Chapter 1

The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement

Trends, Patterns, and Expression

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Early Development of a Pentecostal Meta-Culture

By 1916, only ten years after the beginning of the Los Angeles Azusa Street revival, western Pentecostal missionaries were found in at least forty-two nations outside North America and Europe.[[1]](#endnote-1) This was indeed a remarkable achievement, especially in view of the lack of central organization and coordination, the naivete of most of these missionaries, and the physical difficulties and opposition they encountered. This chapter looks at the polynucleated origins and the development of a global network in early Pentecostalism and how this contributed to the formation of a multidimensional global movement. Pentecostal denominations were still in the process of formation, and in most countries they did not exist as organizations with centralized structures. Most of these early missionaries were novices who had never ventured outside their own, often-narrow cultural setting. Those who left America in the wake of the Azusa Street revival did so with the conviction that they could speak the languages of the nations to which they had been called. European Pentecostals from the Pentecostal Missionary Union, being rather more phlegmatic and having the experience of their leader Cecil Polhill, formerly of the China Inland Mission, to guide them, went out to China, India, and central Africa expecting to need to learn these languages. Many of the early missionaries lacked financial means (including funds to take furloughs in their homelands); they were subject to impoverished living conditions, and many died from tropical diseases. Some of their stories are indeed tragic.

It is possible, however, to understand the present global proliferation of Pentecostalism from these rather chaotic beginnings and to discern the essential characteristics that made it ultimately the most successful Christian missionary movement of the twentieth century. Pentecostalism has always been a movement with global orientation and inherent migrating tendencies that, coupled with its strong individualism, made it fundamentally a multidimensional missionary movement. Very soon its ambassadors were indigenous people who went out to their own people in ever-increasing numbers. Networks were formed, crisscrossing nations and organizations. These networks were essential in the globalizing process and were aided and abetted by rapid advances in technology, transportation, and communications. As the twentieth century progressed Pentecostalism became increasingly globalized, and the power and influence of the former colonizing nations and their representatives diminished.

Charismata or “spiritual gifts” and ecstatic or “enthusiastic” forms of Christianity have been found in all ages, albeit sometimes at the margins of the established church, and they have often been a characteristic of the church’s missionary advance, from the early church to the pioneer Catholic missionaries of the Middle Ages. Protestantism as a whole did not favor such enthusiasm, however, and it often suppressed any expressions of Christianity that would seek to revive spiritual gifts. The histories of the Anabaptist, Quaker, and Irvingite movements are cases in point. It took new revival movements in the nineteenth century (especially of the Methodist and Holiness type) and movements among other radical Protestants who espoused similar ideas, to stimulate a restoration of spiritual gifts to accompany a missionary thrust believed to be at the end of time. The many and various revival movements at the start of the twentieth century had the effect of creating a greater air of expectancy for worldwide Pentecostal revival before the imminent return of Christ. The signs that this revival had come would be similar to the earlier revivals: an intense desire to pray, emotional confessions of sins, manifestations of the coming of the Spirit, successful and accelerated evangelism and world mission, and especially spiritual gifts to confirm that the power of the Spirit had indeed come.

Key to understanding the globalization process in early Pentecostalism was the role of the periodicals. There were at least three features of this process. First, the early periodicals were sent all over the world and provided the mass media for the spread of Pentecostal ideas. Second, they also formed the social structures that were necessary during this time of creative chaos, when the only form of missionary organization was often linked to the support engendered by these periodicals. International travel was an increasing feature of the early missionaries and their networks and conferences were the means by which their message spread. One cannot read these different early periodicals without noticing how frequently a relatively small number of the same Pentecostal missionaries are referred to in all the periodicals. Division and schism were to come later; but the periodicals promoted a unity of purpose and vision that has since been lost.

Third, this internationalism, this global meta-culture of Pentecostalism, was evident in these years through the influence of both the periodicals and the missionary networks. In the beginning, the missionary networks like those of A. B. Simpson’s Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) were essential for the spread of Pentecostal ideas. The CMA was open to Pentecostal beliefs at least until estrangement occurred over the new Pentecostal dogmatism over tongues in 1915, when longtime CMA missionary in China, William W. Simpson, resigned.[[2]](#endnote-2) Azusa Street missionaries Alfred G. and Lillian Garr arrived in Calcutta in December 1906 and immediately began sharing their Pentecostal teaching with experienced missionaries.[[3]](#endnote-3) Those who received Spirit baptism Pentecostal style began to spread it within their missionary networks and ultimately to their indigenous leaders. The periodicals were distributed free of charge to the missionaries and played their part in standardizing a Pentecostal meta-culture. At the same time, Pentecostal missionaries like William Burton in the Congo saw the globalization that occurred by which native peoples were adopting western ways as “a marvelous, an unparalleled opportunity for presenting the realities of Christ” to replace the now discarded old beliefs in witchcraft, fetishes, and charms.[[4]](#endnote-4) André Droogers has outlined three broad but common features of transnational Pentecostalism that help us understand the ideology that makes Pentecostals feel part of a global community or meta-culture. These features are: (1) the central emphasis on the experience of the Spirit, accompanied by ecstatic manifestations like speaking in tongues; (2) the “born again” or conversion experience that accompanies acceptance into a Pentecostal community; and (3) the dualistic worldview that distinguishes between the “world” and the “church,” between the “devil” and the “divine,” between “sickness” and “health.”[[5]](#endnote-5) These three common features of a Pentecostal meta-culture have been with the movement from its start and can be traced throughout its history.

Multidimensional Global Pentecostalism

From its beginnings, Pentecostalism throughout the world is both transnational and migratory, or “missionary,” in its fundamental nature. Its earliest propagators at the start of the twentieth century were individuals driven by an ideology that sent them from North America and Western Europe to Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and various islands of the world within a remarkably short period of time. A particular ideology of migration and transnationalism has been a common feature of all types of Pentecostalism. In these migratory processes the various movements remain stubbornly consistent, for they see the “world” as a hostile place to move into and “possess” for Christ. Transnationalism and migration do not affect the essential character of Pentecostalism, even though its adherents have to steer a precarious course between contradictory forms of identity resulting from the migratory experience. Pentecostalism developed its own characteristics and identities in different parts of the world during the twentieth century without losing its transnational connections and international networks. The widespread use of the mass media, the setting up of new networks that often incorporate the word “international” in their title, frequent conferences with international speakers that reinforce transnationalism, and the growth of churches that provide total environments for members and international connections are all features of this multidimensional Pentecostalism, which promotes this Charismatic global meta-culture constantly.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Early Pentecostal missionaries were obsessed with a crusading mentality that saw their task of bringing “light” to “darkness,” who frequently referred in their newsletters to the “objects” of their mission as “the heathen,” and who were often slow to recognize national leadership when it arose with creative alternatives to western forms of Pentecostalism.[[7]](#endnote-7) Missionary paternalism, even if it was “benevolent” paternalism, was widely practiced, perhaps universally so. In country after country, white Pentecostals abandoned their egalitarian roots and followed the example of other expatriate missionaries in this regard. They kept tight control of churches and their national founders, and especially of the finances they raised in Western Europe and North America. Most wrote home believing that they were mainly (if not solely) responsible for the progress of the Pentecostal work in the countries to which they had gone. These actions were often prompted by an unconscious imperialist attitude on the part of white missionaries who were convinced of the innate superiority of their own European and Euro-American “civilization.” The truth was often that the national churches grew in spite of (and not because of) these missionaries, who were actually denying their converts gifts of leadership. But the Holy Spirit was anointing ordinary people to “spread the fire” to their friends, relatives, neighbors, and even to other communities, peoples, and nations. These early missionaries were certainly no angels on assignment. Sometimes western Pentecostal missionaries were patronizing and impolite about the people they were “serving” and on a few occasions their racism was blatant. It is probably not so remarkable that some of these racist comments were published in Pentecostal periodicals without disclaimer. In spite of these weaknesses and failures, the exploits of western missionaries were certainly impressive, and it cannot be assumed that all of them were bigoted racists. Their sacrificial efforts and (in most cases) their selfless dedication were admirable, and many laid down their lives through the ravages of tropical disease and, in some cases, through martyrdom. They were often very successful in adapting to extremely difficult circumstances; and many showed a servant heart and genuine love for the people they worked with. They achieved much against what was sometimes overwhelming odds. The so-called “native workers” also had qualities of dedication, courage in the face of stiff opposition, and selfless love for the people they were serving and reaching out to. But we cannot ignore the clear evidence that some of the missionaries supposedly responsible for the spread of the Pentecostal gospel throughout the world were by no means exemplary.

Although Pentecostals have been around for only a century, today they are among the most significant role players in Christian missions, with perhaps three-quarters of them in the Majority World. The Pentecostal jump from the first to the last decade of the twentieth century has been an enormous one, and it is important to understand the historical process involved. According to the statistics of Johnson, Barrett, and Crossing, in 2011 64% of the world’s Christians (1,396 million) were in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania, while those of the two northern continents (including Russia) constituted only 36%. When this is compared to 1900, when 82% of the world Christian population was found in Europe and North America, we have dramatic evidence of how rapidly the western share of world Christianity has decreased during the twentieth century. According to these statisticians, if present trends continue, 69% of the world’s Christians will live in the South by 2025.[[8]](#endnote-8) In the Pew Forum’s *Spirit and Power* study, conducted in 2006, it was discovered that in all the countries surveyed, Pentecostalism constituted a very significant percentage of Christianity. In six of the countries Pentecostals and Charismatics were over 60% of all Protestants. In Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, South Africa, and the Philippines, they constituted over a third of the total population—in Guatemala and Kenya it was over half.[[9]](#endnote-9)

But it is not only in terms of overall numbers that there have been fundamental changes. Christianity is growing most often in Charismatic forms, and many of these are independent of both western “mainline” Protestant and “classical Pentecostal” denominations and missions. What Andrew Walls describes as the “southward swing of the Christian center of gravity” is possibly more evident in Pentecostalism than in other forms of Christianity.[[10]](#endnote-10) In 2000 Barrett and company estimated a total of 523 million, or 28% of all Christians, to be Pentecostal and Charismatic. This number is divided into four groups: (1) 18 million “peripheral quasi-Pentecostals,” 3% of the total; (2) 66 million “denominational Pentecostals,” 12%; (3) 176 million “Charismatics” (including 105 million Catholics), 32%; and (4) the largest group of 295 million “Neocharismatics (Independents, Postdenominationalists),” a massive 53% of the total.[[11]](#endnote-11) Of course these figures are controversial,[[12]](#endnote-12) but nevertheless they give an indication that something highly significant is taking place in the global complexity of Christianity as a whole and of multidimensional Pentecostalism in particular.

The terms “Pentecostals” and “Pentecostalism” signify this multidimensional variety of movements where the emphasis is on receiving the Spirit and practicing spiritual gifts, especially prophesying, healing, and speaking in tongues. This includes what eventually became Pentecostal denominations, Charismatic renewal groups in the older churches, and a wide range of independent churches―over half the numbers in Barrett’s statistics. However we interpret these figures or the categories, we need to acknowledge the multidimensional diversity in Pentecostalism. This has amounted to a twentieth-century reformation of Christianity that has precipitated a resurgent interest in pneumatology and spirituality. Whereas older Protestant churches have bemoaned their ever-decreasing membership and possible demise in the West in the early twenty-first century, a most dramatic church growth continues to take place in Pentecostal and independent Charismatic churches, especially outside the western world. During the 1990s, it was estimated that the Majority World mission movement had grown at seventeen times the rate of western missions.[[13]](#endnote-13) Countries like South Korea, Nigeria, Brazil, and India have become major Christian missionary-sending nations, many of whose missionaries are Pentecostal. Half the world’s Christians today live in developing, poor countries, where forms of Christianity are very different from those of western Christianity. These Christians have been profoundly affected by several factors, including the desire to have a more contextual and culturally relevant form of Christianity, the rise of nationalism, a reaction to what are perceived as “colonial” and foreign forms of Christianity, and the burgeoning Charismatic renewal. These factors play a major role in the formation of independent churches throughout the world.

Multiple Origins of Global Pentecostalism

With regard to the origins of global Pentecostalism, the following are what I regard as four important central assumptions. These are that: (1) the Azusa Street revival in the USA (1906–9) and the Mukti revival in India (1905–7) were equally part of a wider series of revivals at the beginning of the twentieth century that had significance in the early promotion of Pentecostal beliefs and values throughout the world; (2) the existing missionary networks, especially that of the CMA, were fundamental in spreading Pentecostalism internationally; (3) the Pentecostal periodicals that were posted to missionaries in the “field” were not only significant in spreading Pentecostalism internationally but were the foundation of the meta-culture that arose in global Pentecostalism in its earliest forms; and (4) the various centers and events in early Pentecostalism were part of a series of formative stages in the emergence of a new missionary movement that took several years to take on any distinctive identity.

The Azusa Street revival was undoubtedly the most significant of the early twentieth century revival centers in America that were formative in the process of creating a distinct Pentecostal identity. Azusa Street was also the main cause for the rapid internationalizing of American Pentecostalism.[[14]](#endnote-14) But there were other similar movements at this time and even earlier,[[15]](#endnote-15) the most noteworthy of which was the Mukti (“Salvation”) revival in India (1905–7) under the famous Brahmin Christian woman Pandita Ramabai at her Mukti Mission near Pune. This revival lasted for a year and a half and resulted in 1,100 baptisms at Ramabai’s school, confessions of sins and repentances, prolonged prayer meetings, and the witnessing of some seven hundred of these young women in teams into the surrounding areas, about a hundred going out daily and sometimes for as long as a month at a time. Ramabai formed what she called a “Bible school” of two hundred young women to pray in groups called “Praying Bands” and to be trained in witnessing to their faith. The Praying Bands spread the revival wherever they went and some remarkable healings were reported.[[16]](#endnote-16)

This revival, in which these women also spoke in tongues before they had any knowledge of such occurrences at Azusa Street and elsewhere, had at least four far-reaching consequences. First, it is clear that Frank Bartleman, William Seymour (the African American leader of the Azusa Street revival), and other writers in the revival’s periodical *The Apostolic Faith* saw the Indian revival as a precedent to the one in which they were involved—a sort of prototype, earlier Pentecostal revival that they thought had become “full-grown” in Los Angeles.[[17]](#endnote-17) It is more likely, however, that Mukti and Azusa Street were simultaneous rather than sequential events in a general period of revival in the evangelical world accompanying the beginning of the century.

Second, women played a more prominent role in the Indian revival than in the American one—although by this I do not want to minimize the very significant role of women leaders in both the Azusa Street revival and in the early American missionary movement that issued from it.[[18]](#endnote-18) But the fact that Ramabai was an Indian woman who resisted both patriarchal oppression in India and western domination in Christianity and was attracted to what a biographer calls “the gender-egalitarian impulse of Christianity,” was even more significant.[[19]](#endnote-19) Or as her assistant Minnie Abrams put it, Ramabai was “demonstrating to her countrymen that women have powers and capabilities which they have not permitted them to cultivate.”[[20]](#endnote-20) The Mukti revival was preeminently a revival among women and led by women, motivating and empowering those who had really been marginalized and cast out by society. This was another case of Pentecostalism’s early social activism, empowering the marginalized and oppressed for service and bestowing dignity on women. In this the Mukti revival and Ramabai herself were pioneers within global Christianity and without precedent. This was to result in an unparalleled missionary outreach of Indian Christians into surrounding areas and further abroad. As one periodical observed, Ramabai’s “Praying Bands” of young women were going “in every direction to scatter the fire that has filled their own souls” and the result was that “many parts of India are hearing of the true and living God.”[[21]](#endnote-21) A relatively untold story is that of how these women were an essential part of the early spread of Pentecostalism in northern India.[[22]](#endnote-22)

The third consequence was that both Ramabai in her ministry and the revival she led demonstrate an openness to other Christians, an ecumenicity and inclusiveness that stand in stark contrast to the rigid exclusivism of most subsequent Pentecostal movements. This was undoubtedly one result of the pluralistic context of India and Ramabai’s indebtedness to her own cultural and religious training in Brahmin philosophy and national consciousness, despite her later Christian fundamentalism. The fourth consequence was its impact on Latin American Pentecostalism. Minnie Abrams, who worked under Ramabai and gave the first reports of the revival in Mukti, sent her friend and former Bible school classmate, May Louise Hoover in Valparaiso, Chile, a report of the revival contained in a booklet she wrote in 1906 titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire*. In its second edition later that year, the booklet included a discussion of the restoration of speaking in tongues (the first written Pentecostal theology of Spirit baptism), and thirty thousand copies were circulated widely. As a result of Abrams’s booklet and her subsequent correspondence with the Hoovers, the Methodist churches in Valparaiso and Santiago were stirred to expect and pray for a similar revival, which began in 1909. Willis H. Hoover, who with his wife May Louise was a Methodist Episcopal missionary, became leader of the new Chilean Methodist Pentecostal Church that resulted out of those expelled from the Methodist church because of their Pentecostal experience. Chilean Pentecostalism has its roots in the Mukti revival and was specifically a Methodist revival that did not promote a doctrine of “initial evidence.” An alternative to the “initial evidence” form of Pentecostalism was developing globally and Mukti was its earliest expression.[[23]](#endnote-23) Mukti operated as a center for Pentecostalism, not only in India, for it was visited by scores of early Pentecostal traveling preachers and missionaries. The Mukti revival can legitimately be regarded with Azusa Street as one of the most important early formative centers of Pentecostalism.[[24]](#endnote-24) Pentecostalism has always had revival centers for international pilgrimage—the Azusa Street Apostolic Faith and the Mukti Mission were the most prominent of the earliest ones, but there were several others both in North America and beyond.

The various revival movements in Mukti, Los Angeles, Valparaiso, and elsewhere were all part of a series of events that resulted in the emergence of global Pentecostalism. Missionaries from these various revival movements went out into faith missions and independent missions, some joining Holiness and radical evangelical organizations like the CMA, and then they became Pentecostal. The coming of the Spirit was linked to a belief that the last days had arrived and that the “full gospel” would be preached to all nations before the coming of the Lord. Considerations of religious pluralism, colonialism, and cultural sensitivity were not on the agenda of those who rushed out to the nations with this revivalist message believing that they had been enabled to speak those languages they needed for the task. The stage was set for the coming of a new Pentecost to spread across the world in the twentieth century. The means by which these Pentecostal fires would spread was a global network of these same faith missionaries and so-called “native workers” whose devotion to Christ and enthusiastic zeal were unrivalled by most of their contemporaries. The Pentecostalism emerging was essentially a missionary migratory movement of unprecedented vigor.

Pentecostalism and Independent Churches

Another very important aspect of early Pentecostal origins was the impact upon independent churches, especially in Africa, India, and China. The evidence in these regions that Pentecostalism converged with and strongly influenced the phenomenon of independency is incontrovertible. China was the largest of the early fields for Pentecostal missions. It has been estimated that there could have been as many as 150 expatriate Pentecostal missionaries there by 1915, and the emergence of the AG in 1914 and the affiliation of the majority of these missionaries with them meant that by 1920 they were by far the largest Pentecostal body in China.[[25]](#endnote-25) But even more significant was the fact that by that time there were already strong nationalist forces forming churches totally independent of western missions and developing a Pentecostal spirituality that was distinctively Chinese. These Chinese churches already formed the majority of Pentecostals by the time the expatriate missionaries were forced to leave China in 1949. Questions concerning how these churches differ from western-founded Pentecostal institutions and the extent of conscious or unconscious adaptation to the Chinese context require much more research. Pentecostalism, in its emphasis on the supernatural was in sync with Chinese folk religion, its offer of spiritual power to everyone regardless of status or achievements, and its deep suspicion of hierarchical and rationalistic Christianity, encouraged the development of new, anti-western independent churches. Resentment against western interference in Chinese affairs and patriotism increased during the 1920s, which was when most of these churches began. Pentecostal missionaries were unwittingly drawn into this process. W. W. Simpson was in contact with Chinese independent churches in Manchuria and made pleas for more missionaries to come to China to work with them, and other Pentecostal missionaries frequently interacted with Chinese independent churches in this period. Their policy of creating self-supporting Chinese churches assisted in developing independency. A missionary writing from Taiyuan in Shanxi wrote of a strong Pentecostal church he visited that was started in 1914 and was run completely by Chinese leaders with four full-time workers.[[26]](#endnote-26) As Deng Zhaoming has pointed out, independent Chinese Pentecostalism had both foreign and domestic influences in its formation. Pentecostal missionaries from the West brought their teachings of divine healing (although not a new idea for some Chinese Christians) and speaking in tongues. At the same time there was a strong anti-western and nationalistic feeling in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, causing many newly emerging Chinese Christian groups to distance themselves from western missionaries.[[27]](#endnote-27) The two largest Chinese Pentecostal denominations to arise during this period were the True Jesus Church and the Jesus Family, both of which came under these two influences. They are still active in China today: the True Jesus Church (being Oneness and Seventh-Day) is the largest Protestant denomination in China, and the Jesus Family set up separate living and self-supporting communities after the model of an Assemblies of God mission in Taiyuan, Shandong, under the American missionaries converted to Pentecostalism in China, the Anglins.[[28]](#endnote-28)

In South India, several Indian preachers associated with American Pentecostal missionary Robert F. Cook were instrumental in starting independent Pentecostal churches there. K. E. Abraham joined Cook in 1923, was ordained by Ramankutty Paul of the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission in 1930, and he founded the Indian Pentecostal Church of God in 1934, now (with the Assemblies of God) one of the two largest Pentecostal denominations in India.[[29]](#endnote-29) The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (now The Pentecostal Mission) is a unique Indian church that encourages celibacy for its pastors and community living for its members.[[30]](#endnote-30) De Alwis was an early convert in Sri Lanka, receiving Spirit baptism in 1912, preparing for the coming of American missionary W. D. Grier to Colombo in 1913 and becoming his main coworker, taking charge of his work in Peradeniya in 1915.[[31]](#endnote-31) Some have suggested that Pentecostalism in Sri Lanka began with the Danish actress Anna Lewini and former British soldier in India Walter Clifford, who arrived in Colombo in 1919 and 1923 respectively. From their work evolved the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal Mission of de Alwis and Paul founded in 1921. It is also suggested that the de Alwis family became Pentecostals as a result of Clifford’s healing services, whereas de Alwis had already been a Pentecostal for at least ten years prior to these meetings.[[32]](#endnote-32) This is an early example of the many places where a careful reconstruction of Pentecostal history is necessary.[[33]](#endnote-33)

The pressures of religious change occurring in colonial Africa at the end of the nineteenth century resulted in many movements of resistance. The “Ethiopian” independent churches in southern Africa and the “African” churches in West Africa were not as much movements of religious reform and innovation as were the later “prophet-healing” churches, but were primarily movements of political protest, expressions of resistance against European hegemony in the church. Although they rejected the political dominance of white-led churches, they framed their protest in familiar Protestant categories and therefore did not seriously contest its social, religious, and cultural components.[[34]](#endnote-34) They were the first to overtly challenge social structures of inequality and oppression in the church and to give a religious ideology for the dignity and self-reliance of the black person—thus foreshadowing the African nationalist movements and forming a religious justification for them. These secessions were often the result of tension between an increasingly self-aware African Christian community and a multiplying number of zealous European missionaries with colonial expansionist sympathies. The secessions that began in South Africa and Nigeria were to set a pattern for the next century. Secession was not a peculiarly African phenomenon, as Africans were simply continuing what had become commonplace in European Protestantism. By the end of the nineteenth century there were already hundreds of new denominations, “faith missions,” and other mission societies springing up in the West, from where missionaries were sent to Africa. These multiplied denominations and societies were reproduced there, and it is hardly surprising that it was considered quite a natural thing for secessions to occur—urged on by the mission policies and colonial politics of the time that were highly prejudicial to Africans.[[35]](#endnote-35) The Freedom Charter that marked the creation of the African National Congress in South Africa in 1912 had several prominent Ethiopian church leaders as signatories. These churches were also seeking to make Christianity more African and therefore more appealing and relevant for ordinary people.

The entrance of Pentecostalism into the African melting pot of a multitude of new denominations and mission agencies had the effect of stimulating more radically transforming forms of independent churches. The “African” and “Ethiopian” churches were overshadowed in the early twentieth century by new, rapidly growing “prophet-healing” or “churches of the Spirit”—so named because of their emphasis on the power of the Spirit in healing, prophesying, and speaking in tongues. Along the West African coast, churches associated with the Liberian prophet William Wade Harris and the Nigerian Garrick Sokari Braide emerged. They were later followed by churches known by the Yoruba term “Aladura” (“owners of prayer”) from the 1920s onward in southwestern Nigeria, where the emphasis was on prayer for healing. The revival movements that began in West Africa in the 1910s and 1920s had few, if any, connections with Pentecostalism in the North, and there is evidence that spiritual gifts including speaking in tongues were being practiced in this region long before western Pentecostal missionaries arrived. It was the African leaders of revival and healing movements in Ghana and Nigeria that first invited British Pentecostal missionaries there in the 1930s.[[36]](#endnote-36)

The existence of large and strong independent churches in southern Africa today has much to do with early Pentecostal missions. There are indications that Pentecostal missionaries tapped into a new phenomenon that was particularly strong in South Africa. One of them, American Pentecostal Jacob Lehman, wrote of a whole tribal community in the northwest of the country that had, with their chief, seceded from “a certain missionary society” because of the highhandedness and exploitation of the missionaries. The reference is obscure, but he may have meant the event in 1885, when Tswana chief Kgantlapane helped found a church seceding from the London Missionary Society in Taung, Botswana, called the Native Independent Congregational Church. Near Middelburg, Transvaal, Lehman and his fellow missionaries held services to welcome a group of secessionists into the Pentecostal fold and John G. Lake, the Canadian evangelist who first brought North American Pentecostalism to South Africa, visited an “Ethiopian” church conference that was seeking affiliation with his Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM). Lake wrote of a “native missionary,” Paul Mabiletsa, who told Lake about a paralyzed woman healed through prayer in the Germiston district. Mabiletsa founded the Apostolic Church in Zion in 1920, to become one of the larger Zionist churches whose leadership remained in the Mabiletsa family throughout the twentieth century. Lake himself reported that twenty-four “native Catholic churches” and “five large Ethiopian churches” had decided to affiliate with the AFM in 1910 and that the “African Catholic Church” with seventy-eight preachers joined in January 1911. Again in 1911 the “Ethiopian Church” affiliated with Modred Powell, a British missionary, to become the Apostolic Faith Church of South Africa. Clearly, many of the early Pentecostal “converts” in South Africa were already members of Christian churches, especially African independent ones.[[37]](#endnote-37) But the flow went both ways—by 1915 there were several secessions from the Pentecostals, especially from the AFM. Azusa Street missionary Henry Turney complained of African women who had “risen up refusing to acknowledge any authority in the church” and who were now “trying to establish a church of their own, with a native as leader.”[[38]](#endnote-38) There is little doubt that many of the secessions which occurred early in western Pentecostal mission efforts in Africa, China, India, and elsewhere were at least partly the result of cultural and social insensitivities on the part of the missionaries, and in some cases there was racism, ethnocentrism, and ethical failure. It is true that missionaries may not have been sensitized to these issues in the ways that we are today and equally true that we now have the hindsight of history—although neither sensitization nor hindsight seems to have changed contemporary human prejudice.

It is important to note the role of Pentecostalism and expatriate Pentecostal missionaries in the early years of African, Indian, and Chinese independency and the links with some of its most significant leaders. This was a form of Pentecostalism that differed considerably from western forms and even from region to region. The Zion Christian Church is the largest denomination in South Africa, and independent “Zionist” and “Apostolic” churches together form the largest grouping of Christians in that country today. Although many of the independent churches may no longer be described as “Pentecostal” without further qualification, the most characteristic features of their theology and praxis is overwhelmingly Pentecostal and, in the case of southern Africa, also influenced by the Zionist movement of John Alexander Dowie, a controversial healer at Zion City, Chicago, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Healing, prophesying, speaking in tongues, baptism by immersion (usually threefold), and even the rejection of medicine and the eating of pork are some of these features that remain among these African churches. Whatever their motivation might have been, Pentecostal missions were unwitting catalysts for a much larger movement of the Spirit that was to dominate African Christianity for the rest of the twentieth century. Although these Zionist and Apostolic churches have gradually increased the distance between themselves and “classical” Pentecostalism in liturgy and practice, their growth and proliferation are further evidence of the rapidly “spreading fires” of the Spirit in Africa and deserve to be accounted for in any historical research on Pentecostalism.

There are several aspects of Pentecostal origins that require further research. Historians speak of the need to formulate a new history written in deliberate reaction to traditional history and its paradigms, a history concerned with the whole of human activity, “history from below” rather than “history from above,” history taken from the perspective of the poor and powerless rather than from that of the rich and powerful. So in the writing of Pentecostal history there needs to be “affirmative action” to redress the balance, where the contribution of national workers, pastors, and evangelists is emphasized rather than that of foreign missionaries. Scholars, especially outside the western world, must plumb the depths of oral histories and written archives to illuminate that which has been concealed or unknown for so long. Consequently, the work of western missionaries who came from countries of power and wrote newsletters for their own specific purposes is put into correct perspective. We cannot ignore the failings of these missionaries and give exaggerated importance to those whose role was often catalytic rather than central. Asia, Africa, and Latin America have their own Christian heroes who should be more visible in the writing of Pentecostal histories. Information on western missionaries to Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, and Latin America is disproportionate to their role and contribution, mainly through the scarcity of written information on national leaders. A serious and extensive revision of global Pentecostal history needs to be done in which the enormous contributions of these pioneers is properly recognized, so that some classical Pentecostals in particular shed their assumption that Pentecostalism is a made-in-the-USA product that has been exported to the rest of the world. The revising of the history of Pentecostalism in the twenty-first century should be undertaken, not by emphasizing the missionary “heroes” of the powerful and wealthy nations of the world, but by giving a voice to the people living in the world’s most marginalized parts. We can listen to the “margins” by allowing the hitherto voiceless and often nameless ones to speak, if that is ever really possible. We can recognize the contribution of those unsung Pentecostal laborers of the past who have been overlooked in the histories and hagiographies. Assumptions at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 were that Christianity would not flourish without white missionary control.[[39]](#endnote-39) Providentially, early Pentecostalism gave the lie to that assumption and probably became the main contributor to the reshaping of Christianity itself from a predominantly western to a predominantly non-western phenomenon during the twentieth century.

The skew in Pentecostal historiography is partly because of the exoticization and marginalization of “the other” that has been prevalent in all western literature, creating Orientalism and colonialist or androcentric stereotypes. These stereotypes were usually unconsciously transferred onto the “subjects” of the missionary enterprise to create a distorted representation of them. The marginalization of women and national workers is also because most of the main sources used in the writing of these histories (early Pentecostal periodicals, reports of missionaries, and missionary letters) were originally written for home consumption and fundraising. If national workers were mentioned at all, it was usually as anonymous “native workers” or, at best, they were mentioned by a single name that does not clearly reveal their identity today. Their memory is now extremely difficult or impossible to retrieve. This is not only a problem in Pentecostal mission history, as Brian Stanley has pointed out, because at the beginning of the twentieth century the missionary movement as a whole was overwhelmingly “indigenous” in the areas of its greatest expansion, even though there was scant acknowledgment of this.[[40]](#endnote-40) Yet because of its emphasis on the empowering ability of the Spirit to equip ordinary believers for missionary service without requiring prior academic qualifications, Pentecostalism was probably more dependent on “national workers” than any other missions were at the time.

The Missionary Nature of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism has always been a global missionary movement in foundation and essence. It emerged with a firm conviction that the Spirit had been poured out in “signs and wonders” in order for the nations of the world to be reached for Christ before the end of the age. Its missionaries proclaimed a “full gospel” that included individual salvation, physical healing, personal holiness, baptism with the Spirit, and a life on the edge lived in expectation of the imminent return of Christ. For this message, its pioneers were prepared to lay down their lives and many of them did exactly that. These very human vessels of this “full gospel” cannot be emulated in many respects―especially when it came to attitudes to other religions and cultures and matters of race―but we should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. The selfless dedication and sacrifices in the face of immense difficulties of these courageous women and men can only be greatly admired. Without them we would be the poorer, and the composition of global Christianity today would certainly look very different and possibly even be in a state of permanent decline. We cannot fully understand the contemporary multidimensional plurality of global Pentecostalisms without revisiting again their historical roots.

The extent to which globalization and migration have affected the shape of this very significant religious sector is something that requires a much more careful analysis than this chapter offers, but is surely an important task for future research. The shapes of the new Pentecostalisms that have emerged as a result of the globalization process, how they differ from the older networks of denominational Pentecostalism, and specifically what the features of this global shift of center to the South means for Pentecostalism have yet to be precisely analyzed. Another area for further investigation is the extent to which Pentecostalism has permeated and affected the beliefs, values, and practices of other Christians, seen especially in the popular Christianity that dominates public events like weddings and funerals. Only when these investigations have taken place will we be better able to understand those external forces that forge the religious identities of people in our contemporary societies and the increasingly important role of Pentecostalisms in this pluralistic world.

This chapter has pointed to some of the polynucleated origins, global orientations, inherent migrating tendencies, and the development of a global network in early Pentecostalism―diffuse yet united in focus and determination to expand throughout the world. The concept of a global meta-culture outlined here must not detract from the fact that contemporary Pentecostalism is multidimensional. The seeds of proliferation and variety were sown at this early stage, contributing to the formation of the contemporary multidimensional global movement that is still a religious force of extreme significance in the twenty-first century.

1. Notes

 Allan H. Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM & Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 288. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Paul L. King, *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (Tulsa, OK: Word and Spirit Press, 2006), 151–60; Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 130–33. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89–90. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Max Wood Moorhead (ed.), *Missionary Pioneering in Congo Forests: A Narrative of the Labours of William F. Burton and his Companions in the Native Villages of Luba-land* (Preston, UK: R. Seed & Sons, 1922),81–82. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
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6. Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 65–71. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
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12. Allan H. Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,” in Allan Anderson and others, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–14. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Michael Jaffarian, “Are There More Non-western Missionaries than Western Missionaries?,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28:3 (July 2004), 132. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11-36..{{AU: OK? otherwise, please update year to 2013}} Changes as indicated [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
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17. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (S. Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, [1925] 1980), 19, 90*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
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21. *Word & Work* 28:5 (May 1906), 145. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 98–101. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. *Pentecost* 2:11–12 (Nov-Dec 1910), 9; *Latter Rain Evangel* 3:7 (Apr 1911), 19; *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 126 (1 Feb 1913), 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. A full account of the Mukti revival can be found in Anderson, *Spreading Fires,* 77–89; cf. Gary B. McGee, “‘Latter Rain’ Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues,” *Church History* 68:3 (1999), 651, 656–57, 664. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
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26. *Triumphs of Faith* 35:2 (Feb 1915), 47; *Word & Work* 37:3 (Mar 1915), 92–93; *Christian Evangel* 73 (9 Jan 1915), 4; 77 (13 Feb 1915), 1; *Weekly Evangel* 202 (11 Aug 1917), 12; 204 (25 Aug 1917), 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
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28. Deng, “Indigenous Chinese,” 372–93; Anderson, *Spreading Fires,* 136, 137; *Triumphs of Faith* 37:6 (June 1917), 127; *Latter Rain Evangel* 11:3 (Dec 1917), 16.{{AU: should this last work be on the bib? it isn’t}} I think it is best deleted here. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. *Confidence* 6:1 (Jan 1913), 20; *Word & Work* 36:6 (June 1914), 187; 36:10 (Oct 1914), 316; 36:11 (Nov 1914), 349–50; 42:1 (Jan 1920), 14, 20; 42:6 (June 1920), 13; *Christian Evangel* 56 (29 Aug 1914), 4; *Word & Witness* 12:5 (May 1915), 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. *Word & Witness* 9:1 (Jan 1913), 2; 9:11 (Nov 1913), 4; 9:12 (Dec 1913), 1; 10:4 (Apr 1914), 4;12:5 (May 1915), 7; *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 144 (15 Nov 1913), 1; *Christian Evangel* 70 (12 Dec 1914), 4; *Weekly Evangel* 91 (22 May 1915), 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. *Weekly Evangel* 145 (24 June 1916), 11; 186 (21 Apr 1917), 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. *Word and Witness* 9:1 (Jan 1913), 2; 9:11 (Nov 1913), 4; 9:12 (Dec 1913), 1; 10:4 (Apr 1914), 4;12:5 (May 1915), 7; *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 144 (15 Nov 1913), 1; *Christian Evangel* 70 (12 Dec 1914), 4; *Weekly Evangel* 91 (22 May 1915), 4; G. P. V. Somaratna, *Origins of the Pentecostal Mission in Sri Lanka* (Marihana-Nugegoda: Margaya Fellowship of Sri Lanka, 1996), 12–23, 27–32, 41, 45–47. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
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35. Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 499. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Anderson, *To the Ends*, chapter 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. *Bridegroom’s Messenger* 52 (15 Dec 1909), 4; *Upper Room* 1:10 (May 1910), 6; 2:2 (Sept–Oct 1910), 3; 2:4 (Jan 1911), 6, 8; 2:5 (May 1911), 6; *Confidence* 4:12 (Dec 1911), 284; Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, NJ & Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2001), 97.{{AU: usually only the first place of publication is given, but I left the second here since I think it’s interesting that it was also published in Eritrea. OK}} [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. *Weekly Evangel* 124 (22 Jan 1916), 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
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