to the poor and to overcome the moral biases and cultural prejudices inherent in the old social order by forming an inclusive community of men, women, bonded, free, rich, poor, Jew and Gentile." Dempster "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective," 63.

¹⁰¹ Volf contends that the results of human work "after being purified in the eschatological *transformation mundi*, they will be integrated by an act of divine transformation in to the new heaven and the new earth." Volf, *Work in the Spirit*, 92. See also Dempster, "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective," 63.

¹⁰² Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 186.

coming of Christ not only validates the eschatological significance of social concern but it also works as motivating force for social concern.¹⁰³ Eschatological continuity also helps the church to have a “holistic, hope-filled approach to mission,”¹⁰⁴ bringing a great sense of optimism not only about their future existence but also about the work they are doing at present.¹⁰⁵

To summarize, one can only agree with Macchia that Pentecostals will have to develop an eschatological passion that “preserves a legitimate desire for the coming of the kingdom of God in righteousness and justice but without the triumphalist and escapist tendencies of earlier convictions.”¹⁰⁶ Pentecostal social concern can get a massive boost if Pentecostals are able to direct their strong moral and ethical consciousness that accompanies their eschatological passion toward social awareness and action, and engage in prophetic criticism of unjust structures as well as of those oppressing powerless of the society. They need to work toward bringing constructive political and social change, and have a constructive prophetic vision for eschatological future.¹⁰⁷

Tradition

The word ‘tradition’¹⁰⁸ within Pentecostal circles often is not considered good, even though it is a good biblical word.¹⁰⁹ One needs

¹⁰³ Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective,” 54. see also Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 186; Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “Truth on Fire: Pentecostal Theology of Mission and the Challenges of A New Millennium,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3/1 (2000) : 48.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew M. Lord, “Mission Eschatology: A Framework for Mission in the Spirit,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (October 1997): 111.

¹⁰⁵ Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might Nor by Power; A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1996), 107-8.

¹⁰⁶ Macchia, “Theology, Pentecostal,” 1138.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 1138-39.

¹⁰⁸ Cambridge Advance Learner’s dictionary defines tradition as “a belief, principle or the way of acting which people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time,” is helpful. *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1377.

to realize that tradition can be good and bad in the same way a theology can be good or bad. Since most early Pentecostals came from different traditions, and viewed human traditions as something that hindered the free move of Holy Spirit, they were determined not to bind themselves again to any human tradition. But the fact is that no movement can continue without developing a tradition.¹¹⁰ In spite of their reluctance toward human tradition, Pentecostals actually developed a particular tradition which is called *Pentecostal oral tradition*. Orality is one of the fundamental qualities of Pentecostal spirituality. Spittler even goes to the extent of saying that “no one can rightly appreciate Pentecostal spirituality merely by reading what Pentecostals have written.”¹¹¹ Pentecostals according to him are yet to produce any substantial theological literature that will capture the whole dimension of movement. But because of its tradition, the movement has been able to accomplish what literature could not. For example certain behavioral patterns such as avoidance of alcohol, gambling, empowerment of women or helping those in need may go entirely unwritten, but through a strong oral tradition a newcomer soon learns what is expected of him/her.

One cannot deny the importance of tradition in theology. McDonald claims that “without tradition there can be no theology,” tradition, according to him is a theology.¹¹² Roots of many Pentecostal

¹⁰⁹ McDonald, “Pentecostal Theology,” 60. For different biblical traditions and their contribution to Christianity, see F. F. Bruce, *Tradition Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970)

¹¹⁰ Addressing those individuals and churches that profess a pure Biblicism and deny that they have any tradition or traditions apart from what is written, Bruce says, “a pure biblicism is rarely as pure as it is thought to be. Let these friends be confronted with an interpretation of scripture which is new to them, held (it may be) by others but unknown to their own circles, and they will suddenly realize that what they had always taken to be the plain sense of Scripture is really their traditional interpretation.” F. F. Bruce, *Tradition Old and New*, 20.

¹¹¹ Russell P. Spittler, “Spirituality, Pentecostal and Charismatic,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 805. See also Walter J. Hollenweger, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Edward Yarnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 550-552.

¹¹² MacDonal, “Pentecostal Theology,” 60.

practices can be easily traced back to its oral tradition. McDonald's statement that "the confessions of faith of the Pentecostal denominations afford outlines, but the more substantive matters by and large must be traced to the oral traditions that implement them,"¹¹³ shows the importance of oral tradition within Pentecostalism. One can even argue that Pentecostal theology is predominantly oral in its character.¹¹⁴

This oral nature of Pentecostal tradition actually worked well for social concern. It allowed Pentecostals (especially early Pentecostals) to be pragmatic in their approach to social needs around them. Even though it created tension between their belief and practices, for example, conceptually they were convinced that one would only waste his/her time by being involved in social concerns, but practically they found themselves involved in the very things they professed not to do. In fact one of the reasons for the exceptional growth of the movement was their pragmatism. The movement, according to Sepulveda, not only identified with those hurting, but it also offered the possibilities of a direct access to God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the movement was able to "offer a satisfying answer to the problem of uprootedness and the disorientation produced by the social crises characteristic of our societies in development."¹¹⁵ Pentecostals cannot afford to neglect their rich heritage, but they have to learn to appreciate it, and incorporate it in their theology.

The very fact that oral tradition was an integral part of New Testament Christianity, and its founder himself, as Hollenweger puts it "was a story-telling rabbi from the *oral culture* of Middle East, who healed the sick and never wrote a book,"¹¹⁶ should encourage Pentecostals to do so all the more.

¹¹³Ibid, 60-61.

¹¹⁴ The emphasis on oral tradition here does not imply that there are no written resources. But *Predominantly* as MacDonald points out both in "past and present, pentecostal theology has had a character of a "witness" experience. This witness tends to have at its deepest level an oral-aural rather than an optic-literary transmission." See MacDonald, "Pentecostal Theology," 61.

¹¹⁵ Sepulveda, "Reflections on the Pentecostal Contribution to the Mission," 98.

¹¹⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, "An Irresponsible Silence," *Asia Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 7/2 (July, 2004): 220. (Italics mine)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Pentecostals in recent times have taken great interest in society. This newfound interest for social concern, as Sepulveda calls it, needs to find proper channel through theological reflections. Pentecostalism today is very different from early 20th century Pentecostalism. The lack of theological reflection in early Pentecostalism can be explained, because, Pentecostalism initially was movement of those excluded from society, poor, illiterate, farmers or those who had no opportunity to prove their skills. But that is not the case today. Pentecostalism today is increasingly growing in middle and upper classes as well; there is more opportunity for theological education today than there ever was. There is also more desire for social concern within the movement today than ever before. These opportunities also bring greater challenges, which should be taken seriously. An effective Pentecostal theology of social concern will have to address the issues of dichotomy between its beliefs and practices, provide a holistic definition of its mission, be able to answer the question of priority, and clearly state the purpose of social concern.

While the Bible should always be the foundation for any theology, the other three distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal identity namely, eschatology, Pentecostal experience and Pentecostal tradition, should also play vital roles in its theology of social concern. Eschatology, if understood properly within Pentecost-kingdom perspective, can actually serve as motivating force for social concern within the movement. The Holy Spirit also needs to play a greater role in Pentecostal theology: The Holy Spirit who leads them in their pragmatism can also lead them in their theologizing. The task of doing theology should never be seen as a pure rational exercise, but a process of knowing and experiencing God. Pentecostals should also understand the value and importance of their rich tradition and utilize it in their theology. So what should a Pentecostal theological framework of social concern look like? A true Pentecostal theology of social concern should be based on the Bible, enriched by its tradition, pneumatological in its dimension and eschatological in its orientation.

Finally, by laying down a prospective theological framework for Pentecostal theology of social concern, the writer does not claim these are the *only parameters* for an effective theology of social concern. What the author hopes is that this paper, in some way will help Pentecostals to realize the need for developing a theology of social

concern that will provide a vision for future, and help the movement to clearly articulate its understanding of social concern.

PREACHING AMONG FILIPINO PENTECOSTALS AND
EXPOSITION THROUGH TESTIMONIAL HERMENEUTICS: A
POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PGAG TO
EVANGELICALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Roli G. dela Cruz

1. Preliminary Remarks

The Pentecostals in the Philippines see “the first job of the pastor” is essentially “the ministry of preaching.”¹ Preaching is also an avenue for a minister of the gospel to share his testimonies of his experiences with God. The most common illustrations in sermons are the testimonies of the preacher. The experience of Spirit baptism guides the Filipino Pentecostal preaching in their verbal homiletical skills.² A preacher’s “own personal experiences will come into the picture” as the proclamation is done.³ It is hard to disagree with the idea that “Filipino Pentecostals must begin to recognize that context is always local.”⁴ The uniqueness of Filipino Pentecostal preaching is the sensitivity to the needs of the congregation who are listening to the message spoken. Eleazer E. Javier, who for many years the General Superintendent of the

¹Eleazer E. Javier, *The Work of the Pastor* (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1989), 168.

²See Roli G. dela Cruz, “A Historical-Doctrinal Perspective of Filipino Pentecostal Preaching,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 2 (July 2007): 192-217.

³Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁴Joseph R. Suico, “Pentecostalism: Towards a Movement of Social Transformation in the Philippines,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 1, no. 1 (March 1999): 18.

Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PGCAG), perceives that “the needs of people in general and your people [in the local church] in particular provide rich data for appreciation of spiritual truths.”⁵ Furthermore, Javier maintains an important principle in preaching: “Keep the individual and his needs in focus when you apply truth to the life situations of your people.”⁶ The total dependence on God’s power in preaching is crucial.⁷ Javier also believes that there should be sensitivity in the part of the preacher to meet the needs of the people.⁸ The Spirit-baptism and the experience of the anointing of the Holy Spirit is the key in effective preaching.

World-wide Pentecostals in general, including the constituency of the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (PGCAG), take it for granted that when the disciples experienced the gift of the Spirit during Pentecost in Acts 2, they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance. Filipino Pentecostal preachers would certainly appreciate Craig S. Keener when he states that “if Jesus’ followers could be inspired to speak for God in a language that they did not know ([Acts] 2:4), how much more would they be prepared to speak for God in a language that they did know ([Acts]1:8)?”⁹ Tongues and preaching are both Spirit uttered words. The Pentecostal understanding of the phenomenon of tongues sees a straightforward connection of contemporary experience of the outpouring of the Spirit with Luke’s description in Acts within the context of the fulfillment of Joel’s

⁵Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁶Javier, *Work*, 176.

⁷See Roli G. dela Cruz, “Missions Endeavor through the Gifts of the Spirit: The Reality of its Dynamic Power,” *Year bang eul hyang ha yeo* [Korean title] *Toward the Tribes in the World* [English meaning] (May-June 1999): 16-21. This article is a Korean-English Diglot.

⁸Javier, *Work*, 177, notes that: “Throughout the week, these people struggle through life, trying to make a living. Some of them are struggling desperately for recognition, acceptance, or success. Young and old alike are faced with temptations. If you stand behind the pulpit and show no enthusiasm or if you assume that the people are all extremely hostile, you can imagine what your approach will do to them.”

⁹Craig S. Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 194.

prophecy. Why? Because the Pentecostals still experience the Spirit of Pentecost. Hence, the PGCAG as a Pentecostal group puts stress on this experience. Preaching about the Spirit filled experience in the Pentecostal pulpits is nothing to be embarrassed about at all.¹⁰

It follows then that the depiction of Luke about Joel 2:28-32 prophecy is believed as still being fulfilled today. This is an unquestioned concept in the Pentecostal perception of Acts 2. Filipino Pentecostals expound and preach the interpretation of the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 using their testimonial experiences of being filled with the Spirit and uttering tongues. The Bible is alive! This kind of hermeneutical practice of the use of personal testimonies in biblical exposition during preaching is very common among PGCAG pastors. Contemporary experience of Spirit-baptism is used as a major tool for interpretation of the Bible during preaching. The experience of the apostolic church in Acts 2 is still for today. The apostolic interpretation the Spirit's coming in Acts 2 is parallel to current proclamation of the outpouring of the same Spirit in our day and age which gave birth to the Pentecostalism in the Philippines.¹¹ Hence, the central thesis of this paper is that preaching among the Filipino Pentecostals and exposition through testimonial hermeneutics cannot be separated. And that this inseparability is a positive contribution of the PGCAG to Evangelical preaching in the Philippines.¹²

¹⁰A good representative of this kind of perspective is the former General Superintendent of the PGCAG, Eli Javier, "The Pentecostal Legacy: A Personal Memoir," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 289-310.

¹¹The experience of the Spirit of God led the pioneer Filipino Pentecostals residing in the United States to go back to the Philippines and share their testimonies through their preaching before World War II. See Trinidad E. Selekty, "Six Filipinos and One American: Pioneers of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines," edited and introduced by Lemuel Engcoy, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 1 (2001): 119-29.

¹²This paper is not intending to challenge Espiritu's study of the biblical interpretation of the Filipino conservative Evangelicals in light of Gadamer's hermeneutical theory; neither Exiomo's research on the Filipino Christian and Missionary Alliance biblical interpretation using Ricoeur's textual theory. Rather, my investigation is meant to complement as well as compliment their studies. See Daniel L. Espiritu, "A Case for Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutical Description" (M.A. thesis, Saint Louis University, 1997); and Jonathan V. Exiomo, "The Significance of Paul Ricoeur's Theory of Text and

2. All Believers in Pentecostal Understanding are Prophetic Witnesses

One of the claims of the Pentecostals is that God intends for all of his people in the church to be filled with the Spirit. The purpose is to be witnesses for Christ in the last days. The early church perceived themselves as an eschatological Christian community. They experienced the prophetic Spirit for the purpose of being Christ's witnesses to the world.¹³ Acts is a major source of understanding the Spirit in the church. Hence, functionally speaking, for Luke, the experience of the Spirit according to Acts 2 designates every believer of Christ as a prophet—a prophetic witnesses of the gospel. R. B. Dillard, although a non-Pentecostal, supports the view of the Pentecostals when he points out that:

Protestant theology is accustomed to speaking of the "priesthood of all believers"; perhaps in light of Acts 2 and Joel 3:1-5 [2:28-32], we must also speak of the "prophethood of all believers." The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost inaugurated a new age, the age when Moses' prayer is realized and all God's people are endowed with the Spirit of prophecy. The possession of the Spirit would never again be the restricted preserve of a few; all who call on the name of the Lord (3:5 [2:32]) now have the equipage and the obligation incumbent upon prophets to bear witness to their generation. This endowment with the Spirit of prophecy belongs to the general office of the church--rich and poor, young and old, male and female, the privilege of

Interpretation for Selected Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines Pastors' Orientations to the Bible Taken as Religious Text Necessitating the Task of Interpretation" (Th.D. diss., Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, 2002). Exiomo's revised work has been recently published with the title *Interpreting the Text: Towards a Filipino Biblical Hermeneutics from a Ricoeurian Perspective* (Quezon City, Philippines: Alliance Graduate School, 2008).

¹³See the discussion of the connection of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism according to Acts 2 with the witness of the Church to the world in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (1988), s.v. "Historical Perspectives on Pentecostal and Charismatic Hermeneutics," by F. L. Arrington, 388.

proclaiming God's truth to a waiting world is not the province of the special office alone.¹⁴

In other words, the Pentecostal hermeneutical view of the pertinent passages of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32 has made a positive contribution to the Protestant theology of the priesthood of all believers. The Pentecostals, based on their hermeneutical experience of Acts 2 gave birth to a complementary new model for the contemporary church that all believers are prophets. This is a significant input to the Evangelicalism in the Philippines which emphasizes the evangelism of the whole country. The Filipino Pentecostal exposition of Acts 2 and Joel 2:28-32 using testimonies is appropriately practiced in a hermeneutical endeavor during the preaching from the Bible. Roger Stronstad, coming from his Pentecostal perspective argues for the model of prophethood of all believers:

The Reformers would have served the church better if they would have chosen a different model than the priesthood of all believers to describe the people of God. This alternative model is the prophethood of all believers. The advantage of this model is that it is an authentic and explicit portrait of the apostolic church. The prophethood of all believers is Luke's description of the eschatological people of God, upon whom Jesus, the eschatological anointed prophet, has poured forth the Spirit. Luke's vision of the prophethood of all believers is given biblical definition and delineation in an ancient oracle of the prophet Joel which finds fulfillment beginning with the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.¹⁵

¹⁴Raymond Bryan Dillard, "Joel," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, vol. 1, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 295.

¹⁵Roger Stronstad, "The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology," in *Contemporary Issues in Pentecostal Theology*, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary First Annual Pentecostal Lectureship Series (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1993), 1.

Dillard and Stronstad are helpful for the Filipino Pentecostals. They provide the contemporary context of a Christian revival movement in the Philippines which is valid and faithful to the New Testament model of the Christian community. On the one hand, the context of the Reformers, i.e., their struggle against the Roman Catholic doctrine and hierarchy of priesthood, led them to develop a model of priesthood of all believers to characterize the people of God in their relationship to their sovereign Lord (see 1 Pet. 2:5,9; cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). On the other hand, the Pentecostal search for a model for the Spirit filled church, led them to propose a model of prophethood of all believers in relationship to the lost world. What would be the essential difference between the two models? The answer lies on the significance of the charismatic vocation of the Pentecostal understanding of the church. This perception of the charismatic vocation of the church should be understood in a broader way in the Philippines and in Asia, especially in the Pentecostal proclamation of the meaning of the gospel to contemporary Asian setting.¹⁶ Additionally, the equality of male and female, as well as young and old is included in the fulfillment of the charismatic service of the Christian community. The Protestant theology of priesthood of all believers emphasizes the access of believers to God. The Pentecostal theology of prophethood of all believers stresses the anointing of the believers for service according to Acts 2 with wider implications for Asia.¹⁷ This entails that both of the lady and male pastors as well as neophyte and veteran preachers can claim the same empowerment of the Spirit.

2.1. Availability of the Spirit Empowerment

The PGCAG appreciates and applies the experience of the Spirit-baptism in terms of the vocational task of the church. This experience

¹⁶As Simon Chan, "Asian Pentecostalism, Social Concern and the Ethics of Conformism," *Transformation* 11, no. 1 (1994): 32, puts it: "The Pentecostal phenomenon in Asia cannot be properly understood without considering the larger religious context and in more recent years, the socio-economic context of Asia."

¹⁷See the discussion of Amos Yong, "The Future of Asian Pentecostal Theology: An Asian American Assessment," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 22-43.

validates that the significance of Spirit-baptism is relevant for every believer's duty to witness for Christ and proclaim the gospel. The notion of the link between the Spirit-baptism and witnessing for Christ is the thrust of Fernando Basilio's view, when he points out that:

Thus, their experience served the purpose of [Acts] 1:8. Put differently, the very act of speaking with tongues was their baptism; and their baptism was itself their act of witnessing. The reason for this is obvious from the narrative: the crowd was drawn to the disciples on the day of Pentecost principally as a result of their hearing the disciples exalt God in 'the language in which we were born.' Hence, the Spirit's activity worked both ways. He inspired the disciples to speak in the 'tongues' of the crowd, thereby making them Christ's witnesses; and He used the same phenomenon (including Peter's sermon...) to bring the people to a saving knowledge of the Messiah.¹⁸

Accordingly, PGCAG congregations should be aware and, at the same time, motivated that the experience of the prophetic Spirit authenticates the call to all Spirit filled believers to witness for Christ boldly. This Christian witness is the real prophetic tradition which God ordained. The Pentecostal experience is for service.

The idea of the empowering of the Spirit for ministering based in Acts 2, which is provided for the eschatological Christian community to obtain, is the positive involvement of the Pentecostal theology to a larger aspect of Evangelical theology. For even if the Evangelical theology may assume that the empowering of the Spirit is available for the church, then it is the experience of the Spirit that should substantiate the theology of the biblical text. The Pentecostal experience makes all believers as prophets by function. This claim is confirmed by the reality of the prophetic Spirit in the lives of those Christians who experience this empowering. The Filipino Pentecostal encounter of the contemporary outpouring of the Spirit verifies Luke's theological motif of Spirit-baptism for empowerment of the believers for the intention of

¹⁸Fernando Basilio, "The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: With what "tongue" does one speak?," *Bethel Light* (February 1995), 11.

bringing the Christian witness to those who are lost. Consequently, the prophetic essence of the Spirit is for the advantage of all believers.

2.2. Preaching with the Testimonial Experience

It is notable that “testimony time” is a regular part of the Filipino Pentecostal church services. Why? It is due to the understanding of the Bible which is directly interpreted through the experience of God in life.

Personal testimony of church members and testimonial preaching of pastors are central to the Filipino Pentecostal liturgy.¹⁹ Even for an academic article, Manuel Bagalawis started his first paragraph using a testimony of divine healing to expound on his subject matter of “power in Acts 1:8.”²⁰ There is no embarrassment for Filipino Pentecostals to give testimonies of God’s work in their lives when they interpret and expound the scriptures. Moreover, the use of testimonies in the exposition of a biblical passage makes the preaching alive, relevant and timely. Pentecostal congregations are attentive listeners! The Pentecostal preachers are sensitive. The perceived needs of a congregation guide the choice of Scriptures and the testimonial stories of the Pentecostal speaker wherein the common people can relate to and find edification and comfort that the Word of God can interpret their situations in life.

The study of Koichi Kitano in the 1980s on the ecumenical movement in the Philippines that involved some PGCAG pastors is instructive. One of his provisional and very cautious conclusions is that the Charismatic movement’s “experience [of] the charismatic gifts, instead of trying to reconcile the theological issues among Catholics [and] Protestants, has contributed to the development of ecumenicity in the movement.”²¹ In this particular setting of the Charismatic

¹⁹See Jae Yong Jeong, “Filipino Pentecostal Spirituality: An Investigation into Filipino Indigenous Spirituality and Pentecostalism in the Philippines” (Th.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001), 155-62.

²⁰Manuel A. Bagalawis, “‘Power’ in Acts 1:8: Effective Witnessing Through Signs and Wonders,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 3, no. 1 (2001): 1-13.

²¹Koichi Kitano, “Socio-Religious Distance Between Charismatics and Other Religious Group Members: A Case Study of the Philippines in the 1980s,” *Journal of Asian Mission* 5, no. 2 (2003): 242.

movement the exposition of the Scripture through different testimonies of the speakers provides a common ground of the experience of the Spirit. Alex Fuentes also notes that the hotel churches or cinema fellowships of the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups among the Filipinos became effective.²² The PGCAG pastors participated in this ministry strategy. The regular part of the hotel ministry program of the Filipino Pentecostals is the testimony time. The pastor or speaker during the worship service also expounds the biblical passage for meditation using testimonies of God's goodness and faithfulness. These experiences, whether by church members, the preacher's family or stories read from books, are conflated and related to the congregation during preaching to interpret the Scriptures and at the same time meet the needs of people. Wonsuk Ma captures the typical Filipino Pentecostal preaching in a provincial PGCAG congregation in his visit to All the Gospel Church in San Fernando City, La Union, Philippines in June 4, 2006:

However, this portion of the service is dedicated to sharing the Word of God. And typically, although not on this particular day perhaps due to time constraints, this portion is further divided into two periods: testimonies by several members of the congregation, normally not prearranged, and the proclamation of the Word by the preacher. Pastor Conrado Lumahan reads almost the entire chapter of Acts 2. Noting that it is Pentecost Sunday, his message traces the appearance of God in the Old Testament through "fire," and then the presence of the "tongues of fire" on the day of Pentecost. Frequently repeated are words such as "fire," and "empowerment," and placing emphasis on the "empowering aspect" of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The preaching was quite long, almost an hour. And yet, the response of the congregation was active with an occasional "Amen," as well as various expressions, such as the nodding of their heads in agreement and clapping their hands. In fact, toward the end of the sermon, the audience enthusiastically responded in unison with "Amen." The sermon is concluded with the entire congregation standing and joining in the

²²See Alex B. Fuentes, "A Church in a Neutral Turf: A History of the Hotel Ministry in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian Mission* 6, no. 1 (2004): 81-96.

pastor's prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. The prayer eventually turns into a communal prayer as the audience is divided by threes and fours and prays for one another, particularly for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.²³

The PGCAG contributed well to the preaching of the gospel in the ecumenical settings, the hotel ministries and the provincial environment.

It is noteworthy that the use of experiential testimonies for exposition of the Bible is always an important element in their preaching, especially about the Spirit-baptism.

3. Christian Mandate for Filipino Pentecostals is a Matter of Spirit

It is noteworthy that the current experience of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit creates awareness among the Filipino Pentecostals to be devoted to the missiological directive that is handed over to the church even in terms of giving money to the work of the Lord.²⁴ Generosity is connected with the Pentecostal experience. To focus on the Great Commission is not adequate without being conscious that God intend to accomplish it through the church. An implication of Joel 2:28-32 as used in Acts 2 is the eschatological mission of the church to be Christ's faithful witness to the world.²⁵ This witness for the Filipino Pentecostalism is communicated through their life testimonies. Furthermore, the declaration of God's salvation and miracles is a feature of this kind of testimonial preaching.²⁶ The faithful

²³Wonsuk Ma, "Pentecostal Worship in Asia: Its Theological Implications and Contributions," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 139-40.

²⁴Carmelita P. Gallardo, "Pentecost Now and Our Mission," in Treasurer's Corner, *Intercom*, June 1995, 9, after quoting Acts 2:17 encourages the PGCAG believers who are Spirit-baptized to see the vision of supporting the PGCAG building project and missionaries.

²⁵According to the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (1988), s.v. "Evangelism," by L. Grant McClung, Jr., 285, the "biblical/theological foundations for evangelism" among Pentecostals is the understanding in particular of the outpouring of the Spirit in such passages as Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-17 in relation to Acts 1:8 and 2:1-4.

witness of the church is done through the anointed work of the Spirit.²⁷

This means that for the PGCAG the fulfillment of the great commission for the church in the Philippines is that the work could be done through the power of the Spirit alone.²⁸ The mandate of Christ can be done through the empowerment of the Spirit even if there are limitations of the material resources.

3.1. Honorable Paradigm for Filipino Pentecostal Preachers

The report given in Acts 2 that the Spirit of prophecy was poured out reveals that the group of believers received the anointing of God to be a prophetic community. Just like during the times of kings, priests and prophets the anointing of God brings the Spirit upon the lives of those people who responded to the call. The Assemblies of God, being a Pentecostal denomination, affirm that God gives the prophetic Spirit to all who respond to his call—which makes the concept of anointing for service inclusive.²⁹

The experience of the Spirit brings accountability. It places upon the PGCAG the duty to teach and model, not only to the Pentecostals

²⁶See Ma, *passim*.

²⁷Cf. Alton Garrison, "Evangelism in the Nineties," in *Pan Asia Pacific Conference Papers*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 16-19, 1990 (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1990), 99, who points out to the Assemblies of God leaders in Asia-Pacific that: "World evangelization is an impossible task without supernatural capabilities." Garrison, 99-100, made an exposition about "the mandate" of the church, "the means" of God's purpose, "the messengers" of the Lord's work and "the money" needed for evangelizing the world for the nineties. Then, Garrison, 100, concludes that: "Teamwork plus supernatural capabilities will result in a Decade of Harvest."

²⁸See the appeal of Ernest A. Reb, "Pentecostal Perpetuation: Evangelism--Sermon Delivered During the 25th Anniversary Convention Held at Cebu City," *The Pentecostal Voice*, June-July 1965, 10. Reb remarks: "I want to be very clear. The only hope of the Philippines is in the true positive powerful preaching of Jesus Christ, under the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost."

²⁹Richard Dresselhaus, *The Assemblies of God--Our Distinctive Doctrine: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 15, points out that Spirit-baptism is "an all-inclusive promise of universal dimension" which means that it is "promised to every Christian believer."

but to the rest of Christianity, the meaning of a life that is molded into the accomplishment of the church mandate in the end times.³⁰ In other words, the experience of Pentecost entails a big responsibility. As Richard D. Israel remarks:

Some questions which arise from the meaning of the Pentecost event described in Acts 2 include the following. What kind of lives should be lived in light of the Pentecostal experience of Spirit endowment? How does the eschatological existence in the Age of the Spirit impinge on our conduct? What does it mean to live a prophetic life as a result of Spirit-baptism? Certainly the Church is a Church in mission empowered by the Spirit, and it operates under the certainty of the coming of the Day of the Lord. But what does it mean "to call upon the name of the Lord"? What kind of community existence does that imply? What these questions attempt to do is to ask whether or not Pentecostal ethic ought not to be grounded in the Pentecostal experience. If so, then our task is to build from Pentecostal experience to Pentecostal ethic. Perhaps it is time to unite *mythos* and *ethos* for Pentecostalism and extend the significance of the Pentecostal experience from faith to practice.³¹

If Israel is correct, the Pentecostal ethic should be built on the Pentecostal experience. Put differently, Paul W. Lewis concludes: "Pentecostal ethics can not be divorced from the work of the Spirit through the baptism of the Spirit or *charismata* within a person's life."³²

The Pentecostal experience of Spirit-baptism incorporates the prophetic work of the believers. Thus, the preciseness of the significance of Spirit-baptism to Pentecostal ethic is to be an empowered witness for Christ, every time and every place, similar to the early disciples in Acts.

³⁰Cf. Thomas Zimmerman, "The Pentecostal Movement's Responsibility to the Present-Day Outpouring," *The Pentecostal Voice*, February 1965, 4-5, 9.

³¹Richard D. Israel, "Joel 2:28-32 (3:1-5 MT): Prism for Pentecost," in *Charismatic Experiences in History*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1985), 13-4.

³²Paul W. Lewis, "A Pneumatological Approach to Virtue Ethics," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1, no. 1 (1998): 60.

Stronstad is correct in his understanding of the nature of the early church in relationship with the present time church:

There are clear implications from Luke's charismatic theology for the contemporary church. If the gift of the Spirit was charismatic or vocational for Jesus and the early church, so it ought to have a vocational dimension in the experience of God's people today. In other words, if they needed the anointing-baptism of the Spirit, the leading of the Spirit and the empowering of the Spirit to render their ministries effective, we do as well. If their vocation was prophetic, so ours is to be prophetic. If Jesus was the charismatic Christ, and the disciples were a charismatic community, so the church in our generation is also charismatic, whether or not it functions at the level of our charismatic potential. Luke-Acts challenges the church in our generation, both individually and collectively, to function up to the level of its charismatic heritage which it derives from Jesus and the disciples. Only then will the contemporary church be a prophethood of believers in reality as well as in promise.³³

The Filipino Pentecostalism has something to share to the evangelical Christianity as an ethical paradigm. Put it this way, the Evangelical faith in the Philippines inherited the justification doctrine from the Reformed faith and the holiness emphasis from the Wesleyan belief. The Protestants reemphasized the salvific work of the Spirit due to their fight against the Roman Catholic Church for the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This is also the case in the Philippines. The Holiness movement rediscovered the sanctifying work of the Spirit because of their struggle against the secular world's tendency to sin. The issue of worldliness has become a problem in the Filipino church. And so, the Pentecostal movement is a reminder to the Evangelicals in the Philippines that the Holy Spirit is not only active "to save" and "to sanctify" people but also "to empower" them for to preach the gospel. Thus, the New Testament understanding of the Spirit's work is highlighted by the different Christian traditions that put stress on their

³³Roger Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Baguio, Philippines: APTS Press, 1995), 167.

understandings of the Spirit's role in "salvation," "sanctification" and "service."³⁴ As Stronstad once again succinctly puts it:

The key is to recognize that the Reformed, Wesleyan and Pentecostal traditions, with their soteriological, holiness and charismatic emphases, respectively, are each legitimate expressions of the diversity of the New Testament witness of the Holy Spirit. The challenge which then comes to each tradition is to recognize that the emphasis in the pneumatology of other traditions is not contradictory to its own emphasis, but is complementary. Consequently, each tradition then faces the Biblical mandate to embrace the full unity of New Testament pneumatology and to produce a doctrine of the Holy Spirit which is fully canonical, neither denying nor despising any dimension of the role of the Spirit in Salvation, Sanctification and Service.³⁵

It is important, therefore, for the PGCAG to draw attention to the understanding of Acts 2 in terms of awareness and inspiration that the Pentecostal experience should be incorporated in a life of righteousness and holiness as Stronstad insinuates.³⁶ The New Testament disciples obeyed Christ's missiological mandate and lived righteous and holy lives. For this reason, the Filipino Pentecostal preaching requires an emphasis on a life of righteousness, holiness and powerful testimony. The ethical standard, therefore, for those who experience the Spirit-baptism is a pure life—whether they are in their personal vicinities or across the miles.

3.2. Motivating Spirit for Filipino Pentecostal Witness

³⁴See Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, foreword by Clark H. Pinnock (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1984), 83.

³⁵Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology*, 192.

³⁶As Article VI - Statement of Fundamental Doctrines in *Rules of Church Government* [PGCAG] (1980), 5-6, under doctrine number nine, "Sanctification," promulgates: "The Scriptures teach a life of 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy' (1 Pet. 1:15,16)."

Due to the awareness of genuine Spirit anointing there is that God-given motivational force for every Spirit-baptized believer to proclaim the message of the gospel. This message is expounded by the Filipino Pentecostals in terms of their testimonies on how the power of God can still be experienced today by those who will believe. The notion that every believer should encounter the empowering Spirit to be effective witnesses for the gospel brings the experience of those who believe in the contemporary experience of Spirit-baptism according to Acts 2 as applicable in this day and age.³⁷ In what sense is the experience applicable? The doctrine of the empowering of the believers for service in Acts creates a hunger for the reality of the biblical record to be experienced in the present.³⁸ As it is experienced in the Pentecostal movement, the missiological effort is clearly motivated by the belief and the experience that the Spirit-baptism is God's anointing for his church to preach Christ. The contemporary Pentecostal experience reminds the universal church as a whole that Christ has anointed his church to serve. F. L. Arrington succinctly describes the Pentecostal motive for evangelism:

Pentecostals have seen themselves as an eschatological community; they insist that these are the last days as proclaimed by Peter in Acts 2:19; they see this Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit as a harbinger of the Parousia and their baptism

³⁷Stronstad, *Spirit, Scripture and Theology*, 78, points out the synthesis of Pentecostal experience and the interpretation of Acts: "Thus, a Pentecostal hermeneutic is a holistic hermeneutic, which differs from Protestant Biblical hermeneutics at two significant points; namely, charismatic experiential presuppositions and experiential verification."

³⁸The hunger for Spirit-baptism is encouraged in PGCAG. See Willard T. Cantelon, "Believing and Receiving the Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, February 1969, 8-9, concluding with a question: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" See also Harold Kohl, "Make Room for the Holy Spirit," *The Pentecostal Voice*, July 1966, 4, who after giving a statistical study of PGCAG adherents baptized in the Spirit points out that: "The statistic indicates that we should preach more on the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and on the vital experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit." Cf. Dresselhaus, 10, who makes an appeal: "All who are hungry for the 'filling' should be encouraged to trust the Lord for the overflowing evidence of that 'filling'; namely, speaking in other tongues."

in the Holy Spirit as an empowering for missionary labors to reap the final harvest before the *Eschaton*.³⁹

The PGCAG, together with the world-wide Pentecostal movement, sees the evangelistic effort in connection with the experience of the outpouring of God's Spirit as central to the preaching of the gospel in the end times. This is clear in the history and doctrine of PGCAG: Premillennial Pentecostalism is "a revival of faith in fundamental Christianity, a re-emphasis upon the charismatic gifts and their operation, an intense evangelistic fervor, and a great missionary zeal."⁴⁰

Such a remark about the outpouring of the Spirit in the PGCAG constituency is noteworthy: "Significantly, this mighty move of God, which generated the outpouring of His Spirit, may remain in the annals of the history of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines as one of the most epochal and significant renaissances."⁴¹ The Filipino Pentecostalism is a devotion expressed through zealotry in evangelism and missions. This devotion is underscored in the Filipino Pentecostal pulpits. There is a sense of urgency that is apparent among the PGCAG circle due to the soon return of the Lord. The devotion and the urgency are so real since the Spirit-baptism makes Joel prophecy a tangible eschatological experience.

The affirmative role of the eschatological awareness of the PGCAG is that the outpouring of the Spirit is the assurance that God is faithful to his promise that his presence will be with his church until the end of the age. Through the Spirit, Christ is constantly there in the church. The Lord of the harvest equips his people by the Spirit to proclaim the gospel with empowerment. The death and resurrection of Jesus who is still doing the miraculous is the content of the empowered Pentecostal eschatological preaching. This gives the PGCAG that enthusiasm to be

³⁹Arrington, "Historical Perspectives," 385.

⁴⁰*Southern Tagalog District Council 15th Annual Convention Souvenir Program and Directory* (Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines, March 21-23, 1995), 5.

⁴¹"Meeting the Challenge of the Bicol Region," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1967, 7.

zealous because the miraculous is still done by the Spirit among those who believe.⁴²

The experiential Pentecostal interpretation of Luke's use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 brings a few pertinent insights for preaching. It provides a faithful scriptural paradigm for interpreting the significance of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. This paradigm is a good model for the Pentecostal form of Spirit-baptism which is a reliable method of biblical reading. It also leads into a biblical-theological understanding for the idea of the prophethood of all believers. Acts 2 describes that those who received the gift of the Spirit became prophetic witnesses. And finally it creates positive reception for the Evangelicals to appreciate the Pentecostal sensitivity to the Great Commission in terms of doing it with their empowered witness. It is obvious that the Spirit-baptism is the impetus behind the powerful witnesses and worthy inspiration of the Pentecostals to evangelize the lost.

4. Joel's Prophecy in Filipino Pentecostalism is Experientially Fulfilled

Luke portrays in Acts 2 that the Joel 2:28-32 prophecy was realized at Pentecost. The context of Joel's oracle which promises the outpouring of the eschatological Spirit is universal. This means it is applicable to all of God's people. The assurance of the Spirit's coming is pertinent only to his chosen ones. However, Luke, taking for granted Judaism's perception of the prophetic Spirit, cites Joel's text purposely among the various Old Testament Scriptures that mention the Spirit. Luke's selection of Joel's prophecy in the Acts 2 Pentecost event is explicitly describing the fulfillment of the promise that gives emphasis on the vocational dimension of the Spirit's role. As a result, the Spirit poured out at Pentecost is understood in Joel's language—as eschatological, universal and prophetic—which is reflected in the Acts narrative.⁴³

⁴²The Filipino view of the miraculous is always connected with the spirits. See Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Literature Inc., 1986), *passim*.

⁴³See the discussions of Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* no. 6 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); and cf. the views of Max

Luke appropriated Peter's sermon in Acts 2 as the relevant interpretation of the Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit. In the portrayal of Luke, the church's empowering experience at Pentecost brought the gospel from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the world. Hence, the Filipino Pentecostals maintain that to fulfill Christ's command for the church to be a witness for him in the last days is to be empowered by the Spirit for service as he himself instructed:

He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Lk. 24:46-49 New International Version)

Following the heart of Jesus' instruction for the church to be Spirit filled and a witness to the world the PGCAG should create new innovative models to better understand Luke's use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 for Filipino Pentecostal preaching. As Acts 2 reinterprets the prophecy of Joel for its relevance to the Pentecost event, Filipino Pentecostal preaching should highlight the Pentecost account of Acts narrative to the current circumstances of the PGCAG as well as the Christianity in the Philippines. The preaching mode on the Pentecostal claim in Acts should be clearly articulated appropriating it to the present context of revival in the Philippines. The role of biblical exegesis and theological approach to the prophetic experience should prioritize the fresh expressions of Pentecostal preaching in terms of Filipino symbols and values.⁴⁴

Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series no. 9 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁴⁴For Filipino value system see Florentino T. Timbreza, *Filipino Values Today* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: National Bookstore, 2003); F. Landa Jocano, *Filipino Value System: A Cultural Definition*, Anthropology of the Filipino People IV (Quezon City, Philippines: Punlad Research House, Inc., 1997); and Tomas D. Andres, *Positive Filipino Values* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989).

4.1. Eschatological Evangelistic Zeal among Filipino Pentecostals

It is taken for granted among the worldwide Pentecostals that the current experience of the outpouring of the Spirit is an eschatological event. Thus, Christ is coming soon. The Gospel should be proclaimed with urgency in these last days. Vincent Leoh is correct when he argues:

In Pentecostal eschatological preaching the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are interpreted by the preacher eschatologically, although the existential dimension is never totally absent. Several eschatological themes for preaching then begin to emerge in this kind of homiletical venture. Provisionality and hope for the new future in Christ begins to control how Pentecostals believe, think, and act in the historical present. This results in an emphasis on strict ethical behavior.⁴⁵

The history of PGCAG reflects the practice and belief that people's lives are changed by the gospel. The gospel is not only life changing but should be authenticated by the manifestations of the miraculous through the power of the Spirit. The Filipino Pentecostals believe that if "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever," (Heb. 13:8, Revised Standard Version) there is no difference between the signs and wonders in Acts and what we can see today. It is the same Christ who is presently doing the miracles as he did when he was on earth.

The zeal for evangelism among the Filipino Pentecostals is motivated by their distinctive doctrine of the Spirit-baptism for empowerment. Pentecostalism as "the fastest growing segment of Christianity," and definitely a "dynamic force" reckons that "they will be taking the lion's share of reaching the unreached."⁴⁶ Why? It is because the zeal in Pentecostalism is shaped by the appreciation of the empowering experience of Spirit-baptism. In addition, since the

⁴⁵Vincent Leoh, "Eschatology and Pneumatic Preaching with a Case of David Yonggi Cho," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2007): 109.

⁴⁶Kevin Hovey, "Training 2/3 World Missionaries," *Agama Vision*, April-June 1995, 8.

Pentecostals expect Christ to quickly return, they take the task to accomplish propagation of the gospel even as the Lord tarries. Moreover, the Pentecostals see without any reservation that "God is going to use [them] in evangelizing the world."⁴⁷

For the reasons stated above, the PGCAG leadership in particular, and the PGCAG constituency in general, should be open for ingenious means of Filipino forms of proclamation. Filipino Pentecostal preaching should address Filipino mentality and values. God has already used Pentecostalism, and yet he can further use the PGCAG as a model to the evangelical Christian preaching by the Spirit in unprecedented mighty ways both in the miraculous manifestations⁴⁸ and the social transformation.⁴⁹ There should be ingenuosness for new possibilities of practicing the prophetic witness of the church apart from the usual ways that have been employed and previously served their purposes in the denominational history.⁵⁰ The past of PGCAG shows how the

⁴⁷Hiroshi Yoshiyama, "Missions are Vital to the Life of the Church," *The Pentecostal Voice*, August 1969, 11.

⁴⁸As a case in point refer to Harold R. Cole, "A Model of Contextualized Deliverance Ministry: A Case Study: The Cordillera Rehabilitation Center [of Rev. Tito Caput], *Journal of Asian Mission* 5, no. 2 (2003), 259-73; and Julie C. Ma, "Elva Vanderbout: A Woman Pioneer of Pentecostal Mission Among Igorots," *Journal of Asian Mission* 3, no. 1 (2001): 121-40.

⁴⁹For the involvement of the Pentecostals in social transformation see the fine articles written by Suico, "Pentecostalism," 7-19; and Conrado P. Lumahan, Sr., "Evangelical/Pentecostal Solution to Gambling in the Philippines," *Journal of Asian Mission* 4, no. 1 (2002): 121-40.

⁵⁰Cf. "New Approach to Missions and Evangelism," *The STDC Newsletter*, October 1993, 3, relates an openness of the PGCAG to new potential means of proclaiming the gospel:

As reported in the General Council Leadership Conference last January 1993 the following approaches in Mission & Evangelism are effective: evangelistic meetings, film showing, home Bible studies, evangelistic concerts, free medical clinic, house to house visitation, radio ministry, literature crusade (ICI), coupled with strong salvation-healing messages. However, recently the P.N.P. Seminar, a Values Formation Council Program headed by General Alfredo Basas (Ret. General) has given us a great open door of evangelism. This program under P. P. No. 62 enjoins all sectors of society to participate in the moral recovery of our Filipino people.

pioneers of Filipino Pentecostalism who were Filipino-Americans came back to the Philippines to preach Pentecost to their Filipino brothers. What went before was certainly unique in itself among the Filipino Pentecostals. Wherefore, trailblazing and pioneering work is not yet finished for the PGCAG. The strategy for unprecedented Filipino Pentecostal preaching is yet to come. These Spirit empowered possibilities for Filipino Pentecostal preaching is yet to be discovered and appropriated to win the Filipino nation.⁵¹

4.2. Pneumatological Empowered Witness in Filipino Pentecostalism

The awareness of the presence of the Spirit encourages the Filipino Pentecostal preacher to experience the reality of God's power and brings inspiration to witness for the Lord.⁵² If the Pentecostal experience is true, then it should lead a Spirit-baptized preacher to a lifestyle of anointed witnessing for Christ. As Kevin Hovey succinctly states that "the power of the Holy Spirit, the compelling inner dynamic that makes the Pentecostals what they are, is primarily the power to witness."⁵³ If Luke aspires to describe in Acts 2 that the Spirit-baptism is for the purpose of empowering for evangelism, then Acts is clear that the gospel was preached by the disciples to the whole world by the anointing of the Spirit.

Filipino Pentecostal preaching ought to carry new expressions for the prophetic role of the church. In allusion to Joel's oracle, Filipino Pentecostal preaching should underline that young men and women are supposed to see new visions of creative and effective ways of reaching out to different people groups that are not yet touched by the church's conventional approach to evangelism; and older men and women should continue to dream dreams of fresh approaches for the eschatological community to fulfill the Great Commission and should not be satisfied with what the church has already done in the past! The empowered

⁵¹The Assemblies of God as a Christian movement is always open for new and creative possibilities in doing the Great Commission. See *Pan Asia Pacific Conference Papers*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 16-19, 1990 (Baguio, Philippines: APTS, 1990). See also Dela Cruz, "Historical-Doctrinal," 192-217.

⁵²Cf. Vincent Leoh, "A Pentecostal Preacher as an Empowered Witness," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006): 35-58.

⁵³Hovey, 8.

opportunities are equal for all Spirit-filled believers. The Pentecostals as salt and light must become involved in social transformation of the Philippine society.⁵⁴

Accordingly, the interest of the Filipino Pentecostalism in the genuineness of Spirit-baptism positively contributes to the Evangelical understanding of the Scriptures—the prophethood of all Christians in the Pentecostal manner is for the job of evangelism. The contemporary outpouring of the Spirit takes Evangelicalism back to the mandate of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission through the empowered prophetic witness. This is also a reminder to the PGCAG leadership and constituency to constantly emphasize in the Pentecostal pulpit a lifestyle of bold witnessing integrating it with character, righteousness and holiness. The Filipino Pentecostal preaching would relate well with Roland Allen when he recognized in 1918—four years after the Assemblies of God in the United States of America was organized—what the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit can do to the missionary endeavor of the contemporary church:

We often complain that Christian people at home have little zeal for the spread of the gospel. How can it be otherwise when our people are taught that the Holy Spirit is given, when they are taught to recognize him in their own souls, almost entirely as the sanctifier, the truth revealer, the strengthener, and in the church as the organizer and the director of counsels, whilst they are not taught in anything like the same degree that [the Spirit] is the spirit of redeeming love, active in them towards others, moving every individual soul to whom [the Spirit] comes and the church in which [the Spirit] dwells to desire and to labour for the bringing of all men everywhere to God in Jesus Christ?⁵⁵

⁵⁴See Joseph Suico, "Pentecostalism in the Philippines," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, foreword by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 3 (Oxford, England and Baguio, Philippines: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005), 345-62.

⁵⁵Roland Allen, "The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles," *International Review of Mission* (April, 1918) as quoted by Robert P. Menzies,

5. Final Thoughts

The Pentecostal tradition claims that the experience of Spirit-baptism for empowering is still valid for today which is reflected in the Filipino Pentecostal preaching. The special reference of the use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 provides a basis for the Pentecostal hermeneutical model of looking at the biblical text with a consciousness of the experience of Spirit-baptism. The purpose of this experience is depicted in Acts narrative as the church empowerment for her vocation. Thus, for the PGCAG the Filipino Pentecostal boldness in preaching the gospel is the direct result of the experience of Spirit-baptism. The exposition of the Pentecostal text is done through the testimonial hermeneutical approach. This is a helpful contribution of the PGCAG to the Evangelicalism in the Philippines. Thus, the Pentecostal view of the Spirit's outpouring in Acts adds to the Evangelical theology primarily in terms of vocational service, which makes Pentecostal preaching anointed.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the PGCAG should be a model of openness to fresh articulation of Pentecostal theology for Filipinos using their pulpits as well as exhibiting new ways in fulfilling the prophetic ministry of the church that would bring growth.⁵⁷

The discussion of the Filipino Pentecostal preaching, with a special reference to PGCAG, brought noteworthy positive input to the Filipino Evangelical preaching that highlights the hermeneutics of historical-literary context and the homiletics of the textual sense of the content of the biblical passage on hand.⁵⁸ First, this kind of testimonial hermeneutics gives a scriptural interpretative model in making sense of the current Spirit outpouring. The Pentecostal view of Spirit-baptism is

"The Distinctive Character of Luke's Pneumatology," *Paraclete* 25 (Fall 1991): 27.

⁵⁶See Leoh, "Pentecostal Preacher," especially 48-52.

⁵⁷Conrado P. Lumahan, Sr., "Facts and Figures: A History of the Growth of the Philippine Assemblies of God," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 331-44.

⁵⁸I refer the issues in the Filipino Evangelical biblical interpretation and preaching content to Espiritu and Exiomo.

aptly applied to arrive at a sound scriptural interpretation. Second, the use of experience of the Spirit to the biblical-theological paradigm of the prophethood of all believers is a functional exegesis. Every believer who has experienced the Spirit takes the role of a prophetic witness. Third, Pentecostal preaching creates sensitivity to the Evangelical agenda of evangelism. The experience of Spirit-baptism is the motivation for bold witnesses in the Pentecostal preaching. In addition, Pentecostalism is not a cult. Rather, the theological distinction of the Pentecostal experience, practices and preaching like the PGCAG against that of Filipino folk practices is scripturally based and clearly placed in proper biblical-theological boundaries.⁵⁹

The Pentecostals inherited the Reformation form of preaching that is used generally within Evangelical circles.⁶⁰ PGCAG ministers learn and apply this Protestant style of preaching from the pulpit. The Protestant exposition of the biblical passages is the main strength of the Reformation's heritage in the proclamation of the Word of God.⁶¹ This

⁵⁹Jeong Jae Yong, "Filipino Independent Pentecostalism and Biblical Transformation," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, foreword by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 3 (Oxford, England and Baguio, Philippines: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005), 401, through an interview that he made about Filipino Pentecostals in connection with folk Christianity succinctly summarizes my thoughts about the clarity of Filipino Pentecostal theology:

Roli [dela] Cruz mentions that it is very hard to distinguish between folk Christianity and Pentecostal practices. Indigenous spirituality has so much parallelism with the Pentecostal practices such as indigenous religious beliefs of healing, trance, speaking in tongues, all of which have often been understood as syncretistic elements. However, among Pentecostals these things are usual phenomena of Filipino Pentecostal spirituality. Their theological understanding is not 'syncretistic' and is a common Filipino Pentecostal spirituality.

⁶⁰For the role, emphasis and method of Reformation preaching see Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 1, *From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers A.D. 70-1572* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 358-524.

⁶¹One can just peruse the pages of Andrew Watterson Blackwood, compiler, *The Protestant Pulpit: An Anthology of Master Sermons from the Reformation to Our Own Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977) and he or she

is good. However, it is not the only form of preaching. Although Bible school and theological seminary graduates are trained to preach and expound the Bible in developing the outline form of having three or so main points with the support of sub points and illustrations or stories, the Filipino Pentecostal preacher would not be bound by this conventional form of sermon development. PGCAG pastors would argue that there are other ways and manners to preach after a person received the Spirit-baptism.⁶² With the sense of what Pentecostal ministers call the Spirit's anointing and proper biblical-theological boundaries Filipino Pentecostal preachers would not be tied down to their homiletically arranged sermon. There are other innovative ways to preach.⁶³ Testimonial homiletics and oral hermeneutics, while preaching within the parameters of the subject matter of the biblical text, bring out the sensitivity of Filipino Pentecostal preaching to the felt needs of the congregation who want to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying through the expounded Scripture.⁶⁴ What is important is what God has done

would affirm that because of the *sola scriptura* doctrine of the Reformers the accent on biblical exposition in preaching is significant.

⁶²A profound insight can be gleaned from the autobiography of one of the pioneers of the PGCAG, the Rev. E. C. Lagmay, *From Gambling to Pulpit* (Concord, CA: Published by the author, n.d.), especially 31-32. In his own Pentecostal encounter Lagmay's narrative presentation of his Spirit-baptism experience is strategically placed before he started preaching the gospel. Furthermore, he was instructed clearly by his Pentecostal friends about the meaning of his experience. Lagmay, in his own words, declared: "But I was told by the saints that my baptism was not given to me just to enjoy its sweetness but only given mainly for service. In other words it was given to me so that I might have power to witness for Him." (32)

⁶³See Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching*, trans. Karl E. Mattson, The Preacher's Paperback Library, ed. Edmund A. Steimle (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1965); and Richard Lischer, ed., *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002).

⁶⁴The current best example for this kind of Filipino Pentecostal preaching is the published sermon of Dr. Eleazer "Eli" Javier, *God, Giving and Gifts: Basic Biblical Teachings Revisited, Insights, Issues, Implications* (Valenzuela City, Philippines: ICI Ministries, Inc., 2009). This little book is the transcript of his sermon with the original title "Lessons in Giving and Receiving from Selected Passages of Scriptures: A Reflection. Basic Bible Teachings Revisited." The

and what he is doing among the people. Javier says it well: “When we examine the Scriptures carefully, we see that preaching does not center on human ideas about God. The focus is on what God has done for man, communicated to him by those who were called by God.”⁶⁵ This Spirit-led manner of preaching is the Filipino Pentecostals positive contribution to Evangelical preaching in the Philippines.

significance of this printed message is that it has been preached by the author at the “Triennial General Council of the Assemblies of God at the Convention Center in Mandaue, Cebu [Philippines] on 14th of May 2009.” Furthermore, Rev. Reynaldo A. Calusay, the current General Superintendent of the PGAG endorsed this written preaching of his predecessor as “a new dimension of [Javier’s] message...taking the form of the prophetic.” See iii.

⁶⁵Javier, *Work*, 170.

Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies, Hyeong-sung Bae, eds.

David Yonggi Cho

A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry

Finally here is an academic credible book on David Yonggi Cho, the pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church, the largest single congregation in the world.

“This unique book brings together studies surrounding th exceptionally gifted pastor of the world’s largest church along with a cadre of emerging Asian scholars—both emerging from the Pentecostal movement. Clearly that Asian, and especially the Korea, churches mark the shift of the ecclesiastical center of gravitiy away from the West toward the East and the South. This pastor, and these scholars, will be irresistible voices in the Pentecostalism of the new century.”

Russell P. Spittler, Ph.D.

Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA

Contributors: Hwa Yung, Allan Anderson, Young-gi Hong, Hyeon-sung Bae, Simon Chan, David S. Lim, William Menzies, Chris Sugden, Young-hoon Lee, Sam-hwan Kim, Myung Soo Park, Wonsuk Ma, and Chang-soo Kang

Dr. Wonsuk Ma is the Executive Director (designate) of Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in Oxford, U.K. Formerly he was Vice-President for Academic Services of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio Philippines.

Dr. William W. Menzies is Chancellor of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines.

Dr. Hyeon-sung Bae is Dean of Graduate Schools, Hansei University, Goonpo, Korea.

Paper bound

ISBN: 91-8942-08-4 APTS Press with
Hansei University Press, 2004
x+309 pp. US\$14.50; P300.00 (Philippines)

*See the order form in this
journal for a discounted reader
rate. www.pts.edu*

TRUTH AND INTEGRITY:
CONSIDERING THE ISSUE OF STANDARD
(JUDGES 9:7-21)

Edwardneil Benavidez and
Doreen Benavidez

Introduction

In this paper, we will focus on Jotham's speech in Judges 9:15-21. Wilcock has identified the theme of 'truth and integrity' in the whole story of Abimelech in chapter 9.¹ Looking at a different angle, we will establish the function of 'truth and integrity' as we explore both the narration part and the speech part of our passage. In the narration part, we will find that the burden to regain 'truth and integrity' was the primary motivation of Jotham and this gave him the courage to confront those who abandoned 'truth and integrity.' In the discussion on the speech of Jotham itself, we will find that 'truth and integrity' are the main grounds for the judgment that Jotham pronounced in his speech.

Translation

^{7a}And when they told to Jotham, he went and stood at a high point (of) Mount Gerizim, ^band he lifted up his voice and proclaimed and said to them, ^c"Listen to me lords of Shechem, so that God may listen to you.

^{8a}Once upon a time² the trees went to anoint over them a king, ^band they said to the olive tree, ^c"Rule over us."

¹ Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Judges: Grace Abounding* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 89-105.

² הָלְכוּ הַעֲצָמוֹת, the infinitive absolute functions as a literary device in introducing stories.

^{9a}The olive tree said to them, ^b“Should I cease³ my fatness (producing oil) by which the gods and men are honored and go and wave over the trees?”

^{10a}And the trees said to the fig tree, ^b“Come, (you) reign over us.”

^{11a}And the fig tree to them, ^b“Should I cease my sweetness and go and wave over the trees?”

^{12a}And the trees said to the vine, ^b“Come, (you) reign over us.”

^{13a}And the vine said to them, ^b“Should I cease my wine which gladdens the gods and men and go and wave over the trees?”

^{14a}And all the trees said to the *atad*⁴, ^b“Come, (you) reign over us.”

^{15a}And the *atad* said to the trees, ^b“If in truth you are anointing me to reign over you, ^cgo (and) make refuge under my shade, ^dbut if not, ^elet fire come out from the *atad* tree and (let it) eat the cedars of Lebanon.”

^{16a}And now if you have acted in truth and with integrity when you made Abimelech king, ^band if you have done good with Jerubaal and with his household ^cand if you have done to him as recompense [his hands] (to what he had done to you).

^{17a}Since my father waged war on your behalf ^band he [threw] risked his life [from what is in front] ^cand he had delivered you from the hand Midian.

^{18a}But you have stood up against the house of my father this day, ^band you have killed his sons seventy [man] (men) upon one stone ^cand you made Abimelech son of his maidservant king over the lords of Shechem because he was your brother.

³ תְּחַרְחֵרֶנּוּ, in the perfect but denotes immanence.

⁴ The *atad* tree will be identified in the discussion below.

^{19a}But if in truth and with integrity you have done with Jerubaal and with his sons this day, ^brejoice in Abimelech and (may) he rejoice in you also.

^{20a}But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and let it consume the lords of Shechem and Beth-Millo, ^band let fire come out from the lords of Shechem and from Beth-Millo and consume Abimelech.”

²¹And Jotham escaped and fled and went to Beer and settled there away from the face of Abimelech his brother.

Literary Context

Judges 9:7-21 is part of the Abimelech story, the second sequel of the Gideon narrative.⁵ Abimelech's story begins in 9:1 although he is already introduced in 8:31. In 8:30, the narrator tells us that Gideon had seventy sons with his many wives, yet, none of the sons was named. The narrator also did not mention the places of origin of the wives of Gideon. On the other hand, Gideon's concubine is said to be from Shechem and Gideon's son with her is named. Two names, Abimelech and Shechem somehow came out of the blue. This is not unintentional. Here the narrator is introducing two important names which will play an important role in the stories that will unfold.

After the narration about Gideon's death and how the Israelites again did evil and worshipped other gods, we read about the two names that were mentioned in 8:31, Abimelech and Shechem. Abimelech goes to Shechem (v. 1) with a proposal to his relatives and to the leaders of Shechem. With very convincing words, Abimelech proposes to his relatives and to the leaders of Shechem to make him king over them (v.2). He tells them that it would be very much more favorable with them that one man, who is their relative, would rule over them rather than the seventy sons of Gideon. The proposition was appealing to the Shechemites so they agreed and conspired with Abimelech against the sons of Gideon (v.3). They gave Abimelech seventy pieces of silver which he used to hire men who were “empty and reckless”

⁵ Barry Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, Journal for the Study on the Old Testament Supplement Series 46 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 154-155.

probably mercenaries,⁶ to help him in his assassination plot (v.4). Abimelech, together with the mercenaries went to Ophrah and executed their plan to assassinate all the seventy sons of Gideon. All the sons of Gideon were killed except one, Jotham, who was able to escape. It is not recorded whether Abimelech or the mercenaries of the Shechemites knew right away that one son of Gideon had escaped. After the completion of the plot, the people of Shechem together with their leaders⁷ made Abimelech their king. After hearing of this, moved by his conviction, Jotham went on top of Mount Gerizim and rendered a speech to the people of Shechem. Here is where Jotham delivered the passage that will be discussed in this paper.

Structure of Judges 9:7-21

Narration	7ab
Speech	7c-20b
Summons	7c
Fable	8-15
Narration	8a
Invitation	8bc
Response (Rhetorical Question, Declined)	9
Invitation	10
Response (Rhetorical Question, Declined)	11
Invitation	12
Response (Rhetorical Question, Declined)	13
Invitation	14
Response	15a-e
Narration	15a
Conditional Statement	15b-e
Protasis	15b
Apodosis	15c
Protasis	15d
Apodosis	15e

⁶ Boling translates אַנְשֵׁים רִיקִים וּפְחָזִים as “idle mercenaries.” Robert Boling, *Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), 171.

⁷ “all of Beth-millo is appositional to the leaders of Shechem.” Boling, 171.

Pronouncement of Judgment	16-20
Conditional Statement	16-17
Protasis 1	16a
Protasis 2	16b
Protasis 3	16c-17c
Indictment	18
Conditional Statement	19-20
Protasis	19a
Apodosis	19b
Protasis	20a
Apodosis	20b
Narration	21

Jotham's speech is enclosed by narration, describing the movement of Jotham (vv. 7 & 21). In both narratives we can see the verb הִלָּךְ in the Qal form. Here Jotham is moving from one direction to another. At the beginning, he went (הִלָּךְ) and stood at the top of Mount Gerizim where he made his speech. At the end of his speech, Jotham went (הִלָּךְ) on his way to escape from Abimelech and fled to Beer.

Jotham begins his speech with a summons (v. 7c). Then it is followed by a fable story narrated by Jotham (8-15). The fable consists of four parts in which the first three parts are completely parallel – all with an invitation and a negative response. The fourth part parallels with the first three parts only in the first line (the invitation in v. 14) and deviates in the response (v. 15). Jotham utilizes this change in the pattern as a jumping board to the climax and main thrust of his speech which follows this fable – pronouncement of judgment (16-20) against the act of disloyalty of the Shechemites and the betrayal and murder done by Abimelech. This pronouncement of judgment starts and ends with conditional statements (16-17; 19-20), between these conditional statements is an indictment against Abimelech and the Shechemites (18). We can observe that the conditional statements in this pronouncement of judgment parallel the conditional statements in the fourth part of the fable. As Ogden has observed, in this fourth part of the fable, specifically the last part “provides the structural element in vv. 16-20.”⁸ Also it is important to take note that the phrase אִם-בְּאֵמֶת “if in faithfulness” or “if in truth” in v. 15 is repeated in 16-20 and also the

⁸ Graham Ogden, “Jotham’s Fable: Its Structure and Function in Judges 9,” *The Bible Translator* Vol. 46, No. 3 (July 1995): 304.

phrase **שֶׁחֶמֶת אֵשׁ תִּצְתָּ** “let fire go out.” The fable also has some clear points of reference— the trees which are in search of a king refer to the Shechemites and the *atad* refers to Abimelech, which connects it with the application of the fable and to the whole narrative on the Abimelech Story. Webb points out that the main thrust of the speech is not the fable but the application of the fable.⁹ This is valid. But because of the connection of this application to the fourth part of the fable, correct understanding of the fourth part of the fable will be helpful in understanding the main thrust of the speech- the application. The fourth part of the fable is undeniably significant. What we could learn from it is relevant to our interpretation of the whole of Jotham’s speech.

Truth and Integrity in the Narration (Verse 7a & 21)

At the beginning, Jotham went (**יָצָא**) and confronted the Shechemites. Jotham’s action here in v. 7 was not his first action in the narrative. Earlier in the chapter in v. 5, we read that Jotham hid himself. This was the reason why he was able to save his life from the tragic massacre that Abimelech did to his brothers. Jotham had good reason to be alone and to mourn for the loss of his brothers. There was no reason for him to come out of hiding because for sure his life was still under threat. But when Jotham heard that Abimelech was enthroned as king in Shechem, he went out from hiding and he suddenly became courageous enough to appear at the top of Mount Gerizim to deliver his pronouncement of judgment to the people of Shechem. The venue chosen by Jotham, Mount Gerizim, for his speech was a strategic place. Wilcock points out the significance of Mount Gerizim as one of the two mountains where Moses commanded Joshua to proclaim the law and the blessing and curses.¹⁰ He stood not literally on top as one would translate **עַל הַר**, because according to Moore, Mount Gerizim was more than nine hundred feet high on the southern side of Shechem¹¹ and Jotham could have been unseen¹² and unheard¹³ by the

⁹ Webb, 155.

¹⁰ Wilcock, 95.

¹¹ George Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), 246.

¹² Boling, 172.

¹³ Moore, 246.

people of Shechem if he were at the summit of the mountain. Boling proposes the possibility that the place where Jotham made his speech was at Tananir, whose ruins are some four hundred meters above Shechem located on the lower slope of the mountain.¹⁴ This also coincides with the description of the location pointed out by Moore which was “a projecting crag on the side of the mountain, which forms a triangular platform overlooking the town and the whole valley, a natural pulpit admirably suited to the requirements of the story.”¹⁵

At the end of his speech, Jotham went (יָלַח) on his way to escape from Abimelech and fled to Beer (a Canaanite town during that time) because of fear of Abimelech. Jotham was never without fear even when he delivered his judgment and curse to the Shechemites for he kept his distance from the Shechemites. He delivered his speech on a strategic part of Mount Gerizim where he could be seen and heard yet would be able to escape if the Shechemites tried to pursue him.

In spite of his fear, Jotham was determined that he had to be heard by the people of Shechem and that he had to deliver the speech at the same spot where the laws were reiterated by Joshua (Dt 27:12). What could have caused this courage and determination? His speech on this mountain has one basic purpose, to condemn and to pronounce judgment upon the abandonment of ‘truth and integrity’ by Abimelech and the Shechemites, as evidenced by the murder that Abimelech committed in conspiracy with the Shechemites. Jotham might have been convinced that this abandonment of ‘truth and integrity’ would speed up the deterioration of his society. This deterioration of the society became a reality in the succeeding chapters of Judges. According to Wilcock, the loss of ‘truth and integrity’ in chapter 9 is so vital that it resulted in the deterioration and downward spiral of the Israelite communities.¹⁶ Jotham stood to prevent it. He was moved to take the prophetic role and go against even the powerful force of Abimelech and the Shechemites. The conviction to uphold and regain ‘truth and integrity’ gave him strength to conquer his fear even for a while and deliver the judgment that was due Abimelech and the Shechemites.

Truth and Integrity in the Speech of Jotham (Verses 7b-20)

¹⁴ Boling, 172.

¹⁵ Moore, 246.

¹⁶ Wilcock, 89-91.

At the mountain, Jotham begins his speech with a summons (v. 7c). His summons contains an appeal for the Shechemites to listen. This summons in Jotham's speech אֲלֵי שְׁמָעוּ "listen to me" is similar to the introductory phrase used by Moses in some of his speeches requiring full attention from his audiences.¹⁷ In some occurrences of this appeal in Genesis to 2 Kings and the Prophetic literature, the one delivering the speech tells about the blessings for those who would listen and the curses for those who would not listen.¹⁸ Other than getting the attention of the hearers, the intention of this appeal is to invoke prophetic authority.¹⁹ This would imply that Jotham is either calling the people of Shechem to respond positively to his prophetic message – that they would cry for forgiveness from God; or informing the people of Shechem of the inevitable judgment that they are going to face because of the evil that they have done. The latter is more possible for there was no invitation to ask forgiveness in the whole speech, and Jotham's speech was interpreted as a curse in 9:57.

The summons also states the phrase "so that God may listen to you." In Genesis to 2 Kings and the Prophetic literature, God is viewed as one who listens to the cry or prayer of people who trust in him.²⁰ Most of them are marginalized or in severe affliction. God is also viewed as one who listens to the cry of his people.²¹ There are also instances when God does not listen.²² For Block, here in this expression of Jotham, he contrasts the seductive promises of Abimelech which are full of self-interest.²³ Block points out that Jotham opens his speech with the possibility of a favorable response from God as they would

¹⁷ Ex 18:19; Dt 6:4; 27:9.

¹⁸ Dt 4:1, 10; 5:27; 11:13, 27, 28; 17:12; 18:14 30:10; Josh 1:17; 3:9; Jer 11:3; 26:13; 35:13, 15, 17; Zec 6:15.

¹⁹ see also Boling, 172.

²⁰ Gn 21:17; 30:17, 22; Jgs 13:9; 2 Sm 22:7; 1 Kgs 8:28; 2 Kgs 19:20; 20:5; 22:18-20; Is 38:5; Dn 10:12.

²¹ References with שָׁמַע: Ex 2:24; 16:12; Dt 26:7; References in Judges without the שָׁמַע, but implies God listening to the cry: Jgs 3:9, 15; 6:6-8.

²² Like in Dt 23:5; Jgs 10:10-14

²³ Block, 316.

listen to him and would respond positively.²⁴ Obviously, this is how the people of Shechem understood this opening statement of Jotham. This is why they listened to Jotham. But it is also possible that Jotham intended them to understand it this way while having in mind a different meaning of his expression “so that God may listen to you.” In Joshua 24:26-27, Joshua “took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.” Then he said to the people, “Behold, this stone shall be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God.” The large stone serves as a witness for the parties to be accountable to fulfill what has been said. Jotham might have invoked God’s witness to assure the fulfillment of the judgment he is proclaiming.

Jotham continues in his speech by narrating a fable. According to Block, vv. 8-15 is the finest example of a fable in the Scripture.²⁵ A fable is “a short narrative in poetry or prose that teaches a moral lesson and involves creatures, plants, and/or inanimate objects speaking or behaving like human characters.”²⁶ A fable belongs to a broad category of imaginative stories in the Old Testament literature called *meshal* (משל).²⁷ The place of this fable in its present location raises many issues because of its inconsistencies with its present context. Scholars have pointed out several of these inconsistencies: 1) It is observed that the fable is in poetry while within a prose narrative; 2) The fable tells about trees approaching their chosen candidate to be their king while in the narrative it was the people of Shechem who were approached by Abimelech. 3) The fable tells about four candidates to choose from while there is only one in the narrative; 4) The connection of the conclusion of the fable in v.15 with the rest of the speech in vv.16-20 seems to point out that this part was redactional, and the cedars of Lebanon are mentioned while this does not add a new insight to the meaning of the fable; 5) The fable is political in character while

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Block, 316.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Silviu Tatu, “Jotham’s Fable and the Crux Interpretum in Judges 9,” *Vetus Testamentum* 56, no. 1 (2006): 108.

the narrative is more theological and neutral.²⁸ Because of these observations, scholars have made different assumptions regarding the composition or source of the fable. Fritz,²⁹ Moore and Soggin explain that the fable was a later insertion of a redactor.³⁰ Maly adds that the redactor has adapted an existing non Israelite fable referring to the phrase “gods and men.”³¹ Boling and Webb both assume that rather than a redactor, it was Jotham who adapted the fable story for his purpose³². On the contrary, Block maintains that the fable was an original composition of Jotham.³³ Although aware of the looseness of the connection of the fable which points to the possible independence from the narrative, Block says that “to argue on these grounds that the fable has been artificially inserted into the narrative is to impose modern Western standards of literary consistency upon an ancient historiographic treatise with a distinct theological and rhetorical agenda.”³⁴ Block explains that when illustrative stories such as this fable are used in speeches, “they do not generally insist that every element of the story be consistent with every element of the rest of the speech.”³⁵ Block points out that even with the inconsistencies, the fable

²⁸ Block, 316; Alberto Soggin, *Judges, A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 174-175.

²⁹ Volkmar Fritz, “Abimelech und Sichern in Jdc. IX,” *Vetus Testamentum* 32 (1982): 129-44.

³⁰ Fritz summarized by T. A. Boogart, “Stone for Stone,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32 (1985): 45-47; Moore 244-246; Soggin, 175.

³¹ E. Maly, “Jotham’s Fable: Anti-Monarchial,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22 (1960): 300-302.

³² Boling. 173; Webb, 155.

³³ Block, 317; also L. Desnoyers, “*Histoire du Peuple Hébreu des Juges à la Captivité*,” *Tome I, La Période des Juges* (Paris, 1922) 173; M. Adinolfi, “Originalità dell’Apologo di Jotham,” *Revue Biblique* 7 (1959): 322-342.

³⁴ Block, 317.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

“suits the original rhetorical context and fits in perfectly with its present literary environment.”³⁶

In the fable, the trees set out in search of a king. First they approached the olive tree. When the olive tree declined, they went to the fig tree and offered to it the crown, the fig tree also declined. Then they went to the vine and the response was similar to the first two. Finally they offered the kingship to the *atad* (אֲטָד) tree which responded differently from the others. All the first three trees, the olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine, responded similarly while the *atad* tree gave a contrasting response. We can observe from the speech of Jotham that the fourth tree represents Abimelech. The identity of the fourth tree is then key to the interpretation of this fable.³⁷ The first three trees are typical trees and had much value in Syria and Palestine then and even today.³⁸ Tatu observes that most modern translations and commentaries of the Bible translate *atad* as ‘bramble’ of ‘thorn bush.’³⁹ Thus Tatu says, “By doing that, the traditional interpretation of Jotham’s words assumes a highly ironical, even sarcastic, tone. Because the ‘bramble’ (read Abimelech) has no quality whatsoever, choosing him as king represents an undesired failure of this political project. Therefore, the intention of Shechem’s citizens to elect a king immediately and despite all reasons, contradicting even common sense, pushed them to the unexpected position of enthroning the most unwelcome and unworthy candidate.”⁴⁰ This, as Tatu points out, is rather rigid.⁴¹ For Tatu, the identification of the *atad* lies in the consideration of its qualities as described in the fable, as giving shade and as being easily combustible.⁴² Tatu treats these as relevant information for the identification of the *atad* tree rather than mere sarcasm.⁴³ Also considering “literary tradition of Mesopotamian

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Tatu, 110.

³⁸ Soggin, 175.

³⁹ Tatu, 111.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 110.

⁴³ Ibid., 113-114.

‘contest literature,’ a fable would set the non-human characters (in most cases an opposite pair) to duel verbally over their abilities. . . qualities such as shade and combustion to which direct reference is expressed in Jotham’s fable should be considered as real for the fourth plant candidate.”⁴⁴ Tatu points to the mention of *Atad* in Genesis 50:7-11 where Joseph and his clan held a ceremonial mourning for the death of their father, Jacob. Pointing to the possibility that *Atad* could have been a Canaanite family name given to the tree, Tatu explains that the threshing floor under the *atad* could have been a perfect place for holding a ceremony in such an arid place because of the shade it provides. The shade also explains the possibility of the existence of a threshing floor under it. Tatu also points that the *atad* parallels the tree of life in the Akkadian literature which could be inferred as a thorny tree that can provide life saving shade in a remote and deadly arid land or desert.⁴⁵ From these descriptions, modern botanists who research on the plants and trees mentioned in the scripture identify *atad* as of the *Zizyphus Spina-Christi* for it matches more closely the biblical description than the commonly accepted identification of the *atad* as *Lycium europaeum*.⁴⁶ The *Zizyphus Spina-Christi*, as described by the botanists “is a tree reaching 10 m in height, armed with spinous stipules. It prefers low altitude terrains (< 1000 m), dry lands (100 mm rainfall), with a minimum temperature of -5 to 2°C. There is no preferred soil. It extends from 0° to 20° N latitude. It is reported that its green leaf fodder is very appreciated by the locals for the domesticated herbivores”⁴⁷ Its fruits “represented not only a food resource for desert travellers, but also an alternative food resource to the fruits of the more domesticated trees of Levant (sycamore, date, fig tree, pomegranate, olive, almond, etc.), especially in times of need (famine, invasion, drought, etc.).”⁴⁸ After identifying *atad* as the *Zizyphus Spina-Christi*, a thorny tree that provides shade and edible fruit, the idea that the trees, who were in search of a king in the fable, resorted to a less capable tree when they went to the *atad* tree seems to be without support. This interpretation of the *atad* would imply that

⁴⁴ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 115-116.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 116-122.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Abimelech, which it represents, is not an incapable candidate for a king. It also implies that the Shechemites did not become complacent in being critical in their choice of the *atad* as king because they have already approached three who rejected their offer. What this fable critiques is whether the Shechemites and Abimelech were בְּאֵמֶתה “in truth” or “in faithfulness” and בְּתַמִּים “with integrity” upon their institution of the monarchy – the enthronement of Abimelech by the Shechemites. In the fable, the *atad* tree seems to express acceptance of the offer of the trees for him to rule over them, but he gives them a condition. This condition in v. 15 seems to verify whether the trees were בְּאֵמֶתה “in truth” or “in faithfulness” as they are making the *atad* king. The *atad* affirms them that if their answer is affirmative, they could benefit from its shade. But, the *atad* also warns them that if they did not come ‘in truth,’ they will be consumed by the intense fire that the *atad*’s very combustible wood could produce. The end of the fable does not tell about the fate of the trees and the *atad*. But we can assume that the trees will enjoy the benefits from the shade of the *atad* and they will be sure of its protection if they came ‘in truth’ but if they did not, the trees are in an ‘irony of dilemma’⁴⁹ for they have already made the offer to the *atad* tree to be their king and could not take back the offer anymore. They will just have to face the consequences – to be consumed by fire. The ones who are in a true dilemma here are the Shechemites. As Jotham shifts from telling a story to addressing his audience, the Shechemites, he lays down his indictment to them. In the form of conditional statements and plain statements, Jotham points to the disloyalty that the Shechemites showed when they stood up against his father and conspired with the evil scheme of Abimelech in killing all his brothers and made Abimelech king over them. As mentioned above in the discussion of the structure, the structure of the pronouncement of judgment follows the structure of the ending of the fable story in v.15. Jotham used v.15 as a transition statement. Also mentioned above, בְּאֵמֶתה is repeated in vv. 16 & 19 and is partnered with בְּתַמִּים “with integrity.” These two phrases together in Joshua 24:14 qualify the challenge of Joshua to the Israelites to “fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity (בְּתַמִּים) and truth (בְּאֵמֶתה)” in his final charge to the Israelites near the end of his life. These parallels between v. 15 and the rest of the speech in vv. 16-20 implies that as good faith or truth (and integrity) was a principle expected by the *atad* tree when

⁴⁹ Ibid., 124.

the trees came to crown him, similarly, good faith or truth and integrity are principles that must be evident upon Abimelech and the Shechemites' institution of monarchy. When they, both Abimelech and the Shechemites, acted against truth and integrity, they disregarded very important virtues which they must have as they live in the land where the LORD, the true king, is reigning. Both Abimelech and the Shechemites are guilty. The inclusion of Abimelech, who is symbolized by the *atad*, is one of the loose ties between the fable and the rest of the speech. But the point that emphasizes the value of truth and integrity is very clear. Their establishment of monarchy is not founded in good faith, truth and integrity not because monarchy is condemned but because they have acted with disloyalty and murder.⁵⁰ Also because of their evil action, the legitimacy of Abimelech's kingship as appointed by a people who opposed the kingship of the LORD is questioned and it is bound to fail and crash. They are in the dilemma of facing the inevitable judgment for what they have done is irreversible,

“²⁰But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and let it consume the lords of Shechem and Beth-Millo, and let fire come out from the lords of Shechem and from Beth-Millo and consume Abimelech.”

This evil that they have done was not just against Gideon but is also against the will of the LORD. Although nothing in chapter 9 explicitly describes the view of God on this matter, God is portrayed in v. 23 as the one who initiated the beginning of the collapse of this monarchy which Abimelech and the Shechemites have established.

Traditionally, Jotham's fable is viewed as anti-monarchial. Proponents of this view point to two things in arguing the anti-monarchial tone of the fable. First is the use of the word *הֲיָרֵחַ* in vv. 9, 11 and 13. Moore translates it “shall I cease” which he said, implies refusal of those qualified and productive candidates to take the position of power in place of their usefulness in their present valuable vocation. Moore adds that the repetition points out that the author of the fable is showing that no one in their present community would want to be king.⁵¹ Boling translates *הֲיָרֵחַ* as “have I ceased” which implies only

⁵⁰ See also G. E. Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), 132.

⁵¹ Moore, 147-148.

those who have ceased to be fruitful would agree to be king.⁵² The second argument points to the word לָנַיַע translated as “to wave, sway or stagger.” As Block and Moore explain, kingship here is viewed as a worthless office far incomparable with a productive vocation. Buber in his evaluation of the theme of kingship in the fable, says that kingship is not a sufficiently productive calling that one should stop pursuing one’s own business and fruitfulness for the sake of it. On the contrary O’Connell views that the point of the fable is not to critique kingship but those who choose the wrong person to be king.⁵³ In response O’Connell argues that רָלְתִי בְּרֵחַ being in the perfect tense “presents no compelling case for anti-monarchialism. The perfective form indicates only that the nobler trees than the bramble were preoccupied with that which God had given them to do, and for this reason were prevented from taking up a popular appointment to kingship.”⁵⁴ Also in response, Lindars and Maly point out that לָנַיַע does not necessarily connote degrading of kingship for in the context of the trees, waving over the trees gives a picture of a mighty tree providing shade and protection to its constituents.⁵⁵ Maly explains that the fable is not really against kingship but against those “who refused, for insufficient reason, the burden of leadership.”⁵⁶ In reaction to Lindars and Maly, Crusemann, pointing to the other fables about kingship that were available at the same time of Jotham’s fable and also provide a context to Jotham’s fable, explains that the context of Jotham’s fable views kingship as “unproductive, it gives no fruit, and the protective function, which it takes for itself, it cannot fulfill.”⁵⁷ As Gerbrandt weighs the evidence he sides also with the traditional view.⁵⁸ Again, we can observe from the

⁵² Boling, 166.

⁵³ R. O’Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 164-165.

⁵⁴ R. O’Connell, 165, notes.

⁵⁵ B. Lindars, “Jotham’s Fable: A New Form-Critical Analysis,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1973): 365; Maly, “Jotham’s Fable: Anti-Monarchical,” 303.

⁵⁶ Maly, 303.

⁵⁷ Gerbrandt, 130.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

arguments raised above that the interpretation of the *atad* is vital in resolving the issue whether this fable is anti-monarchical or not. If we identify *atad* as the the *Zizyphus Spina-Christi*, most of the arguments above become improbable. We cannot anymore say that ‘waving over the trees’ is derogatory for the primary service of the *atad* tree is to offer its shade. The argument also that only the unproductive would give in to the seduction of kingship becomes weak for the *atad* is not an unproductive tree. Also, we can no longer say that when the productive trees refused the leadership position, the trees resorted to an unqualified candidate because the *atad* is not an unqualified candidate. Now if the voice of the majority of other fables about kingship at that time speaks negatively about kingship as pointed out by Crusemann, this minority voice that affirms kingship but points out the value of ‘truth and integrity’ also deserves a hearing.

Theological Reflection

The Value of Truth and Integrity

Truth and integrity are indeed vital values in institutions not only in Monarchy or government but also in educational institutions, religious institutions, and any other organization. The loss of them assures collapse and self-destruction. It is really disheartening hearing the news about Erap Estrada, Panfilo Lacson, our government’s anomalous ‘ZTE’ deals, bribery of local government officials, extrajudicial killings and many more. Truly, our country is in crisis because of the loss of ‘truth and integrity.’ Our leaders have not only lost the trust and confidence of our countrymen but also have violated and have gone against the will of God who is truth and full of integrity.

Abimelech made use of one of the ways we Filipinos are familiar with-the *Kamag-anak* (kin) incorporated. “*Ako ang piliin niyo kasi ako ang kadugo niyo*” (‘elect me because I am your blood relative’) because of this many times we choose to disregard ‘truth and integrity’ in favor of supporting our kin in whatever endeavor that they are in. Many times we are blinded by this too much affinity to the point of losing our wise judgment and perspective on things.

Sad to say but the church is not exempted from this ugly truth. We can also find in our churches deception, conspiracy, selfish promotion of self in order to be on top, hurting and damaging the reputation of people just to get that much prized position. Is the condition of the

church better? Or is the government just a reflection of the degradation of 'truth and integrity' in the church? I wonder...

It is really difficult to think of the possibility that truth and integrity could loosen its hold in the family, in the church, in the community and in every individual. But so long as we ourselves, who are called followers of Jesus Christ, hold on and uphold truth and integrity, it is our hope that this will not happen and hopefully we can affect our community.

Our Prophetic Call to Uphold Truth and Integrity

When one discerns the loss of 'truth and integrity' in a given society, whether in the family, in the local community, in the church community, or in the country, he or she must take a stand against it. Jotham was not a brave person. He was the youngest in his family v. 5, in fact he was hiding when Abimelech massacred his brothers v. 5 and feared Abimelech v. 21. But realizing the crisis in his society because of the evil of Abimelech and the Shechemites, he courageously confronted the Shechemites, though from a safe distance, and proclaimed judgment against them. With the introductory summons and with God causing the fulfillment of Jotham's curse, his speech resembles a prophetic pronouncement. Jotham took the role of a judge fulfilling a prophetic office like Deborah, Joshua and Moses who were before him. Jotham did not have the call encounter like the other judges or prophets, but he was deeply moved with the loss of 'truth and integrity' on his society. Later in the history of the Israelites, the loss of 'truth (of faithfulness or righteousness) and integrity' were part of the indictment of the prophets against the evil kings, corrupted religious cults, and the greedy economic tycoons in their time. Yes, they risked their lives, but God honored them and executed his judgment on the ruling parties who had abandoned 'truth and integrity.' The same conviction must remain in us and may this conviction move us to act and uphold truth at all costs.

Our Strategy in Confronting Those Who Have Abandoned Truth and Integrity

What can one man do? Jotham was all alone, his brothers were dead. How could he fight against a kingdom? Even though Abimelech's kingdom was newly established and had not yet reached stability, Jotham's strength could not match the power of Abimelech

and the Shechemites. But this did not stop him. God was on his side, though he might not know it, and he had the wit to use the power of stories as he confronted his opponents. Jotham understood that a direct confrontation would not work against the powerful Abimelech and the Shechemites so he uses a story to be subtle in his attack. This is the same strategy that the prophet Nathan used when he confronts David in his sin. Brueggemann rightly observes in the case of Nathan, “One cannot address royal power directly, especially royal power so deeply in guilt. It is permissible to talk about speaking truth to power, but if truth is to have a chance with power, it must be done in subtlety.”⁵⁹ Other than the use of stories, other prophets used human drama, Isaiah walking naked, Jeremiah carrying a yoke, to invoke subtle but powerful messages against a ruling power. I have heard stories that during the martial law here in the Philippines, people expressed their opposition using music, drama, comedy, comics, and many other creative ways to bring a subtle powerful message against a ruling power who had abandoned truth and integrity. Indeed, even if we are powerless compared to those who are abusive in their power and have no respect for truth and integrity, we can still confront them in creative, subtle but powerful ways.

⁵⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *David's Truth: In Israel's Imagination and Memory* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 63.

Luke Wesley

The Church in China

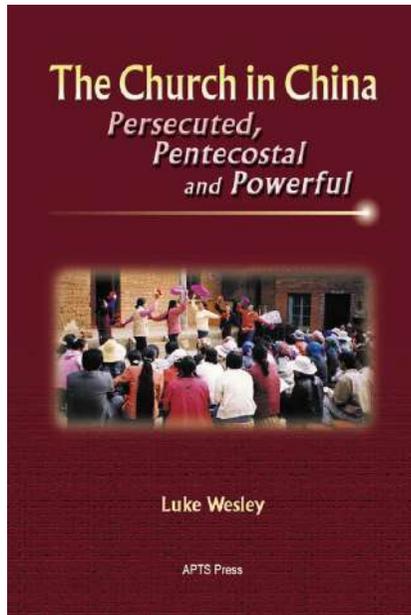
Persecuted, Pentecostal, and Powerful

“The Chinese church is persecuted, but it is a church strengthened by the Holy Spirit and bold in its witness. God’s power is revealed, often in inspiring ways, in the lives of countless numbers of Chinese Christians. I trust that this small sampling of analysis and stories will bear witness to this fact.”

From the author’s introduction

“At last a knowledgeable Pentecostal confirms that a great part—perhaps even the majority—of China’s Protestants are Pentecostal or Pentecostal-like, and this on the basis of thorough field research

and by an author who speaks Chinese... All in all a most useful book. The author has researched an extremely difficult field.”



Walter J. Hollenweger, Ph.D.
Former Professor of Mission
University of Birmingham

Luke Wesley (a pen name) is a missionary who has lived and served in China for most of the past decade, and is the Field Director of the China Training Network.

Paper

ISBN: 971-8942-09-2

AJPS Books

2004

xvi+123 pp.

US\$7.50; P150.00 (Philippines)

See the order form in this journal for a discounted reader rate.

Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds.,

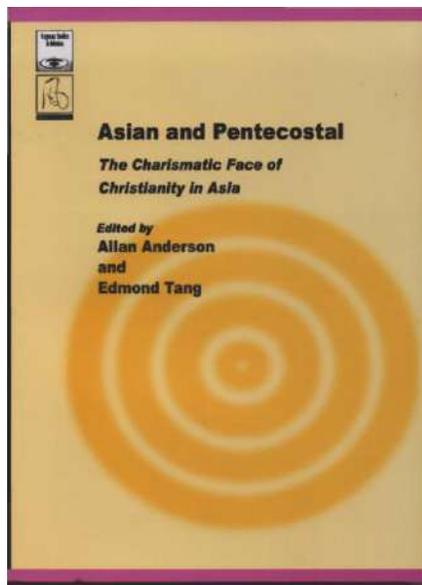
Asian and Pentecostal

The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia

“This volume is a first in the study of Asian Pentecostalism at several levels.... This book comes highly recommended for use in courses on global Pentecostalism, Asian Church History, Modern Church History, as well as a resource for those who want to know what God is saying through the Charismatic face of Christianity in Asia.”

Cecil M. Robeck, Ph.D.
Fuller Theological Seminary,
CA, USA

Contributors include Walter J. Hollenweger, H-S Bae, Michael Bergunder, Simon Chan, DengZhaoming, Roger Hedlund, Hwa Yung, Jeong C-H, Jeong J-Y, Lee Y-H, Julie Ma, Wonsuk Ma, David Martin, Gotthard Oblau, Paulson Pulikottil, Mark Robinson, Paul Shew, Joseph Suico, Tan Jin Huat, Gani Wiyono, Lode Wostyn, Amos Yong and the editors.



Allan Anderson is Reader in Pentecostal Studies, University of Birmingham, UK

Edmond Tang directs the Centre for East Asian Christian Studies, University of Birmingham, UK

Paper

ISBN: 1-870345-43-6

Regnum Books (Regnum Studies in Mission), APTS Press (AJPS 3)

2005

xiv+596 pp. (See the order form.)

Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüländ, *“Give Jesus a Hand!” Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines*, Theology and Religious Studies Series (Quezon City, Phils.: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), xi pp. + 226 pp., paperback, ISBN: 978-971-550-569-7, US\$ 37.00.

“...[T]he fact that the Philippines is considered by many to be the ‘sick man’ of Southeast Asia and a loser in the globalization process” makes this nation a breeding soil for “populist religion.” (153) However, the increase of the Pentecostals and Charismatics in this nation could not be solely credited to this kind of reckoning. That is reductionism. “Such reasoning reduces religious movements to socioeconomic causes in a manner reminiscent of the ‘opium of the people,’ an approach that is too simple for the complex phenomenon of religious movements and revivals.” (153) An oversimplified analysis is not helpful. Yes, it is true that the Philippines has gone through a lot of struggles as a nation. From the Spanish, American and Japanese occupations (see 31-55) until the difficulties of the young state after World War II and the struggles of the democratic system during and after Martial Law (55-86) the religiosity of the Filipinos has been shaped in one way or another by their national experiences. And the current graft and corruption in every sector of the Philippine government continue to haunt the Filipino people. (*passim*) The dislocation of the different ethnic groups as well as the underprivileged poor people and the migration of the many Filipinos all over the world are due to basic need of humans to survive and live a better life. (e.g. 156-160) This is an evidence of uncertainty. Exploitation of people is not news. Suffering is not an uncommon sight. Politics is dirty. Government is bad. Disparity between the rich and the poor is the norm. But are the Filipinos hopeful? Yes indeed! The Pentecostal-Charismatic experience of the manifestations of the Spirit among the Filipinos is a source of hope. The growth of the Catholic Charismatic groups Couples for Christ and El Shaddai as well as the Protestant Pentecostal churches like Jesus is Lord and the Assemblies of God makes the Christian revival in the Philippines exciting. This claim is verified by social science.

The title *“Give Jesus a Hand!”* authored by Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüländ is captivating. It gives the impression that the Lord Jesus Christ is getting “a hand,” or a help. It also makes one think that because it is Jesus the Son of God it may be implying that if a person would only give his or her one hand He can do a life changing miracle.

These thoughts came to mind when the reviewer got a hold of this book. The subtitle of the book, *Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines*, further brought an impression that the book is more about the experience of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Filipino Charismatic Christians. Although there are some ideas that the reviewer disagrees with, some information that is not accurate, a few typographical and textual errors and problematic conclusions, the volume did not disappoint the reviewer in the promising title that it carries. Kessler and Rüländ provide a book about the Pentecostals and the Charismatics in the Philippines that is decently researched. It is a study of Filipinos who claim the experience of the manifestations of the Spirit of God. Their general portrayal of the experience of the Spirit baptism as well as the Pentecostal-Charismatic revival and phenomenon among the Filipino people is straightforward and sound. The work is not only bibliographical research. It is also a social science endeavor. The authors have done field research. Not only did they use the outcomes of their own survey data and empirical result but they also employed the national statistics of the Philippine census. Thus, the scope of *"Give Jesus a Hand!" Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines* is considerably broad and generally balanced. It may be said that the product of the research of Kessler and Rüländ reflects the contemporary sociological situation and community perception of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the Philippines.

The book, which has six chapters, begins with an outline about the transforming religious scenery in the Philippines. The authors present the contemporary estimates of the number of Pentecostals and Charismatics both in the world and in the Philippines. They also describe the identity of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Kessler and Rüländ also explain their theoretical approach and research methodology in the first chapter. The title of the chapter is "Religious Change in the Philippines: An Overview." (1-29) This part of the book summarizes what the authors will do in their presentation of materials. The next chapter which is entitled "Church and State, Filipino Nationhood, Social Justice and Democracy" (30-86) is a historical and sociological chapter. It talks about the background of the Catholic and Protestant arrival and influence in the Philippines. The third chapter is an empirical study in comparison with the previous study which is bibliographical. The title "The Philippine Religious Landscape of Today" (87-115) is very appropriate as the study uses the government statistics, different surveys and own field research of the authors.

Charts and graphs are helpful in understanding the contemporary Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Catholics and Charismatics in the Philippines. The qualitative field research and the random interviews made by the authors are nicely integrated with bibliographical information about “The Philippine Charismatic Revival” (116-151) which is also the title of the fourth chapter. The next chapter, which is the significant chapter in the whole argument of the book, argues that the Christian revival phenomenon in the Philippines is actually “Charismatic Populist Religion.” (152-179) The importance of this chapter is the synthesis that the authors have done to make their point of using the “populist” approach in assessing the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the country. Finally, the last chapter is their summation of the study and their opinion on the force and the future of this current religious revival phenomenon. The title is a content description: “Conclusion: How Populist Religion May Shape Philippine Society.” (180-197)

Kessler and Rüland define, describe, illustrate and apply the concept of “populism” or “populist” in politics and religion. Thus, the authors are convinced that the thriving Pentecostal-Charismatic renewal is not explainable in terms of the Filipino dissatisfaction of the available options in the society. (*passim*) And so they think that the idea of populism will bring illumination to their study of the growth and the force of this revival movement in the land that has gone through a lot of national problems. Populism for Kessler and Rüland, using various authors, refers “in the first place, [as] a protest against the system, a revolt against the establishment and its values.” (15) “Populism thus champions the interests of the common people.” (16) “The populist tendency to propagate simple solutions for complex problems,” as well as “the populist movements [tendency] to mobilize their followers through unconventional methods...sharply distinguish them from the routines of the established order.” (17) “Populists emphasize personal relationships, face-to-face interaction and small communities in which grassroots democracy can flourish and leaders are personally accountable to their followers.” (18) In connection with the authors use of the concept of populism to the Christian revival in the Philippines they view that the Pentecostals and the Charismatics are the religious outcome of populism. (19) The noteworthy contributing result of their research is that: “Whereas political populism is confined to the problems of this world and legitimized largely by secular motives, populist religion can draw on divine legitimacy and provide support in all types of crisis—political, social, and individual. Apart

from this cognitive advantage of populist religion, the Charismatic Renewal also has far greater ability to provide its adherents with a stable lifeworld.” (20) Furthermore, although the research of Kessler and Rüländ among the Filipinos does not achieve a undisputed positive conclusion, they are still hopeful: “Populist religion has the potential to foster democracy and to keep the quest for social justice alive in society.” (197) *“Give Jesus a Hand!” Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines* is a substantial contribution to a better understanding of the current Christian revival in the Philippines specifically represented by the Pentecostals and the Charismatics who claim that they have the biblical experience of Spirit baptism and the manifestations of the supernatural charisms in this contemporary day and age.

R. G. dela Cruz

Randal Rauser, *Finding God in The Shack* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster Publishing, 2009), paperback, xii pp. + 160 pp., ISBN: 978-1-60657-032-6, US\$14.99.

Randal Rauser has taken a bold step in writing this book. He begins by presenting the case for theologians, the need for reflective theological thinking in our world, and the justification that theology, rightly done, makes the wonder of God even more amazing. He gives as his motivation for writing this book, the fact that so many have found a profound experience with God through reading *The Shack* by William P. Young, and yet others have objected strongly to the theology the book appears to present. Thus, although the book is a novel, people who read it are finding theology there which either appeals to or repels them. Rauser states his concern that those who object to the book solve the problem by warning others not to read it. His own opinion is that the conversations concerning the book are so valuable, that whether or not we agree with the theological presentations found there, we cannot afford to dismiss ourselves from those conversations. He indicates that his intention in writing his book is to add some important background to the theological issues that are at stake in the current discussions of the novel (14). To do this, he examines the theological implications of the following six theoretical conversations overheard in a coffee shop : 1) the novel presents “a two-thirds female and ethnically diverse vision of God” (20), 2) “ it fails to distinguish the three persons” (14), 3)“all divine persons are submitted to one another and to the creation, and so all human persons should also be so submitted” (15), 4) “how a God who is all-loving and all-powerful would allow the horrific murder of young Missy, a child of whom he says he is especially fond” (15), 5)“how *The Shack* explains the atoning work of Christ” (16) and 6) “how far Christ's atoning work extends, and specifically whether it might save some who have never heard of Christ” (16).

In considering these theological ideas, Rauser shows that although *The Shack* is a novel, it presents theological truth in a way that draws everybody, not just theologians, into the conversation. He then proceeds to deal with each of the theoretical conversations he has listed, by examining the Scripture, and the theological discussions of the past. He presents the idea of God accommodating Himself to our level of understanding concluding that “God stoops down to our level and interacts with us as if he were a human being, *and he does it so we can come into relationship with him.*” (30 emphasis original) Secondly he examines the doctrine of the Trinity both from Scripture, and from

what appears in *The Shack* and comes to the conclusion that “the book opts for mystery rather than modalism” (53) and that “the tension between one and three that exists in *The Shack* is a sign of good biblical theology” (54). In relation to the question of the subordination in the Godhead, Rauser gives the reader pause for some serious thinking about how we relate to God in our every day lives, and even in our churches. While admitting that the image of God presented in *The Shack* could be freeing for those who have experienced abuse, for others who are already “dangerously over-familiar” with God it may reinforce their misconception of God's holiness and awesomeness (73). He also closely examines the whole range of biblical texts relating to authority and submission in the Godhead and comes to the conclusion, that if we exercised true servant leadership in all our areas of responsibility “we might find ourselves moving beyond the authority/submission debate altogether” (91). The fourth question Rauser approaches is the question of human suffering and the problem of evil. In examining *The Shack's* answer to this problem he shows that the book equally rejects the Calvinist's and the Open Theist's view of free will, and instead adopts “[t]he idea that free will is a greater good” (109). However, it does not espouse the idea that God is just make use of His creatures for his own glory, and instead indicates that although God will not necessarily explain the purpose for all of our suffering, if we will walk with Him in faith, he “will ultimately redeem each terrible event within an emerging picture of beauty in which there will no longer be mourning, crying or pain” (122-3). Having struggled with this most difficult of questions, Rauser goes on to consider the purpose of Christ's suffering. He notes that while *The Shack* indicates the need for salvation from sin, and the effectiveness of the atonement for this purpose, it appears to avoid the subject of salvation from God's wrath, which is not only an Old Testament image, but appears clearly in the New Testament – particularly in the book of Revelation (134-40). Finally on the subject of the extent of the atonement, he admits that “the book is not as concerned with delimiting the precise extent of the potential application of Christ's atonement as affirming that the atonement is the single means to reconciliation with God” (143). Having considered these six questions raised at the beginning of the book as examples of the objections people have raised to the theology of *The Shack*, Rauser finishes by considering the view of creation that is presented in the book, and concludes that while it presents a “vision of a renewed and restored creation” (156) which is biblically sound, it falls short of a truly biblical view of the redemption of creation by

including the killing and consumption of animals in the meals the Mack enjoys with the Trinity.

Randal Rauser has produced a very helpful companion to the novel *The Shack*. With great theological insight and a clear understanding of the issues, he has examined the theology of the book, and found it to be mostly quite biblical. He has indicated some areas where it might be misleading, or perhaps fall short of a fully biblical explanation, but in general he has given a favourable theological examination of the book. He has also included some major theological discussions, which go far beyond the novel itself, and for this reason his book is useful by itself without necessarily being a reference to *The Shack*. At the end of each chapter he has included questions for further discussion, making his book useful not only for small group study, but also for individual challenge and growth. The strength of Rauser's book, is the same as the strength he finds in *The Shack* itself, that it brings theological discussion into the market place.

A. Kay Fountain

Harold A. Netland and Keith E. Yandell, *Spirituality Without God?: Buddhist Enlightenment and Christian Salvation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009); alternative title, *Buddhism: A Christian Exploration and Appraisal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), paperback, xix pp. + 230 pp., ISBN: 978-1-84227-642-6, GB£14.99, US\$22.00.

This volume is written by Netland and Yandell with the western audience in mind. The title of the book called *Spirituality Without God?* precisely defines Buddhism which is a religion that “does not teach the existence of an almighty creator God” but instead “it offers the prospect of deep spirituality without having to bother with God.” (xii) It starts with the description of the origins of Buddhism which entails the life and teachings of Gautama the Buddha. It brings the discussion to the growth of Buddhism in the eastern and western hemispheres. It moves the discourse to the characteristics of Buddhist teachings and the various branches of this religion and the issues entailing the formation of different schools of thought. The final section of the book deals with Christianity and Buddhism. In the first few pages of introduction, the authors depict the current demography and sociology of Europe, Australia and North America. Netland and Yandell admit that there are more Asians, Africans and Latinos who are Christians now than the traditionally Christian West. Buddhism, which came from Asia, has gained attention and provided alternative religion for the western people. Partly, this attraction to Buddhism is due to huge Asian migration into the West and the stressful materialistic consumer societies in North America, Europe and Australia receive “promise [of] a spirituality and serenity that enables one to transcend the pressures of modern life, but without the ecclesiastical structures, dogma, and authoritarianism of traditional Western Christianity.” (xi-xii) The authors also note that Buddhism and other Asian religions are new to the West and what is known about them is very slight. Thus, *Spirituality Without God?* is a modest endeavor to fill the gaps of understanding the nature of Buddhism and its contrast with Christianity.

From the beginning chapter it could be sensed that the book is not primarily for apologetic purposes. It is sincerely attempting to understand Buddhism and its origins and appreciate it as a religion seen from the lenses of Christian authors. In other words, the discussion is a plain description of the spirit and makeup of Buddhism. The approach of Netland and Yandell in emphasizing the contrasting natures of

Buddhism and Christianity in terms of a belief system is due to their targeted audience:

In highlighting some differences between Christianity and Buddhism above, we provided examples of differences in the two religions' *beliefs*. Some, however, will object that focusing upon beliefs in this manner is to misconstrue what religions are all about. Religions, we are told, are ways of life and should not be understood in terms of truth claims. Many of those in the West who are attracted to Buddhism are not primarily interested in its metaphysical claims but rather in the practical benefits that accompany meditation and a Buddhist way of life. Buddhism seems, for many, to be a form of spiritual therapy that can be embraced quite apart from accepting the particular doctrines Buddhism traditionally has advanced. (xiii-xiv)

The preceding quotation from *Spirituality Without God* captures the authors' approach, attitude and analysis of Buddhism as a religion. They are essentially responding to the contemporary attitude of the western mindset. The proper understanding of Buddhism as a religion must be presented without any reservation. It is notable that the account given in chapter one about the historical milieu of ancient Buddhism as well as the doctrines and development of this Asian religion is generally informative. Netland and Yandell describe Buddhism that thrived since its inception over two and a half millennia ago. They also depict the clear connection of Buddhism to Hinduism. (1-9) The authors historically affirm Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Buddha, in terms of his existence as a human being. The representation of the different ideas about the historical Gautama Buddha is balanced. (9-14) The Buddhism's system of belief such as the "four noble truths" as well as "impermanence and no-self" including "spiritual goal of nirvana" are clarified to avoid Christian misunderstandings. (14- 26) This chapter provides an informative historical understanding of Buddhism.

The last pages of the first chapter talk about the historical growth of the Buddhist faith where the account highlights the early years of Theravada Buddhism. (26-32) Chapters two and three continue the narration of the historical expansion of Buddhism as they account for "The Dharma Goes East" and "The Dharma Comes West" respectively. The titles of these chapters highlight the notion of dharma which

traditionally refers to the Buddha's sayings and traditions and their virtuous truths. On the one hand, the important personalities such as Nagarjuna, Honen and his follower Shinran as well as the present Dalai Lama are placed in the wide picture of Buddhism historical record according to their contributions. Buddhist groups such as Mahayana, Zen and Tibetan as well as Indian and Sri Lankan, Chinese and Japanese interaction with the coming of the Dharma are doctrinally described and historically illustrated in the second chapter. (33-67) On the other hand, the third chapter starts with the missionary nature of Buddhist religion. (69-70) It paints the picture of Japanese and Chinese immigrants who brought their Buddhist religion with them in America. (72-79) The influential writings of Suzuki on Zen and Abe's contemporary representation of Zen Buddhism attracted the westerners to this Asian religion. (83-103)

In the next two chapters Netland and Yandell draw the attention of the reader to "Aspects of Buddhist Doctrine" and "Some Buddhist Schools and Issues." Chapter four explicitly describes that Buddhism teaches "religious exclusivism" and further explanations which are "incompatible with Buddhist teachings are said to be mistaken, resulting in ignorance and further suffering; only Buddhism leads to release from suffering and the ignorance from which suffering arises." (106-107) The same chapter talks about Buddhist understanding of truth linked with "rebirth and karma," "impermanence and no-self," "appearances and reality," "dependent co-origination and determinism," "enlightenment and nirvana" and "conscious states." (111-144) Chapter five takes a few versions of the Buddhist religion. They speak on the essential problems of humanity that caused the need for a Buddhist answer in dealing with age old religious illness. (145) The authors chose to speak about "the Pudgalavada or Personalist tradition," emphasizing the "self or soul" during the life now, the reincarnation later on and reaching the state of Nirvana. (147-157) Then, they present "the Madhyamaka tradition" as pluralistically interpreted by the Buddhists in terms of "nihilism" or "absolutism" or "ineffabilism. (157-166) Lastly, "Buddhist reductionism" is depicted by the writers as a religion of "momentary states" which means that everything in life is dependent on "the mental states." (166-174)

The final chapter is the only chapter in the book that makes comparison and contrast between Christianity and Buddhism. Netland and Yandell also articulate the similarities and differences between "The Dharma [and] the Gospel." For example, they call attention to the similarity of Buddhist and Christian claim that both Buddha and Christ

expect allegiances from their followers to their persons and teachings as well as their necessary inclusions to the communities that put their faith on their founders. (176) However, the big difference is that for a Buddhist to be healed of “unsatisfactory states” it is believed to be “enlightenment,” while for a Christian to be delivered from sin, is “thought of in terms of repentance.” (180-181) Another crucial point that the authors stressed is that Buddhism does not include the existence of God in their religious system but Christianity places God and his Christ at the center of its belief. With other specific examples given by the authors they were able to show that: “The choice here is between two radically different perspectives on reality, on the nature of the human predicament, and the way to overcome it.” (212)

Spirituality Without God? is an informative book to peruse. It is recommended to be read by Christians who are interested in Buddhism as well as those who may not be attracted to this Asian religion but are acquainted with friends who have a Buddhist background. Although this book as written by Netland and Yandell presupposed an audience with a western mindset Asians and non-Western Pentecostals will get much substance from this volume. The book is readable and was successful in communicating the essence of a religion that developed apart from the English language that is used to describe it. The references are adequate for further studies, and the documentations are showing the scholarly research done by the authors. This volume is a welcome contribution to a better understanding among Christians of what Buddhism is all about.

R. G. dela Cruz

Tavita Pagaialii, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost": A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa* (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2006), paperback, x pp. + 190 pp., ISBN: 978-971-8942-10-9, US\$ 8.00.

With over 20,000 adherents in 100 churches, the Assemblies of God in Samoa (including both American Samoa and the Independent State of Samoa) claims about nine percent of the residents on these Pacific islands. From the introduction of Pentecostalism to the islands in 1928, the Assemblies of God has become the largest evangelical body in Samoa. Like many of the rapidly-growing Pentecostal churches in non-Western nations, little scholarly attention had been paid to the history and development of the Assemblies of God in Samoa. That is, until now.

Tavita Pagaialii, a veteran Samoan Assemblies of God educator and now General Superintendent of the Samoa Assemblies of God, has written a remarkable book, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost": A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa*. The author's undergraduate studies at South Pacific Bible College in Fiji (1975-77) and graduate studies at Far East Advanced School of Theology in the Philippines (since renamed Asia Pacific Theological Seminary) (1979-82) sparked curiosity in the young student concerning Pentecostal origins in his homeland. His alma mater (APTS) has published the results of his research, which likely will serve as the church's standard history for years to come.

Pentecost to the Uttermost is divided into five sections: 1) history of Christianity in Samoa; 2) history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa; 3) development of Assemblies of God Bible schools; 4) challenges facing the Assemblies of God in Samoa; and 5) the conclusion that the Assemblies of God is addressing a significant need.

Pagaialii begins by placing Samoa's Pentecostal origins in the context of the islands' Christian history. Herman Winkleman, the first Assemblies of God missionary, arrived in 1928. The church quickly matured and indigenous leaders emerged. The author outlines local histories, then identifies larger themes visible in the grassroots accounts. Since 1978, missionaries have faded into the background, and three Bible colleges have been established.

He notes the nation's proud Christian heritage and that in past years the nation's mainline Protestant churches sent many missionaries to other nations. As these churches grew more liberal, the Assemblies of God became the primary evangelical group. With the Samoan

diaspora (there are almost as many Samoans in the United States as in Samoa) came new opportunities to spread the faith among their people in new lands. Today, Samoan Assemblies of God churches are found throughout the Pacific rim, including in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

In addition to recounting the history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa, Pagaialii discusses challenges it faces. Unlike other evangelical and charismatic groups, the Assemblies of God has rejected many traditional Samoan cultural practices. In addition to these cultural challenges, the author avers that the Assemblies of God needs to develop and support educational institutions and overcome anti-intellectualism. He also encourages ecumenical engagement, citing William Menzies' admonition to the church to find ways to "function well within their own constituency" and to "relate constructively to other church bodies." Finally, Pagaialii laments the lack of concern among Pentecostals for social, political, economic, and environmental issues. How have Pagaialii's views been received? Wayne Cagle, President of APTS, writes that "[t]he author is to be commended for bringing up such issues that traditionally, Pentecostals have tended to leave to the more 'liberal' branches within the Christian movement" (x).

Pentecost to the Uttermost is the first written history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa, except for a short narrative penned by missionary Maurice Luce in 1988. Pagaialii's account is admirably researched and well-written, and also provides a challenging assessment of what issues need to be addressed in the future. It is an important work for Samoans at home and in the diaspora, as well as for scholars who wish to better understand the complexity of Pentecostalism in a non-Western context. *Pentecost to the Uttermost* belongs in every university and seminary library.

Darrin Rodgers

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ed. *The Spirit in the World: Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts*, preface by Jürgen Moltmann (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), xxiv pp. + 248 pp., paperback, 241 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8028-6281-5, US\$ 20.00.

The Spirit in the World is a collection of articles by Pentecostal thinkers. Its subtitle, *Emerging Pentecostal Theologies in Global Contexts* describes what the book is all about. Jürgen Moltmann gives a preface highlighting the coming of age of the Pentecostal movement. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, the editor of the volume, gives an introduction entitled “Pentecostalism and Pentecostal Theology in the Third Millennium: Taking Stock of the Contemporary Global Situation.” (xiii-xxiv) Kärkkäinen puts the collection of essays into the current context of the globalization of Pentecostal experience and doctrine. The volume “concentrates on theological issues.” (xix) He also explains the scope of his definition of Pentecostals to classical Pentecostalism and yet acknowledges their unavoidable diversities. Then, Kärkkäinen introduced the articles and what the book is all about.

The anthology is divided into three major parts according to the following topics: “I. ‘The Spirit Among the People’: Pentecostal Theology and Spiritual (em)Power(ment); II. ‘The Spirit Among Cultures’: Pentecostal Theology and Cultural Diversity; [and] III. ‘The Spirit Among Religions’: Pentecostal Theology and Religious Plurality.” The articles in part one include Frank Macchia’s “Baptized in the Spirit: Towards a Global Theology of Spirit Baptism”; Margaret Poloma’s “Divine Healing, Religious Revivals, and Contemporary Pentecostalism: A North American Perspective”; Wonsuk Ma’s “‘When the Poor Are Fired Up’: The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal/Charismatic Mission”; and Douglas Petersen’s “A Moral Imagination: Pentecostals and Social Concern in Latin America”. The initial article of Macchia is a theological response to the seemingly marginalized doctrine of Spirit baptism in Pentecostal scholarship. Poloma’s piece is a sociological evaluation of the divine healing experiences in connection with revival movements. The essays of Ma and Petersen are concerned about the necessity of missiological sensitivity to the poor and “a moral imagination” in doing “social concern” in Latin American setting, respectively.

There are also four significant pieces of writings in the second section. Paulson Pulikottil’s historical article that first appeared in

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 5, no. 1 (2002): 5-22 with the title “‘As East and West Met in God’s Own Country’: Encounter of Western Pentecostalism with Native Pentecostalism in Kerala” is republished here in this volume with little modification and editorial changes as “One God, One Spirit, Two Memories: A Postcolonial Reading of the Encounter Between Western Pentecostalism and Native Pentecostalism in Kerala.” Koo Dong Yun’s essay that brings theological interplay between the notions of Korean *Minjung* and Asian Pentecostalism is labeled “Pentecostalism from Below: *Minjung* Liberation and Asian Pentecostal Theology. Then, “Sanctified Saints—Impure Prophetesses: A Cross-Cultural Study of Gender and Power in Two Afro-Christian Spirit-Privileging Churches” by Deidre Helen Crumbley brings a cultural study as its contribution to the volume. The input of “*Sankofa*: Pentecostalism and African Cultural Heritage” by Ogbu U. Kalu is on customs and traditions of his people’s way of life.

Lastly, the papers of Kärkkäinen, Onyiah, Yong and Richie interact with religious pluralism using their Pentecostal pneumatology. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen’s “Pentecostal Pneumatology of Religions: The Contribution of Pentecostalism to Our Understanding of the Work of God’s Spirit in the World” argues for a broader pneumatological understanding of the role of Spirit on earth. Opoku Onyiah’s “Deliverance as a Way of Confronting Witchcraft in Contemporary Africa: Ghana as a Case Study” is most interesting in dealing with the superiority of the Spirit of God than those of the powerful witch spirits. Amos Yong’s “From Azusa Street to the Bo Tree and Back: Strange Babblings and Interreligious Interpretations in the Pentecostal Encounter with Buddhism” relate Pentecostal pneumatology with Buddhist experience. And last but not the least, Tony Richie’s “Azusa-Era Optimism: Bishop J. H. King’s Pentecostal Theology of Religions as Possible Paradigm for Today” is well articulated as a basis for current interfaith exchange of ideas.

Due to the anthological nature of *The Spirit in the World* it is not practical to comment on every treatise included. In addition the limited allowance for a book review like this would not permit to engage with every essay in this title. Three articles, one from every thematic division, of the book will be included in the current evaluation of this work. The choices are done at random and by representation. Since Frank Macchia’s work is the first article it automatically caught the eye of the reader. His whole point in the article is captured by a series of questions on the second paragraph of his article:

Does Pentecostalism globally have a chief theological distinctive or a theologically distinctive message? If so, how have Pentecostal theologians over the past several decades developed this message? What have been the major trajectories among Pentecostal theologians globally? Finally, how may we bring these lines of thought and research together in a way that implicitly invites many different Pentecostals to the table in conversation? (3)

These questions set the tone of the whole volume's discussion on Pentecostal theology in relationship with the book's title *The Spirit in the World*. Macchia did the right thing when he dealt with the preceding questions using the Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit baptism in connection with tongues. He sketches the idea of this doctrine from Acts and 1 Corinthians 12-14 to Wesley and Seymour, and used the perceptive ideas of Donald Dayton, David Lim and Murray Dempster, through Howard Ervin, Harold Hunter and Walter Hollenweger, among others. He also notes the views of Asian Pentecostals such as Narciso Dionson, Koo Dong Yun and Simon Chan. He answers the questions by addressing the issues of oral theology and personal experience in dealing with the doctrine. He also attempts to bring coherence to the fragmented Pentecostal views.

Paulson Pulikottil is another author who brings a fresh approach to Pentecostal Theology in India. He uses a postcolonial tool in doing Pentecostal historiography to highlight the "locality" and "particularity" of "events and incidents" that should have "their due place in history." (69-70) He deals with the "Syrianness" of native Pentecostalism in Kerala in relationship with the arrival of the Western Pentecostal missionaries in terms of the former's resistance to the latter's claim of Pentecostal revival coming from the West. (83-84) Furthermore, Pulikottil describes how "the Eurocentric approach" in doing the historiography of the Pentecostalism in South India is rejected by the natives (85-86) and "colonial mimicry" was refused and led the Christians from the Syrian tradition to join the native Pentecostals. (86-87)

The other essay of interest is written by the editor of this volume. This is included on the final section of the book. It deals with the Holy Spirit in Religious pluralism. It specifically talks about the necessary openness of Pentecostal pneumatology to the work of the Spirit outside the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups. The Holy Spirit should not be domesticated within these circles alone. And Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

says it well that the Spirit can go wherever He is pleased to go (citing Jn. 3:8). He also joins Among Yong in an open pneumatology and is calling for the “*Discerning the Spirit(s)*.” (180) He gives a succinct description of the present condition of the theological discourse about the Spirit. Then, he discusses the manner in which the Pentecostals interact with the recent pneumatological dialogues. The bulk of Kärkkäinen’s presentation deals with the manner Pentecostals view God and the Spirit in relationship with the globe and reflect on this attitude in connection with other faiths. Thus, the author places his theological thoughts in a wider matrix of world religions.

The articles in this volume are well written. The editor makes the collection and arrangement of essays in a progressive way, i.e. from a discussion of the necessity of contemporary articulation of the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism to a Pentecostal Bishop’s heuristic paradigm of doing an interfaith dialogue within the framework of Pentecostal theology in connection with theology of religions. The concluding article of Tony Richie on the Pentecostal theology of J. H. King is appropriately placed as a concluding article in the volume which brings “optimistic, gracious and patient” manners in doing pneumatology, specifically among the Pentecostal-Charismatic thinkers. It is also helpful to see in the footnotes that some essays are referring to the other essays within the same anthology. Perhaps, having an index of scriptural quotations, authors cited and explored topics would bring better use of the book, especially for researchers.

R. G. dela Cruz

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please make a copy of this form, mark and/or fill the appropriate subscription/order portion(s) and send to Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies, P.O. Box 377, Baguio City, 2600 Philippines or e-mail to ajps@apts.edu.

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies (including surface mail)

Areas	1 year	2 years	3 years
Philippines	P300.00	P600.00	P750.00
Asian Countries	US\$18.00	US\$35.00	US\$50.00
Others	US\$23.00	US\$45.00	US\$60.00

Beginning from vol. ___ no. ___ (199___/200___)

[AJPS began in 1998]

Title	Unit Price	S/h*	No. of copies	Total Amount
David Y. Cho	US\$ 10.00	(US\$1.00)		
The Church in China	US\$ 6.00	(US\$1.00)		
Asian and Pentecostal	US\$ 15.00	(US\$1.50)		
Pentecost to the Uttermost	US\$ 8.00			

**For an additional copy, US\$0.50 is to be added. Orders within the Philippines do not require the shipping/handling charge. For bulk order, please inquire for special discount rates.*

Check payable to APTS enclosed, drawn on a U.S. bank in U.S. dollars. Please note your payment for : AJPS Subscription or Book.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail: _____

If interested in a journal exchange with AJPS, please mark here.