

The Origins of Pentecostalism and its Global Spread in the Early Twentieth Century

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The fire is spreading. People are writing from different points to know about this Pentecost, and are beginning to wait on God for their Pentecost. He is no respecter of persons and places. We expect to see a wave of salvation go over this world. (*The Apostolic Faith*, Los Angeles, 1906)¹

BIASES IN PENTECOSTAL HISTORY

One of the prominent convictions of early Pentecostals expressed in this paper from the Azusa Street revival was that their experience of Spirit baptism was a 'fire' that was going to spread all over the world, a last-days universal revival that would precede the soon second coming of Christ.² And they were not far out in predictions of a global fire. Although events didn't turn out quite as suddenly as they expected, one hundred years later global Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity in all its diversity is an extremely significant movement (or perhaps more accurately, movements) within Christianity, both inside and outside the older, 'historic' churches. These are probably the fastest expanding religious movements in the world, according to statistics (and depending on definitions) with between 300 and 570 million adherents worldwide in 2004, up to a quarter of the world's Christian population and predominantly now a non-western and independent church phenomenon.³ Pentecostalism has contributed to

¹ Parts of this paper are gleaned and adapted from Allan Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and from a forthcoming book provisionally titled *The Spreading Fire*. See also my 'Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective', in Allan Anderson & Edmond Tang (eds.), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Oxford: Regnum, 2004), 157-183.

² *The Apostolic Faith*, Los Angeles, 1:2 (October 1906), 1; *Confidence*, Sunderland, England, 1:1 (April 1908), 5.

³ David B. Barrett & Todd M. Johnson 2004, 'Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28:1 (January 2004), 25, for the higher figure. The

the reshaping of the nature of Christianity itself in the twentieth century and has become globalized in every sense of the word; it has enormous ecumenical implications and its adherents are often on the cutting edge of the encounter with people of other faiths.

It is important to study the beginnings of these movements in order to establish the precedents that determined the future. Several scholarly works have arisen in the past forty years, including two recent important studies on early American Pentecostalism,⁴ but little attention has been given to the theology and praxis that made these primarily migratory and missionary movements, nor to the motivations and processes of expansion into Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The early history and activities of Pentecostals can be studied through the writings of the early missionaries (where available) and these help us better understand its subsequent growth and mission theology in the present day. One of the things that these writings show us is that at least this was not merely a religious export from the USA or from other parts of the western world.

The present proliferation and growth of Pentecostalism (and indeed its inherent character) are linked directly to the efforts and vision of its pioneers, who were by no means always westerners. The first two decades of Pentecostalism represent more than its infancy; this period was the decisive heart of the movement, its formative time when precedents were set down for posterity. Whatever happened in the later twentieth century was because of the pioneers who blazed the way, the proverbial giants upon whose shoulders we stand. No discernible formal organization or structures appeared in Pentecostal missions until comparatively recently and Pentecostal missions have been known for what William Faupel calls their 'creative chaos'.⁵ But the historians of Pentecostalism have often reflected a bias interpreting

lower figure is a conservative estimate (David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 1.

⁴ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2001); Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003). I will use the terms 'America' and 'American' reluctantly in its popular usage to refer to the USA.

⁵ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 213-222.

history from a predominantly white American perspective, neglecting (if not completely ignoring) the vital and often more significant work of Asian, African, African American, Caribbean and Latino/a Pentecostal pioneers. Some of these western histories add the biases of denomination and race, and most of the earlier ones tended to be hagiographies.⁶ Grant Wacker has pointed out that early histories of Pentecostalism suffered from a 'ritualization of Pentecostal history' that included a 'white racial bias' that ignored the central influence of black culture on Pentecostal worship and theology, and in his view, the 'more serious distortion' of a 'persistent gender bias' in which the leading role of women was overlooked.⁷ So, for example, African American worker Lucy Farrow, who not only was a leader at Azusa Street but also was one of the first Pentecostal missionaries to reach Africa (Liberia), has largely been written out of the histories. These race and gender distortions are indeed problems to overcome, but there may be even more serious issues facing the interpretation and writing of Pentecostal history. Pentecostal histories usually begin with American pioneers like Charles Parham and William Seymour, and then emphasize the beginnings of Pentecostalism in other countries with reference to missionaries sent from the West. So for example, John G. Lake (Canadian) is credited with the founding of Pentecostalism in South Africa, George Berg (German American) in India, Gunnar Vingren (Swedish) and Luis Francescon (Italian American) in Brazil, William Burton (English) in the Congo, and so on. Without underestimating the important role of these missionaries or ignoring those historians who have attempted to correct errors of the past, it remains true that many historians have still not acknowledged, or have overlooked or minimized the vital role of thousands of national workers in early Pentecostalism, particularly in Asia and Africa.

This is partly because in the main sources for the writing of these histories, the early Pentecostal periodicals, reports of missionaries and the missionary letters were written for home consumption and fund raising. If national workers are mentioned at all it was usually as anonymous 'native workers' or at best, they were mentioned by a single

⁶ This is discussed in more detail in Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 167-169.

⁷ Grant Wacker, 'Are the Golden Oldies Still Worth Playing? Reflections on History Writing Among Early Pentecostals', *Pneuma* 8:2 (1986), 95.

name (often misspelled), and their memory is now extremely difficult or impossible to retrieve. This serious omission arises from the environment in which early Pentecostal missionaries carried out their work, to which writers of its history sometimes do not give enough consideration. We cannot separate the spiritual experiences of Pentecostals from the wider context of political and social power. The beginning of the twentieth century was the heyday of colonialism, when western nations governed and exploited the majority of the world's peoples. This rampant colonialization was often transferred into the ecclesiastical realm and was reflected in the attitudes of missionaries, who often moved in the shadows of colonizers. In the late nineteenth century there was an almost universal belief in the superiority of western culture and civilization. As Leon de Kock puts it in the context of Africa, this was a 'civilizing colonialism' that 'sought to inscribe in "barbarous" Africans the precepts of a largely Protestant, Western modernity... and to implant in their minds dreams of a "rational", Christian community of peasant individualists drawn away from what was perceived as heathen abjection in degrading tribal conditions'.⁸ This was the ideology that fired colonialists and missionaries alike, and the belief lingered long into the twentieth century. Pentecostal missionaries too were impassioned with ideas of 'global spiritual conquest', an expansionist conviction influenced by premillennial eschatological expectations that the nations of the world had to be 'conquered' for Christ before his imminent coming to rule the earth. This expansionist tradition had been around for some time, rooted in the nineteenth century Evangelical Awakenings. Undoubtedly, the belief in the 'manifest destiny' of the USA also influenced Pentecostal missions used to thinking in expansionist terms. Coupled with a belief in the superiority of forms of Christianity 'made-in-America' was a conviction in the superiority of the political and social system found in the USA.

We obviously need to know who and what is responsible for the explosion of Charismatic Christianity from its beginnings until its present prominence in the twenty-first century, and there are glaring gaps in this knowledge. The historical processes leading to the fundamental changes in global Pentecostal demographics

⁸ Leon de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), 2.

must be charted accurately. Hopefully, however, it is not too late to correct past distortions, but in much of the writing of Pentecostal history the 'objects' of western missionary efforts, now the great majority of Pentecostals in the world, remain marginalized. This situation has begun to improve with the welcome appearance in the past two decades of academic theses and studies relating to the history of Pentecostalism outside the western world. Michael Bergunder's seminal work on South Indian Pentecostalism is a case in point. Bergunder deals with the issues of historical methodology, and writes of the uneasiness some scholars have with an 'American-centred history' of Pentecostalism that does not seem to do justice to its multifaceted and global nature. He argues for a way out of this dilemma by focussing on the global network of evangelical and Holiness missionaries and their expectations of 'missionary tongues' in an end-time revival as a root cause for the emergence of Pentecostalism, which was global and highly migratory from its beginnings.⁹ Pentecostalism that is made in the USA is only one part of the total picture of many forms of 'Pentecostalism', and the hidden treasures of these local histories need to be rediscovered. Sadly, in many cases it is too late to resurrect a completely accurate picture of the past, as the memories have slipped into oblivion. The multitudes of nameless people responsible for the grassroots expansion of Pentecostalism have passed into history unremembered and their memory is now very difficult (if not impossible) to recover. Despite the undeniably courageous work of the early Pentecostal missionaries from the West, the equally important contribution of African, Asian, Latin American, Caribbean and Pacific evangelists and pastors at the beginning should be properly acknowledged. This involves recognising that much of Pentecostalism's rapid expansion in the twentieth century was not only due to the labours of missionaries from North America and Western Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America, but was especially the result of the spontaneous contextualization of the Pentecostal message by thousands of local preachers who traversed these continents with a new message of the power of the Spirit, healing the sick and casting out

⁹ Michael Bergunder, 'Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation', Anderson & Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, ch. 8.

demons. This may be one of the most important reconstructions necessary in the writing of Pentecostal history.

One of the reasons for the distorted picture we have of Pentecostal origins is the problem of documentary sources. Our writing of early Pentecostal history outside the western world almost entirely depends on letters, reports and periodicals of western Pentecostals and their missionaries. These documents were usually loaded for western consumption in order to bolster financial and prayer support in North America and Europe. So, the reports mostly talked about the activities of the missionaries themselves and not those of what were referred to as 'native workers'. History cannot be understood from written sources alone, especially when these sources are the only written documents from this period and almost exclusively reflect the 'official' positions of power and privilege of their authors. Consequently, we have to try to read 'in between the lines' of the documents, minutes and newsletters in order to discover hints of a wider world than what they described. This is certainly a hazardous exercise, for the possibilities of misinterpretation become greater with incomplete information, especially in the case of those who have already died and whose voices have been lost. The importance of retrieving oral traditions is underlined here, for we must record for posterity the stories of those still living who remember the past. In some parts of the world, the early histories of Pentecostalism are still within living memories, and these must be recounted before it is too late. Of course, the further back in time we go, the more difficult it is to recover the histories 'from below', as the sources become scarcer.

Some of the reading between the lines that is done here might put early western Pentecostal missionaries in less favourable light than they have been cast previously. There can be little doubt that many of the secessions that took place early on 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 blatant racism. Early Pentecostal missionaries were obsessed with their task of bringing 'light' to 'darkness'; they frequently referred in their newsletters to the 'objects' of their mission as 'the heathen', and were slow to recognize national leadership when it arose with creative alternatives to western forms of

Pentecostalism.¹⁰ Missionary paternalism, even if it was 'benevolent' paternalism, was widely practised, perhaps universally so. In country after country, white Pentecostals followed the example of other expatriate missionaries and kept control of churches and their national founders, and especially of the finances they raised in Western Europe and North America. Most wrote home as if they were mainly (if not solely) responsible for the progress of the Pentecostal work there. The truth was often that the 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, neighbours and even to other communities, peoples and nations.

We do not always have to read between the lines of missionary sources, however. Sometimes western Pentecostal missionaries were patronizing and impolite about the people they were 'serving', and their racism was blatant. In spite of all these weaknesses and failures, the exploits of western missionaries were certainly impressive and we cannot assume that they all were bigoted racists. We can only greatly admire their sacrificial efforts and (in most cases) their selfless dedication, as many laid down their lives through the ravages of tropical disease and even martyrdom. They were often very successful in adapting to extremely difficult circumstances; and many showed a servant heart and genuinely loved the people they worked with. They achieved much against what sometimes seemed overwhelming odds. 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. For the early Pentecostal missionaries, 'mission' was understood as 'foreign mission' (mostly cross-cultural, from 'white' to 'other' peoples), and they were mostly untrained and inexperienced. Their only qualification was the baptism in the Spirit and a divine call, their motivation was to evangelize the world before the imminent coming of Christ and so evangelism was more important than education or 'civilization'. Pentecostal workers from the western world usually saw their mission in terms of from

¹⁰ Allan Anderson, 'Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at 'Home and Abroad' in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Asian Mission* 2:2 (2000), 193-210; *Confidence*, 1:2 (May 1908), 19; 2:5 (May 1909), 110.

a civilized, Christian 'home' to a Satanic and pagan 'foreign land', where sometimes their own personal difficulties, prejudices (and possible failures) in adapting to a radically different culture, living conditions and religion were projected in their newsletters home. They went out, like many other Christian missionaries before them, with a fundamental conviction that the western world was a 'Christian' realm, that they were sent as 'light' to 'darkness' and that the ancient cultures and religions of the nations to which they were sent were 'heathen', 'pagan' and 'demonic', to be 'conquered' for Christ. Western culture was 'Christian' culture and all other cultures were foreboding problems to be solved by the light of the gospel, replacing the old 'paganism' with the new 'Christianity'. Missionaries went out with the conviction that their 'future labours' would be among 'the poor heathen in darkness'.¹¹

Historians speak of the need to formulate a new history written in deliberate reaction against traditional history and its paradigms. The new history is 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. We need to plumb the depths of oral histories and written archives to bring to light that which has been concealed or unknown for so long. Consequently, the work of the western missionaries, who came from countries of power and wrote newsletters for their own specific purposes, is put into correct perspective. We cannot continue to ignore the failings of these missionaries and give an exaggerated importance to people whose role in the early growth of Pentecostalism outside the western world was usually catalytic rather than central. Asia, Africa and Latin America have their own Christian heroes, who are seldom the western missionaries that went there! The voices of these national pioneers should be heard in the writing of histories. In the western world, information on western missionaries to Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America is completely disproportionate to their role and contribution, mainly because of the scarcity of written information on national

¹¹ *Flames of Fire* 35 (February 1916), 4; 49 (May 1917), 40.

leaders. A serious and extensive revision of global Pentecostal history should 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 world. The revising of the history of Pentecostalism in the twenty-first century must 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 must listen to the 'margins' by allowing the hitherto voiceless and often nameless ones to speak, and by recognizing the contribution of those unsung Pentecostal labourers of the past who have been overlooked in histories and hagiographies.

THE 'MYTH' OF AZUSA STREET

The first quarter of the twentieth century was the formative period of Pentecostalism before denominations were really established, and in many ways constituted the 'ecumenical' stage in Pentecostal history. Central to this formative period was the revival that began in April 1906 in the run-down former African Methodist Episcopal building in Azusa Street, Los Angeles. Here African American preacher William Seymour led a revival that had twelve-hour-long meetings every day for three and a half years. People flocked there from all over North America, Mexico and further abroad. Seymour's core leadership team was fully integrated with men and women being responsible for various aspects of the work (more than half were women), but Seymour remained in charge. He was described as a meek and gracious man of prayer, even allowing his critics to speak to his congregation and advertising the meetings of his rivals.¹² Such was the impression that Seymour made on people that healing evangelist John G. Lake, meeting him for the first time in 1907, commented that Seymour had 'more of God in his life than any man I had ever met'.¹³ Seymour was spiritual father to thousands of early Pentecostals in North America.

¹² Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'Azusa Street Revival'; 'Seymour, William Joseph', *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 344-50, 1053-8.

¹³ John G. Lake, *Adventures in God* (reprinted, Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1981), 19.

There can be no doubt that for the next three years the revival in Azusa Street was the most prominent centre of Pentecostalism, further promoted by Seymour's periodical *The Apostolic Faith*, which reached an international circulation of 50,000 at its peak in 1908. People affected by the revival started several new Pentecostal centres in the Los Angeles area, so that by 1912 there were at least twelve in the city. Hundreds of visitors from all over the continent and internationally came to see what was happening and to be baptized in the Spirit. Many of these began Pentecostal centres in various US and Canadian cities and eventually further afield. At least twenty-six different Pentecostal denominations trace their origins to Azusa Street, including the two largest: the Church of God in Christ and the Assemblies of God. In a real sense, the Azusa Street revival marks the beginning of classical Pentecostalism and from there, the revival reached to other parts of the world. From its beginning, North American Pentecostalism placed an emphasis on evangelism and missions. People came from as far away as Europe and went back there with the 'baptism'; and Pentecostal missionaries were sent out from Azusa Street, reaching over twenty-five nations in two years, including places as far away as China, India, Japan, Egypt, Liberia, Angola and South Africa.¹⁴ This was no mean achievement and the beginning of what is arguably the most significant global expansion of a Christian movement in the history of Christianity.

The story of the Azusa Street revival has significance for the complex question of the origins of Pentecostalism. One theory of the origins cannot be emphasised to the exclusion of others. Pentecostal historian Augustus Cerillo has outlined at least four approaches to the subject: (1) *providential*, the belief that the movement came 'from heaven' through a sudden, simultaneous and spontaneous outpouring of the Spirit, the 'latter rain' foretold in the Bible (this view was held by many early Pentecostals); (2) *historical*, where the movement is seen as continuous with nineteenth century revivalist Christianity, especially the Methodist and Holiness movements; (3) *multicultural*, where Pentecostalism is seen as originating in multiple cultural and religious factors; and (4) *functional* or *sociological*, which looks at the functions of Pentecostalism in a

¹⁴ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 182-6, 208-9, 212-6.

given social context to provide an explanation for its emergence.¹⁵ William Kay has pointed out that the providential view of history is as old as church history itself, and that 'it is impossible to write Pentecostal history without reference to providence'.¹⁶ The opposite danger is that providential histories tend to discount or ignore 'natural' causes for the rise of Pentecostalism.

Although it is clear that several centres of Pentecostalism emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, the movement was first given national and international impetus at Azusa Street. Some scholars have referred to the 'myth' of Azusa Street that has overlooked the importance of other centres and have suggested that its role was not as central as has been generally accepted.¹⁷ There were other important early centres of Pentecostalism independent of Azusa Street, in particular Marie and Robert Brown's Glad Tidings Tabernacle in New York City (which commenced in 1907), William Piper's Stone Church in Chicago (which became Pentecostal in 1907), and Ellen and James Hebden's Queen Street Mission in Toronto (the Hebden's were baptized in the Spirit in 1906). There is no record of these centres being linked to Azusa Street at any time, or of them deriving their impetus from there, and these centres also sent out workers to other parts of the continent as well as internationally. But what cannot be denied is that for three years, Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street was the most prominent and significant centre of Pentecostalism on the continent. That this was a predominantly Black church and leadership, rooted in the African American culture of the nineteenth century, is really significant. Many of the early manifestations of Pentecostalism came from African American Christianity and were also found in the religious expressions of the slaves. These expressions were a reflection of the African religious culture from which slaves had been abducted and Seymour himself was deeply affected by slave spirituality.¹⁸ Walter Hollenweger says

¹⁵ Augustus Cerillo, Jr., 'Interpretative Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins', *Pneuma* 19:1 (1997), 29-49.

¹⁶ William K. Kay, 'Three Generations On: The Methodology of Pentecostal History', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* XI: 1-2 (1992), 58-59.

¹⁷ Joe Creech, 'Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History', *Church History* 65 (1996), 405-424.

¹⁸ Douglas J. Nelson, *For Such a Time as This: The Story of William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival* (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1981), 157-8.

that the main features of this African American spirituality was an oral liturgy, a narrative theology and witness, the maximum participation of the whole community in worship and service, the inclusion of visions and dreams into public worship, and an understanding of the relationship between body and mind manifested by healing through prayer.¹⁹ Other examples of African American Christian liturgy include rhythmic hand clapping, the antiphonal participation of the congregation in the sermon, the immediacy of God in the services and baptism by immersion, which are all practices common to Pentecostal churches worldwide.²⁰ These expressions were a fundamental part of early Pentecostalism and remain in the movement to this day. It is impossible to understand the origins of North American Pentecostalism without reference to Seymour and the Azusa Street revival.²¹

Former Methodist preacher and healing evangelist Charles Fox Parham is credited with being the first (in 1901) to make the theological link between Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues, the distinctive doctrine of early Pentecostalism. He was also the person from whom Seymour first heard of the Pentecostal message. But Parham held that the speaking in tongues would be in real languages given supernaturally by which people would preach the gospel. At first, this was also a belief found at Azusa Street, but was abandoned later when it did not work on the mission field. Hollenweger suggests that the founder of Pentecostalism is either Parham or Seymour and that the choice between the two depends on what the essence of Pentecostalism is. Either it is found in a particular doctrine of a particular experience (speaking in tongues as languages), or else it lies in its oral, missionary nature and its ability to break down barriers, emphases of the Azusa Street revival. For Hollenweger, his choice of Seymour as founder of Pentecostalism is not based as much on historical sequence (which shows the earlier work of Parham) as it is on theological principles, which become the basis

¹⁹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 18-9.

²⁰ Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1988), 29.

²¹ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), 46-8.

on which the Pentecostal message spreads around the world.²² Although Parham was indeed influential in the early formation of Pentecostalism, Seymour and Azusa Street eclipsed him in significance and play a major role in the ways most Pentecostals and Charismatics define themselves. In a certain sense, early North American Pentecostalism typified by Azusa Street was a revolutionary movement where the marginalized and dispossessed could find equality regardless of race, gender or class. The primary purpose of the coming of the Spirit as it was practised in Azusa Street was to bring a family of God's people together on an equal basis. We must not underestimate the importance of this revival. Although events have moved a long way from these heady days, this formative period of North American Pentecostalism should be seen as its fundamental essence and not merely as its infancy. This means that if the movement is to continue to be strong in the twenty-first century, it must consider its Azusa Street prototype to be the source of inspiration for theological and spiritual renewal.²³ But this is not the only place from which Pentecostals today can draw inspiration from their history. Focussing on a debate of origins that looks only to North America for leadership is, in my view, completely missing the point and distorting the facts.

Charles Parham, William Seymour and many of the first American Pentecostals believed they had been given foreign languages through Spirit baptism to preach the gospel throughout the world. Hundreds did just that. The first missionaries that went out only five months after the Azusa Street revival had begun were self-supporting and the majority were women. Alfred and Lillian Garr, the first white pastors to be baptized in the Spirit at Azusa Street, believed they had spoken Bengali and left Los Angeles for India, arriving in Calcutta in 1907. Although disillusioned about their language abilities, they persevered and were invited to conduct services in a Baptist church there, where a Pentecostal revival began. Independently of this event and five miles away, a revival broke out in a girls' orphanage run by Fanny Simpson, a

²² Walter J. Hollenweger, 'The Black Roots of Pentecostalism', Allan Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 42-3.

²³ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'Pentecostal Origins from a Global Perspective', Harold D. Hunter & Peter D. Hocken (eds.), *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 179; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 309.

Methodist missionary from Boston, who was thereupon dismissed and sent back to the USA. She returned to India as a Pentecostal missionary in 1920 and set up another orphanage in Purulia. The Garrs went on to minister for a short time in Hong Kong before returning to pastor a church in the USA. African American evangelist Lucy Farrow was also one of the first missionaries from Azusa Street, arriving in Liberia in 1907. Canadian evangelist and former elder in Dowie's Zion City, John G. Lake, travelled to South Africa in 1908 with Thomas Hezmalhalch and established the Apostolic Faith Mission, now the largest classical Pentecostal denomination in that country. Others left for the Bahamas in 1910 and for British East Africa in 1911. Kathleen Miller and Lucy James left for India from Britain under the Pentecostal Missionary Union in 1909, followed by four others a year later, one of whom, John Beruldsen, spent 35 years in North China. Pentecostal phenomena broke out in a missionary convention in Taochow, China in 1912 when William Simpson (1869-1961), missionary in China and Tibet from 1892-1949, became a Pentecostal. Simpson travelled throughout China, much of the time by foot, assisted in the training of Chinese ministers, and became one of the best-known missionaries in Pentecostalism. Another well-known pioneer Pentecostal missionary was H.A. Baker (1881-1971), missionary to Tibet and China from 1912-1950 and in Taiwan for 16 years until his death in 1971. He worked among tribal peoples and established an orphanage in Yunnan. In 1909 the Pentecostal message was taken from Chicago to Italian communities in Argentina and Brazil by Luigi Francescon, and in 1910 two Swedish immigrants influenced by Durham in Chicago, Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg, began what became the Assemblies of God in Brazil, now the largest non-Catholic denomination in Latin America and the largest Assemblies of God in any nation.²⁴ These were all important figures in the early spread of Pentecostalism.

²⁴ Entries: 'Baker, H.A.'; 'Farrow, Lucy F.'; 'Garr, Alfred Goodrich, Sr.'; 'Simpson, William Wallace'; *New International Dictionary*, 352, 632-3, 660-1, 1070-1.

MANY JERUSALEMS

So, many things were generated from western countries, and particularly from Azusa Street, seen as the Pentecostal 'Jerusalem' from which the rest of the earth was to be reached. But this is by no means the whole story. In a provocative article, Joe Creech suggests that Bartleman's account in particular created the 'central myth of origin' of Azusa Street that has persisted to the present and was based on theological and historical paradigms that overlooked other points of origin.²⁵ Bearing in mind that some studies are intentionally American in focus and at the risk of oversimplification, most histories declare or imply that Pentecostalism, fanning out from the western world and particularly from the USA, grew and expanded in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Latin America because of the work of a number of White 'missionaries' who carried the 'full gospel' to the ends of the earth. In these histories, the various presuppositions of the writers are often transparent, some of which are now easily dismissed.²⁶ The primacy of Azusa Street as the heart or 'cradle' of Pentecostalism was reaffirmed in the 1970s, largely through the influence of Walter Hollenweger and his researchers at Birmingham. Writers began to assert the important role of this predominantly African American church as the generator of Pentecostal churches all over the world.

However, there were several parts of the world where Pentecostal revivals actually preceded the events in North America, or were independent of them. There were several other centres of Pentecostalism from which great expansion took place. There were many 'Jeruselems': Pyongyang, Korea, from which revival in 1907 Presbyterian minister Kim Ik Du and others spread out throughout the country with a revivalist healing message; Pune, India, from Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission where a Pentecostal revival beginning in 1905 resulted in scores of young women forming evangelistic teams; Wakkerstroom, South Africa, from where the first African Spirit churches in South Africa under Daniel Nkonyane and others were formed; Lagos, Nigeria, from where the first Aladura (healing) movement began in the 1918 influenza epidemic; Valparaiso, Chile, where the revival in the Methodist church under Willis

²⁵ Creech, 'Visions of Glory', 406, 408.

²⁶ Further discussed in Anderson, 'Revising Pentecostal History'.

Hoover beginning in 1909 was the start of the Methodist Pentecostal Church, the largest Protestant church in Chile; Belem, Brazil, where Swedish missionaries Vingren and Berg began the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world; Oslo, Norway, where Methodist pastor Thomas Barratt began Pentecostalism in Europe in 1907; and Sunderland, England, where Anglican vicar Alexander Boddy led the commencement of Pentecostalism. These were some among many other centres. Pentecostalism has many varieties very different from the North American 'classical Pentecostal' kind.²⁷

The 'Korean Pentecost', which began among missionaries in Wonsan in 1903 and broke out again in Pyongyang in 1907, soon spread to thousands of Korean people, especially through the remarkable healing ministry of Presbyterian pastor Kim Ik Du. This revival seemed to have been unaffected by the nineteenth century Evangelical Awakenings; it predated the 1904 Welsh Revival in origins and it quickly took on a Korean character all of its own. The Korean revival affected revivals in China like the Manchurian Revival of 1908,²⁸ and irrevocably changed the face of East Asian Christianity. Korean Pentecostals acknowledge the contribution to their own movement of the earlier revival, which greatly influenced the present dominance of the Charismatic movement in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches there. Many of this revival's characteristic practices have been absorbed by the classical Pentecostal churches (like Yonggi Cho's Yoido Full Gospel Church), which came over two decades later. Furthermore, although this is not a classical Pentecostal revival and in spite of American Protestant missionary participation in its beginning, early Korean revival leaders were much more 'Pentecostal' than the missionaries might have wanted them to be, and their characteristic revival practices persist in Korea today.

In the case of China, Daniel Bays has shown that the influence of Pentecostalism has accelerated the development of 'indigenous churches', particularly because Pentecostals were closer to the 'traditional folk religiosity' with its 'lively sense of the supernatural' than other churches were. Most of the grassroots Chinese churches are

²⁷ Everett A Wilson, 'They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn't They? Critical History and Pentecostal Beginnings', Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus & Douglas Petersen (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 107.

²⁸ Daniel H. Bays, 'Christian Revival in China, 1900-1937', E.L. Blumhofer & R. Balmer (eds.), *Modern Christian Revivals* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 163.

Pentecostal 'in explicit identity or in orientation'. Bays says that Pentecostalism in China, 'especially its egalitarian style and its provision of direct revelation to all', also facilitated the development of churches independent of foreign missions.²⁹ In China, the first independent and largest Pentecostal church, the True Jesus Church, began as early as 1917, and was radically anti-missionary. Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America also developed independent churches early—something the Pentecostal missionaries from the West could not have anticipated and probably would not have encouraged.

In India, the first Pentecostal outpouring in India took place in Tamil Nadu in 1860-65 under the Tamil evangelist John Aroolappen, and in Travancore in 1873-81. As McGee points out, Pentecostalism had already established itself in India long 'before word of Azusa reached the subcontinent'.³⁰ The 1905-7 revival at Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission in Pune, in which young women baptized by the Spirit had seen visions, fallen into trances and spoken in tongues, began before the Azusa Street revival—and although tongues may have first been recorded there in December 1906, there is no indication that this was precipitated by events in Los Angeles. The Mukti Mission revival was understood by Ramabai herself to be the means by which the Holy Spirit was creating an independent Indian Christianity. *The Apostolic Faith*, the periodical from Azusa Street, greeted news of this revival in its November 1906 issue with 'Hallelujah! God is sending the Pentecost to India. He is no respecter of persons'. There is no mention of missionaries or of Ramabai's mission, but it suggests that there, 'natives... simply taught of God' were responsible for the outpouring of the Spirit and that the gifts of the Spirit were given to 'simple, unlearned members of the body of Christ'. Of course, the Indian people are not named, not even the internationally famous Pandita Ramabai! Nevertheless, Pentecostal missionaries worked with the Mukti Mission for several years and Ramabai received support from the fledgling

²⁹ Daniel Bays, 'The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement', Blumhofer, Spittler & Wacker, *Pentecostal Currents*, 63.

³⁰ 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), 648-65.

Pentecostal movement in Britain, where she was mentioned regularly in the Pentecostal periodical from Boddy's church in Sunderland, *Confidence*.³¹

The Mukti revival had other far-reaching consequences that penetrated parts of the world untouched by Azusa Street. Perhaps the most important of these consequences crossed the oceans to South America. In 1907, American Methodist revivalist in Valparaiso, Chile, Willis Hoover heard of the Mukti revival through a pamphlet by his wife's former classmate Minnie Abrams, an associate of Ramabai. Later, Hoover enquired about the Pentecostal revivals in other places, especially those in Venezuela, Norway and India among his fellow Methodists. The revival in his church in 1909 resulted in his expulsion from the Methodist Church in 1910 and the formation of the Methodist Pentecostal Church. The vast majority of Chilean Pentecostals are quite different from classical Pentecostals in North America and trace their origins to the Valparaiso events.³² In 1909 Luigi Francescon, an Italian from Chicago, took the Pentecostal message to Italian communities in Argentina and Brazil; and in 1911 Vingren and Berg began what became the Assemblies of God in Brazil, three years before it was constituted in the USA. This is now the largest Protestant denomination in Latin America and the largest Assemblies of God in any nation, quite independent of its US counterpart. The first missionaries to Brazil were connected with William Durham's church in Chicago (who had been baptised in the Spirit at Azusa Street), but they were separate from the US movement and looked to Sweden for their main support. However, although these western missionaries are usually given the credit for the foundation of these large denominations, their rapid growth was mainly due to the efforts of the mostly now unknown national workers. Petersen has shown that in Central America, strong Pentecostal churches emerged 'with little external assistance or foreign control'.³³

³¹ Shamsundar M. Adhav, *Pandita Ramabai* (Madras, India: Christian Literature Society, 1979), 216; *Apostolic Faith* 3 (1906), 1; *Confidence* 1:6 (1908), 10.

³² Willis Collins Hoover & Mario G. Hoover, *History of the Pentecostal Revival in Chile* (Santiago, Chile: Imprenta Eben-Ezer, 2000), 9, 164; Juan Sepúlveda, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism and the Chilean Experience', Anderson & Hollenweger, *Pentecostals after a Century*, 111-5.

³³ Douglas Petersen, 'The Formation of Popular, National, Autonomous Pentecostal churches in Central America'. *Pneuma* 16:1, 1994 (23-48), 23.

All over the world untold thousands of revivalists without western connections were responsible for the spread of the Pentecostal gospel. In the Côte d'Ivoire and the Gold Coast (now Ghana), the Liberian William Wade Harris spearheaded a revival in 1914 quite distinct from the western Pentecostal movement but with many Pentecostal phenomena including healing and speaking in tongues. This revival resulted in 120,000 conversions in a year, the largest influx of Africans to Christianity the continent had ever seen. We may never know whether Harris had any encounter with African American missionaries from Azusa Street working in Liberia (a tantalizing conjecture), but there were certainly no connections thereafter. Chinese evangelists crisscrossed that vast nation and beyond with a Pentecostal message similar to but distinct from its western counterpart, resulting in many thousands of conversions to Christianity. A Chinese preacher, Mok Lai Chi, was responsible for the early spread of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong and started a Pentecostal newspaper there in 1908.³⁴ These various Pentecostal revivals were not primarily movements from the western world to 'foreign lands', but more significantly movements within these continents themselves.

The Azusa Street revival was certainly significant in reminding American Pentecostals of their non-racial and ecumenical origins and ethos, an interracial fellowship that was unique and has given inspiration to many.³⁵ Seymour was deeply affected by an African spirituality, a holistic spirituality that made the Pentecostal and Charismatic message so suitable to cultures all over the world, where experience of divine intervention was more important than the creeds, controversies and doctrinal arguments that soon racked the American movement. Although British Pentecostal leader Donald Gee, followed by Pentecostal missiologist Pomerville, continued the earlier 'providential' view of Pentecostal history, they declared that Pentecostalism had originated in a series of roughly spontaneous and universal beginnings in different parts of the world, and that no attempt should be made to restrict its commencement to

³⁴ Bays, 'Protestant Missionary Establishment', 54.

³⁵ Allan Anderson, 'Dangerous Memories for South African Pentecostals', Allan Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 105; Allan Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2000), 58, 85.

one geographical location such as Los Angeles or to one religious leader.³⁶ This represented a new approach to the problem of origins, but the insistence on spontaneity meant that they tended to ignore the complexity of historical and social factors that linked the different 'outpourings' to each other.

Historians have pointed out the connections to Azusa Street through those missionaries who directly or indirectly went from there to different continents. But without minimizing the importance of Azusa Street, we must also give due recognition to places in the world where Pentecostal revivals broke out independently of this event and in some cases even predated it. In many cases local charismatic leaders, whose role has often been minimised in Pentecostal historiography, led these revivals. It may be argued that the revivals independent of western Pentecostalism in Korea, China, India, Chile, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire were not specifically 'Pentecostal' revivals. It all depends how 'Pentecostal' is defined: if we consider the practices of healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, other physical manifestations and emotional prayer meetings to be characteristic of Pentecostalism (as I do), then we have to acknowledge the main thesis of this paper. I have attempted to show by historical examples from different parts of the globe that Pentecostal origins are complex and varied, polycentric and diffused. A theory of origins that sets the commencement of the movement in Los Angeles in 1906, while certainly having merit as far as some parts of the world are concerned, must be balanced by the equally convincing case of multiple, often unconnected origins. This more nuanced view will help us dispel the premise of treating American forms of Pentecostalism as normative, it will maximise our understanding of the impact and influence of local leadership in comparison to that of western missionaries, and will enable us to better comprehend the contextualization of the Pentecostal gospel in different cultures, nations and contemporary contexts.

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³⁶ Donald Gee, *Wind and Flame* (Nottingham, UK: Assemblies of God Publishing House, 1967), 3; Paul Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 52.