Volume 30.2 2011

Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

93 Editorial *Celebrating 30 Volumes of AJET*

95 Steven M. Bryan *Reflections on 2 Timothy 4:6-8 in Grateful Memory of John R. W. Stott*

101 Isaac Kahwa Mbabazi *Christians as Members of a 'Royal Family' in the Gospel of Matthew*

117 Danny McCain *Energizing Church Development in Africa Through the Gifts of the Spirit*

135 Robert P. French II *Holy Spirit and Ecumenical Division: Identifying the Theological Implications of Pentecostal-Charismatic Growth for Western Christianity*

165 J. Quayesi-Amakye *Spirituality and Social Transformation The Samson Syndrome and National Progress - Judges 13-16*

177 Book Reviews

ISSN 1026-2946

Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

© Scott Christian University.

Consulting Editors:
Dr. Paul Bowers, Managing Editor, *BookNotes for Africa*.
Dr. Victor Cole, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi.
Dr. Richard Gehman, Former Editor of AJET.
Dr. Jacob Kibor, Provost, Kabarak University, Nakuru, Kenya.
Dr. Esther Kibor, Former Editor of AJET.
Dr. Gregg Okesson, Associate Professor of Leadership and Development, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.

Editorial Committee:
Rev. Professor Paul Mumo Kisau
(Publisher, Vice-Chancellor of Scott Christian University).
Dr. Andrew G. Wildsmith (Editor, Lecturer, Scott Christian University).
Dr. Jonathan Mwania (DVC for Academic Affairs, Scott Christian University).
Rev. Jack Mitchell (Lecturer, Scott Christian University).
Dr. Paul Mbandi (Lecturer, Scott Christian University).

Subscription Services: Email Karen Mitchell: ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke.

Subscription Information: Subscription rates and ordering procedures are published on the inside back cover. Information can be downloaded from our website: www.scott.ac.ke. Or email Karen Mitchell: ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke

Purpose: *AJET* is published twice a year by Scott Christian University, a chartered private university in Kenya, in order to provide theological educators and students with evangelical articles and book reviews related to Christian ministry in Africa.

Publisher: Scott Christian University, the publisher of *AJET*, has been accredited by ACTEA since 1979 and was chartered as a private university by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) Kenya in November 1997. Scott offers university level theological education with concentrations in Pastoral Studies, Christian Education and Missiology.

AJET is indexed in *Christian Periodical Index*; *New Testament Abstracts* (Cambridge MA); *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, published by the American Theological Library Association, Chicago; *Theology in Context* (Institute of Missiology, Germany); and in *DIALOG Abstracts* (Cambridge MA). *AJET* is indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, published by the American Theological Library Association, 300 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60606, E-mail: atla@atla.com, Website: http://www.atla.com/. *AJET* articles and information can be found on the web by searching “evangelical theology”.

Celebrating 30 Volumes of AJET!

This issue marks the completion of AJET's 30th volume. Richard Gehman was the editor in 2001 when AJET celebrated 20 years of continuous publication. In his editorial, he first gives thanks to God for providing AJET with the vision, personnel, authors, readers and funding. Those of you who have been involved from the beginning know that it is almost a literal miracle that we have reached 30 volumes, though it has taken a little more than 30 years to get here. Gehman briefly summarizes AJET's beginnings in 1982, including some of the people involved, one of whom, Paul Bowers, has continued to be a wonderful support to all the editors over the years, not least to me. Gehman mentions several other people used by God in the production of the journal over those first 20 years and concludes that two page editorial with a "state of the journal" report.

I was an early reader, arriving in south-eastern Nigeria in 1983, and finding the first issues of the fledgling *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* in the library. I used it as one of the sources for making sense of the African Christian context where polygamy and fear of the ancestors were only two of the issues students asked me about from my first day of classes. My thanks goes out to God and to all of the past and present people involved in writing articles and reviews, in producing and subscribing to this now "middle-aged" journal.

My focus however, is on the future, especially putting AJET back on its "normal" publishing schedule. In addition, we intend to add the last ten years of the journal onto the CD. At this point, AJET is not on-line, but it is something to consider. Any opinions you might have in that regard would be welcome.

We have a backlog of articles waiting for publication, but we don't have enough good quality articles from African authors. AJET's 20.2 issue featured all African authors. Of the five articles in this issue, only two are by Africans, and of the three book reviews, only one is by an African. This is below AJET's normal percentage, but the ideal, from my point of view, is that at least 75% of the content of each AJET issue be contributed by African authors. It seems that some potential scholars are placed in administrative posts once they achieve their PhD, and some of them have almost no time to write. Andrew Walls sees scholarship as a vocation, a calling from the Lord of the Church. Consider turning down that prestigious administrative post to devote yourself to labour for the Lord at the cutting edge of African evangelical scholarship. This often means less money but the rest of Africa and the rest of the world need the insights God has given you. AJET desires articles that come from Christ-likeness in character, and that display academic excellence, Biblical truth, and relevance to the Church in Africa. Consider field research based articles, especially if you don't have access to a good library. If you write book reviews for BookNotes, consider a longer version for AJET. AJET is 30 issues old, but we're just getting started!

Contributors to AJET 30.2 2011

Articles

Dr. Steven M. Bryan currently teaches New Testament at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and also serves as the Area Director for SIM's work in Ethiopia. He holds a PhD in New Testament from Cambridge University.

Dr. Isaac Kahwa Mbabazi is the Academic Dean of the School of Evangelical Theology and Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at Shalom University of Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He holds the PhD in New Testament from the University of Manchester, UK, 2011. His PhD thesis explores the significance of interpersonal forgiveness in Matthew's Gospel.

Prof. Danny McCain (Bob Jones University - PhD New Testament Interpretation, 1982) is the founder of the International Institute for Christian Studies. He teaches at the University of Jos, Plateau State and is a prolific writer and well-known speaker in Nigeria. This article was first presented to the Northern Zonal Conference of the National Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS) held at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Plateau State, on 29 February 2008.

Robert P. French II (M.Div. in Global and Contextual Studies from Evangelical Theological Seminary; M.Th. in World Christianity from the University of Edinburgh) is a PhD student at Eastern University with a background in business and the US Air Force. Robert also co-edited this issue of AJET at a time when I was more than usually over-committed. He helped to put this issue in your hands. Thanks Robert.

Joseph Quayesi-Amakye is completing his PhD studies in Contextual and Cross-Cultural Theology with Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where he obtained a Master of Arts (Theology). He also holds a Master of Philosophy in Religious Studies from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Currently he is a lecturer in Systematic and Practical Theology with the School of Theology and Missions of the Central University College, Accra, Ghana.

Book Reviews

Rev. Emmanuel Kwasi Amoafo has been an international business entrepreneur for the past thirty years, is an ordained Minister and is currently a Lecturer in Theology at Carlile College School of Theology, Nairobi.

Rev. Jack Mitchell (MA in Historical Theology from Wheaton Graduate School, 1987) has been teaching at Scott Christian University for four years. He and his wife Karen were missionaries in Hungary for 10 years after 7 years of pastoral ministry in the USA. He lectures at Scott Christian University.

Georgette Short (MA in Biblical Interpretation from London School of Theology, 2005) taught primary school in Scotland for 15 years before joining Africa Inland Mission, teaching at Ravine Bible Institute, Eldama Ravine (2005-2007). She has lectured at Scott Christian University since 2007.

Reflections on 2 Timothy 4:6-8 in Grateful Memory of John R. W. Stott

(27 April 1921 – 27 July 2011)[1]

by Steven M. Bryan

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8). This memorable and moving passage in which Paul self-consciously speaks about his impending death serves as a fitting text to focus a few thoughts in grateful memory of John R. W. Stott who finished his race on 27 July 2011 at the age of 90.

A Kept Faith

In remembering a life given in service to the Lord and his Church, I wish to make three broad connections between 2 Timothy and the man fondly known around the world as "Uncle John", followed by three more specific comments about vv. 6-8. The three broad connections focus on Stott as one who vigilantly guarded the gospel.

1. Biblical Authority and Evangelical Essentials

First, one did not have to be around John Stott for long or to have read many of his books to notice that he was extremely careful with Scripture. He worked hard at the text. He cared about what it said, and he cared about communicating it well. That attitude is characteristically on display in his commentary on 2 Timothy and you can feel Stott's feeling rise as he unpacks the opening charge of 2 Timothy 4: "*preach the word*." For Stott, Scripture – what he called "the sceptre by which King Jesus reigns"[2] – and its exposition were absolutely central to ministry: "We have no liberty to invent our message, but only to communicate 'the word' which God has spoken and has now committed to the church as a sacred trust."[3]

John Stott did his theological training at Cambridge back in the 1940s at a time when liberal theology held the day in both Cambridge and in the Church of England. But a theology that rejected biblical authority, watered down the

---

[1] The article is based on a meditation given at a memorial service for John Stott in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 28 August 2011.

[2] Cited in Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001) 412.

[3] John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, BST (Downers Grove: IVP, 1973) 106.

atonement, and downplayed the necessity of personal conversion held no fascination for him. And on these he never wavered. These were for Stott the essentials of evangelical faith – the revelation of God, the saving work of Christ and the transforming work of the Spirit.[4] But his convictions about the centrality of the cross and the necessity of personal transformation were rooted in his belief in the authority of Scripture.

Some fifty years after his Cambridge resistance to rampant skepticism about biblical authority, Stott came to Ethiopia and made Scripture and its ultimate authority the focus of his Frumentius Lectures, sponsored by the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology. While in Ethiopia, he intentionally met with Ethiopian Orthodox leaders and followed this up with practical assistance to Orthodox seminary libraries. But in his lectures he was uncompromising: with a number of Orthodox in attendance, he said that if the Orthodox would give up the assertion that the Church and its tradition was equal in authority to the authority of Scripture, then he felt certain that other differences could be resolved.[5] The unity of Christ's church around the world was an enduring concern for Stott, but he was unwilling for that unity to be purchased at the cost of the authority of Scripture.

I lived for three years in England and would sometimes hear British evangelicals express reservations about the debate within American evangelicalism about "inerrancy". Stott seems not to have shared these reservations. In a 1988 book, in which he and the liberal theologian David Edwards conducted a written debate, Stott wrote, "I also wonder why you seem so anxious to persuade me that inerrancy is untenable? It is entirely your concern for intellectual integrity. But I am committed to this also." Stott went on to suggest that the real problem behind doubts about Scripture is the fear that "submission to biblical authority" might prove incompatible with the freedom to *think* what one liked.[6] He felt just as strongly that preaching, if not anchored in exposition, only led to a freedom to *say* what one liked.

2. "Double Listening"

Second, Stott's commentary on 2 Timothy was the first in the Bible Speaks Today series that Stott launched in an effort to support a ministry of the Word which Stott called "double listening" – a vision of preaching which

---

[4] This explicitly Trinitarian understanding of Evangelicalism is laid out in Stott's *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999).

[5] Personal recollection of the author.

[6] Cited in Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999) 181-182. In *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry,* (Leicester: IVP, 2002) 76, Stott urges readers not to be embarrassed by the doctrine of Scripture's verbal inspiration, which "means that what the Holy Spirit spoke through the biblical authors… is true and without error."

listened to both text and context.[7] In this too, Stott followed a tradition that went back to Paul. In 2 Timothy 4:3-5, Paul grounds his exhortation to Timothy to preach the Word in the contextual realities that run counter to the gospel: *"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths".* Stott himself was deeply tuned in to the cultural realities and contextual trends that lead people away from the gospel and which desperately needed to be addressed by gospel-centered ministry. Stott was never cranky, but for him the task of relating Scripture to culture most often places the preacher in a position of dissent. Speaking on 2 Timothy 3-4, Stott said, "[T]he Word of God and the mood of the day were, and still are, radically incompatible with one another. And to insist that the Word of God speaks to our time does not mean that the Word of God agrees with our time, because it does not. On the contrary, the Word speaks most authentically to the world when it subjects the world to rigorous critique…".[8]

3. The Gospel and God's "Self-Substitution"

Third, Stott's commentary on 2 Timothy was aptly called *Guard the Gospel* and that too reflects Stott's characteristic concern to keep the gospel central. As Stott rightly notes, Paul writes to Timothy out of a strong sense that the gospel for which he had labored since his conversion on the way to Damascus was now seriously at risk at precisely the moment when its foremost steward is at the point of death. And so Paul writes to Timothy out of a concern for the preservation of the gospel. As for Paul, so also for Stott there could be no doubt about what lay at the center of the gospel – the cross of Christ. And for Stott there could be no doubt that the central meaning of the cross was the idea of substitutionary atonement. Stott acknowledged that Scripture uses various metaphors or images to describe salvation, but for Stott the "self-substitution" of God is not simply one image among many but rather the essence of salvation: "The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone."[9]

---

[7] His Galatians commentary was written earlier but was not initially a part of the BST series.

[8] Cited in Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry*, 337.

[9] Cited from John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* in Christopher J.H. Wright, *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) 125.

A Faith Passed On

Much of the latter half of Stott's life was given over to a variety of initiatives to ensure that the charge to faithfully preach and pass on the gospel was picked up by the next generation of leaders. Again from his commentary on 2 Timothy: "The church of our day urgently needs to heed the message of the second letter of Paul to Timothy. For all around us we see Christians and churches relaxing their grasp of the gospel, fumbling it, in danger of letting it drop from their hands altogether. A new generation of young Timothys is needed, who will guard the sacred deposit of the gospel, who are determined to proclaim it and are prepared to suffer for it, and who will pass it on pure and uncorrupted to the generation which in due course will rise up to follow them."[10]

This is Paul's primary concern in 2 Tim 4:6-8 – a concern that Timothy take up the charge to preach the gospel which Paul must now lay down. Paul's way of doing that is to point to the impact of the gospel in his own life and ministry. He notes three things in particular.

1. A Gospel Life: Living a Life of Dying (v. 6)

In v. 6, Paul describes his life as a drink offering which is already being poured out. To understand the metaphor, it is perhaps important to remember that a drink offering was a sacrifice which was never offered alone but always and only alongside the primary sacrifice. There can be little doubt that for Paul the primary sacrifice was Christ's own sacrifice. But the impact of the gospel in Paul's life is seen in the fact that he thinks of his own life as a co-sacrifice - a sacrifice offered alongside of Christ's. Life is thus conceived as dying: dying to sin, dying to self, dying even to any and every claim that his life was his own.

The last book written by Stott before he died is called *The Radical Disciple*.[11] He wrote the book explicitly intending that it be his last – a kind of farewell. The last chapter in the book is on death. The remarkable thing about this is that Stott deals with death as an aspect of discipleship. This is vintage Stott, faced with the prospect of his own death he explores death as a way of thinking about and indeed as part of our discipleship to a crucified Messiah. This is what he calls "one of the profoundest paradoxes in the Christian faith: life through death."[12] We receive Christ's resurrection life through his substitutionary death, and thus dying becomes the pattern for living. Stott simply expresses what Paul's metaphor of the drink offering implies – that for someone who lives within "the paradox of life through death", physical death is simply the culmination of a life of dying. A life lived as dying makes physical

---

[10] Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 22.
[11] John Stott, *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of our Calling* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010)
[12] *Radical Disciple, 112-3.*

death the completion of discipleship. Stott did not die a martyr, but his death bears witness to the gospel of life through death because he made death to self the pattern of his life. In a culture desperate to hold on to life, Stott, like Paul, poured his out.

2. A Gospel Integrity: Conforming Ministry to Message (v. 7)

Shortly after Stott was in Ethiopia in 2003, he suffered a fairly serious stroke. He eventually recovered and in March sent me a fax in which he said he was glad to report that he was "back at work and fighting fit."[13] But in line with Paul's words in v. 7, I think Stott's life was always fit for the fight. John Stott's biographer notes that at school, Stott was decidedly mediocre in sports, but as a depiction of a faithful life, the words of v. 7 are an entirely fitting description of how he lived his life. Probably all three parts of v. 7 relate to the athletic metaphor. If so, Paul's meaning is that he had been in the right contest and had competed in the right way. Both of those things are crucial. Many Christians are fighting but are fighting the wrong fight; we're running but running the wrong race – extraordinary exertion in the wrong cause. For Paul, the fight is the gospel; he contends for the faith. The contest is not a competition with other leaders – who can build the biggest church or make the biggest name for himself or get the most education. Paul's struggle, rather, is for the display of God's glory in the crucified messiah.

Not only did Paul run the right race, he ran it in the right way. There is a dual sense to his assertion that he has "kept the faith". He has not only preserved an uncorrupted gospel, he has also lived a life faithful to the gospel and to the way of life inherent to the gospel. For Paul, it was absolutely vital that the manner of one's life conform to the substance of his message.[14] He refused to preach the self-sacrifice of Jesus and then live a life of personal ambition. He did not preach the message of one who emptied himself only to turn around and fill his own pockets. He would not preach the good news of a God who humbled himself and then obsess about titles and positions, about status and power. He conformed his ministry (and his life) to his message. He fought the right fight in the right way. That same integrity of life is one of the richest legacies that John Stott leaves to the Church.

3. A Gospel Reward: Gaining What the Gospel Gives (v. 8)

In v. 8, Paul anticipates the reward that awaits such a life. The reward is the crown of righteousness. Paul's meaning, of course, is not that he will get something that he has earned, but rather that he eagerly awaits what the gospel alone can achieve. Paul's gospel is of a God who makes us righteous as part of his ultimate aim of setting the world to right. The gospel creates a

---

[13] Personal fax communication to the author, 25 March 2004.

[14] Cf. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2006) 676.

love for God and a love for what he does through the gospel. And what he does is set things to right. The fulfillment of this hope - the crown of righteousness - is not so much for those who fear hell or a reward uniquely reserved for those entrusted with unusual gifts. Rather, it is for all whose fondest dream is for the appearance of a judge who will set the world right. They will get what the gospel gives; they will gain what the cross of Christ achieves. That was John Stott's dream. It was a gospel dream, and, like an African stirred from sleep by a powerful dream, he knew it had to be shared.

Bibliography

Dudley-Smith, Timothy. *John Stott: The Making of a Leader.* Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.

Dudley-Smith, Timothy. *John Stott: A Global Ministry*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2001.

Stott, John R.W. *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, BST. Downers Grove: IVP, 1973.

Stott, John R.W. *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity*. Leicester: IVP, 1999.

Stott, John R.W. *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry.* Leicester: IVP, 2002.

Stott, John R.W. *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of our Calling*. Leicester: IVP, 2010.

Towner, Philip H. *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

Wright, Christopher J.H. *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.

Christians as Members of a 'Royal Family' in the Gospel of Matthew

By Isaac Kahwa Mbabazi

This essay seeks to contribute to Matthean scholarship by exploring the concept of Christians as members of God's royal family in Matthew's Gospel. It argues that the first Evangelist views Jesus' followers of all times as members of a 'royal family'. This is made clear through passages in the Gospel that use the royal family membership language, a fact to which no attention seems to have been paid so far in Matthean studies. Engaging in the study of such a topic would involve discussing aspects of theism and of Christology in the Gospel of Matthew. It is not my intention to engage in the debate about complex issues related to Christology in the first Gospel attempting to address, for example, the question of whether or not Jesus 'imagined himself to be the Davidic Messiah, or envisaged himself as the eschatological Son of Man, or thought himself to be God's Son in a singular sense.'[1] Others have dealt with this quite thoroughly.[2] In an attempt to make sense of how Matthew views the followers of Jesus, conceptual analysis will be used. It will be used to explain the concept of Christian royal family membership within Matthean texts related to the subject under scrutiny.

The essay is structured in three parts, the first of which discusses the idea of Christians as members of God's royal family in Matthew's Gospel. The second part explores the notions of the kingship and fatherhood of God, together with that of the royalty of Jesus. The third part discusses some ethical and practical implications. A conclusion then is drawn from the essay, giving a summary of the findings.

Christian Membership in God's Royal Family

In several passages in the first Gospel the language of diversified family membership is employed to describe the followers of Jesus, all related to the kingdom of heaven/God. Jonathan Pennington has recently explored the theme of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew's Gospel, focusing on the meaning of Matthew's distinctive expression 'the kingdom of heaven'. More precisely, he concentrates on the purpose of the use of Matthew's phrase 'the kingdom of heaven'. He challenges the traditional reverential circumlocution explanation for Matthew's expression (i.e., the common understanding that Matthew uses 'kingdom of heaven' instead of 'kingdom of God' out of a desire

[1] E.g., Robert Funk, *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 320; cp. James M. Robinson, 'Theological Autobiography', in *The Craft of Religious Studies* (ed. Jon R. Stone; New York: Palgrave, 2000), 144-45.

[2] For example, Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (London: SPCK, 2010), esp. 221-32.

to avoid using the word 'God').[3] He proposes that Matthew's choice to speak of the kingdom in this unique way serves to articulate a deep and powerful theological point, namely, to emphasize the apocalyptic and eschatological contrast between two realms – the heavenly and the earthly – standing for God on one hand, and humanity on the other.[4]

Pennington's argument in rejecting the reverential circumlocution explanation for Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven' has strong textual support from within the Gospel itself. The proposal that Matthew has conscientiously avoided the use of "God" (θεός) by employing the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ('the kingdom of heaven') does not stand at all when one considers the following Matthean texts where the Evangelist does use the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ('the kingdom of God'): Matthew 12:28 (cf. the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ['the kingdom of God']); 19:24 (cf. the phrase τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ['the kingdom of God']); and 21:31, 43 (cf. τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ['the kingdom of God'] and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ['the kingdom of God'], respectively). Moreover, as Pennington has also correctly seen, Matthew employs θεός ('God') freely throughout the Gospel.[5]

To return to the family membership language used of the followers of Jesus in Matthew in connection with the kingdom, it may seem odd to make a case out of only a few passages. But, as we shall see, these texts speak volumes in favour of the thesis propounded in this essay. Two of these texts (5:3, 10; 12:46-50) are worth discussing in detail.

1. Royal Family Membership in Matthew 5:3, 10

To begin with, Matthew 5:3, 10 states quite explicitly that the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ('kingdom of heaven') is for οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit') and for οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ('the persecuted for justice'). Two things are most important in identifying these people Jesus said would receive the kingdom. First is determining the meaning of οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit' [v. 3]). For some scholars, the added τῷ πνεύματι ('in spirit') is taken literally.[6] For others, the phrase is understood as referring to God's people who depend on his protection from oppression by the rich. For France, for example, '[p]overty in spirit is not speaking of weakness of character ("mean spiritedness"), but rather of a person's relationship with God.[7] The latter seems most likely.

---

[3] Jonathan T. Pennington, 'The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew', *SBJT* 12.1 (2008), 42.
[4] Pennington, 'The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew', 45-46.
[5] Pennington, 'The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew', 45-46.
[6] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* WBC 33A, ed. Ralph P. Martin, (Dallas, Texas: World Books, 1993), 91.
[7] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 165.

The Lukan counterpart of this phrase lacks the added τῷ πνεύματι ('in spirit' [cf. Luke 6:20]). The main question is whether the Matthean οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit' [5:3]) are to be identified with, or to be distinguished from, the Lukan οἱ πτωχοὶ ('the poor' [6:20]).[8] What is quite certain is that the Lukan form of the beatitude has spiritualized its subjects while the Matthean form has kept them literal. Gary T. Meaders has said it well: '[w]hile Matthew's statement is clear, Luke's is strikingly specific.'[9] Based upon the use of this expression in the Old Testament, R.T. France has interpreted the 'poor in spirit' in terms of a person's relationship with God in the face of subjugation suffered at the hands of others. For him, these πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('poor in spirit') refer to 'God's faithful people, humbly dependent on God's protection in the face of the oppression which they endure from the ungodly rich.'[10]

The phrase ὁ πτωχός τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit') is not found in the LXX. We find there its counterpart ὁ ταπεινός τῷ πνεύματι ('the humbled in spirit', or 'the humble in spirit', or 'the lowly in spirit'), which occurs in Psalms 33:19 (cp. Isa 61:1 and related LXX texts, e.g., Pss 146:7; 34:19; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Prov 16:19; 29:23).[11] In the context of these texts, this phrase has to do with the proximity of God to the afflicted righteous and his rescue of them, which may allow one to think of a possible indirect link between οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit') and οἱ ταπεινοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the humbled in spirit'). The exact expression 'poor in spirit' occurs at Qumran (1QM 14.7) and reads as follows:

> He has taught war [to the hand] of the feeble
> and steadied the trembling knee;
> he has braced the back of the smitten.
> Among the poor in spirit (עני רוח) [there is power]
> over the hard of heart,
> and by the perfect way
> all nations of wickedness have come to an end:
> not one of their mighty men stands,
> but we are the remnant [of Thy people].[12]

In this text, the expression עני רוח, the Greek equivalent of οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('the poor in spirit'), clearly speaks of the members of the Qumran

---

[8] I. H. Marshall understands the Lukan οἱ πτωχοὶ ('the poor') to mean the completely destitute, *The Gospel of Luke,* NIGTC, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 249.

[9] Gary T. Meaders, 'The "Poor" in the Beatitudes of Matthew and Luke', *Grace Theological Journal* 6.2 (1985), 306.

[10] France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 165.

[11] So also John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC. eds. I.H. Marshall and Donald A. Hagner; (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 200, n. 28.

[12] Translation by Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (rev. ed; London: Penguin Books, 2004).

community. These members, who identified themselves elsewhere as the 'sons of light' and the 'righteous', are here the 'remnant of God's people' and most importantly the poor to whom the eschatological promises apply (so also 1QM 15.1-2). As with the context of the LXX texts mentioned above, these 'poor in spirit' are the afflicted righteous awaiting imminent divine intervention to rescue them from oppression.

The second phrase to define is οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ('those who are persecuted for righteousness' [Matt 5:10]) which refers to those who are faithful to God in spite of all kinds of oppression.[13] The persecution of the faithful prophets was an Old Testament theme (eg. 2 Chron 36:16; 1 Kings 19:10, 14; Neh 9:26; Jer 2:30). Furthermore, the persecution of God's people plays a significant role in the Psalms (Pss 7; 31:15; 69:26; 109:16; 119:86).

One may suggest that Matthew is assuring his readers - God's faithful people who are humbly dependent on his protection - that indeed the kingdom of heaven is *theirs* (ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ['theirs is the kingdom of heaven'], Matt 5:3b), which is good news for them. The personal pronoun αὐτῶν ('theirs') is placed in the emphatic position to highlight the fact that these faithful and humbled people possess the kingdom. In its Matthean context, this kingdom is God's kingdom, as will be shown later in this essay. Elsewhere in Matthew, the kingdom of heaven is also spoken of as something that may be possessed. In 19:14, for example, the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ('kingdom of heaven') belongs to those who are like the παιδία ('little children') who have been given high priority to come to Jesus.

2. Royal Family Membership in Matthew 12:46-50

Matthew 12:46-50 is another text that uses family membership language to speak of the relationship of Jesus' disciples to the kingdom. The primary focus of this pericope is on the 'true family' of the disciples of Jesus. As France has pointed out, though it begins with Jesus' mother and brothers, the pericope is not really about them.[14] Matthew's use of 'disciple' in verse 49 allows for a wider group (cp. 8:11), and the inclusion of 'sister' in verse 50 demands it. It is these disciples who constitute Jesus' true family.

In the text above {note especially a redactional change to πατρός ἐν οὐρανοῖς ('Father in heaven') in verse 50 [cp. Mark 3:35 and Luke 8:21]}, the disciples of Jesus are explicitly called his ἀδελφοί ('brothers and sisters'). They are the doers of the will of the Father in heaven. A similar note is sounded in 7:21, where we are told that it is the one who 'does the will' (ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα) of 'my Father in heaven' (πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) who will enter the kingdom. Pennington states that the phrase ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐν [τοῖς] οὐράνιος ('Father in heaven') occurs thirteen times in the Gospel of Matthew, and the similar ὁ

[13] John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 207.
[14] France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* 494.

πατὴρ ὁ οὐράνιος ('heavenly Father') occurs seven times. He points out the remarkable fact that the phrase 'Father in heaven' occurs elsewhere in the Gospels *only* in Mark 11:25, which is indeed evidence of a particular Matthean emphasis.[15] In 12:46-50, the brotherhood of Jesus' disciples to Jesus himself is linked to the concept of God as both king and father.[16]

3. Royal Family Membership in Other Matthean Texts (13:24-30,43; 25:34)

The καλὸν σπέρμα ('good seed') of the parable of the weed and wheat in 13:24-30 is likened to the υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ('sons of the kingdom', 13:38). In 13:43 we are informed that the δίκαιοι ('righteous') will shine like the sun in τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν ('the kingdom of their Father'). Matthew 25:34 identifies Jesus (the Son of Man) with the βασιλεὺς ('King') and it is as King that Jesus will declare that his Father has blessed those at his right hand, and that they are to *inherit* the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

To recap, the πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ('poor in spirit') of 5:3, the δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ('those who are persecuted for righteousness') of 5:10, the καλὸν σπέρμα ('good seed') of 13:24-30, together with the υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ('sons of the kingdom') of 13:38 and the ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα ('those doing the will') of the heavenly Father and to whom entrance to the kingdom has been promised (7:21), the δίκαιοι ('righteous') of 13:43 who will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, those likened to the παιδία ('little ones') of 19:14 to whom high priority to come to Jesus have been given, those at Jesus' right hand who are declared 'blessed' by his Father and who are welcomed by Jesus to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (25:34), can be best understood as Christians. The main question is whether they are understood simply as citizens of the kingdom or as members and heirs of the kingdom. The Matthean evidence just surveyed strongly suggests that they are more than just citizens of the kingdom. It is worth mentioning in passing that the negative picture of the children of the kingdom we find in 8:12 probably applies to those who pretend that they are the 'heirs' of the kingdom, but are not in reality. [17]

4. The Meaning of Royal Family Membership

What the notion of the royal family membership of the disciples may have meant to the first Evangelist and his audience is a reasonable question to ask. Two possible explanations have been proposed. In the first place, Antony J. Saldarini has observed that the community to and for whom Matthew wrote was one with a strong sense of group cohesion, emphasised in the use of kinship language to describe its members. He argues that at the core of

[15] Pennington, 'The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew', 47.
[16] The concept of God as king and father is discussed later in this article.
[17] 'But the sons of the kingdom (οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας) will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (NKJ)

Matthew's identity is the relationship of Jesus to God as Son and the analogous relationship of his disciples to God as sons/daughters and servants.[18]

Saldarini's observation points to *identity* as the meaning of the fictive kinship in Matthew's Gospel. For him, the kinship language in this Gospel serves to highlight Jesus and the believers' identity with God as both sons and servants. To this aspect of meaning, John K. Riches has added another: *commitment*. He traces the notion of fictive kinship from Philo, who speaks of all humans as judged worthy of kinship with God because in principle they share the gift of reason.[19] From this parallel, he suggests that for Matthew, the central mark of the members of his community, which makes them brothers and sisters of Jesus – and who therefore share kinship with one another – is doing the will of the heavenly Father. He goes on to argue that there is a clear sense in which those who become brothers and sisters of Jesus by doing God's will leave their former ways behind them and become members of a new family centered on Jesus.[20]

These two features of the meaning of kinship in Matthew are not mutually exclusive; they are helpful because they shed some light on our understanding of Matthew's recipients' filiation with God. It can be suggested that both Matthew and his audience most likely understood their kinship to mean their *identity* and *commitment* to doing God's will. This reading is supported especially by Matthew 12:46-50 and 7:21. This would be reflected in their mutual relationships in several ways, as will be shown later in this essay.

The Kingship and Fatherhood of God, and Jesus' Royal Status

1. Kingship and the Fatherhood of God in Matthew's Gospel

1.1 God as King

The notion of God as king is central to Matthew's thinking. It is striking to realise that, among the Gospels, Matthew alone uses the metaphor of king frequently - a 'predominant relational metaphor used of God in the Bible', according to Brettler.[21] Along the same lines, Allison has reasonably suggested that, given the fact that the kingdom of God/heaven was the major theme of Jesus' preaching, one might then expect the tradition about Jesus to depict God as a king.[22] The following chart gives C. C. Caragounis' statistics

[18] Antony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 94-99.
[19] Cf. Philo, *De Abrahamo,* 41.
[20] John K. Riches, "Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew" in *Studies of the New Testament and Its World*; eds J. Barclay and J. Marcus and J. Riches; (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 209, 210.
[21] Marc Zvi Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOT Sup 76; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 160.
[22] Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 244.

for the Gospel data on the distribution of the various expressions for the kingdom.[23]

Expressions	Matt	Mark	Luke	John
Kingdom of *God*	5	14	32	2
Kingdom of *heaven*	32	–	–	–
The Kingdom	13	–	7	3
Total	**50**	**14**	**39**	**5**

The kingdom of heaven/God (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν/τοῦ θεοῦ) was at the centre of the message of Jesus, and in this case of the Matthean Jesus (4:23; 9:35; cp. 6:10; 12:28). This understanding is also widely accepted among scholars. As Pennington has noted,

> Each of the Synoptics clearly portrays Jesus' ministry as one that focuses on the kingdom, but Matthew stands out among the Evangelists. At the basic level of vocabulary, we see that Matthew uses βασιλεία some fifty-five times in a wide variety of phrases, including "kingdom of heaven," "kingdom of God," "the Father's kingdom," and simply, "the kingdom."[24]

It is the βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ('kingdom of heaven') that was to be preached throughout the whole world to all the nations (24:14).

The teaching about the present reality of the kingdom appears at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry (4:17), and continues throughout it (10:7: Ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν [The kingdom of heaven has come near']; 12:28: ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ['then the kingdom of God has come to you']; 19:14, by implication). In 13:11, we are informed about Jesus' proclamation of τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν ('the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven'). In addition Jerusalem is described as 'the city of the great king', that is 'God's city' (5:35, cf. Ps 48:2). The parable of the unmerciful slave in 18:23-35 likens God to 'a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves'. As Allison suggests, 'Jesus' pronouncement regarding the temple tax in this text [17:24-27] presupposes that, in one important respect, God relates to the disciples just as earthly kings relate to their children.'[25] Jesus' question and Peter's answer in verses 25b-26 are worth quoting: 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?' When Peter said, 'From others,' Jesus said to him, 'Then the children are free.' The parable of the wedding banquet in 22:1-14 also likens God to a king. Taken all together the evidence gathered above confirms that God is king and has a kingdom.

---

[23] C. C. Caragounis, 'Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven', in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 426.

[24] Pennington, 'The Kingdom of Heaven in the Gospel of Matthew', 44.

[25] Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, 245.

1.2 God as Father

The idea of God as father can also be found in the first Gospel. God's fatherly care and aid for all the needs of his people is clear in the Gospel. Roger Mohrlang is probably correct when he writes that 'of all the synoptic writers it is Matthew that draws the most winsome picture of God as a kind and caring heavenly Father, concerned to meet the everyday needs of his children … indeed it is to him that disciples are invited to look for *all* their needs … '.[26] Indeed, in Matthew's Gospel the notion of the fatherhood of God abounds. In 6:9-15, for example, this notion is central, πατὴρ ('father') being a key term in this text. At the beginning of the pericope (v. 9), the disciples are instructed to address God as their Father in heaven (Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ['Our Father in heaven']). The pericope ends with the fatherhood of God language (ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος/ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ('the heavenly Father'/'your Father', vv. 14-15). The same is true of Matthew 6, as a whole, which begins by describing God as the Father in heaven (τῷ πατρὶ ὑμῶν τῷ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ['your Father in heaven', v. 1]), and concludes by describing him as the disciples' heavenly Father (ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ['your heavenly Father', vv. 26, 32]). Within this framework, fatherhood of God language abounds. God is described as Father (ὁ πατήρ σου/ὑμῶν ['your Father'] and τῷ πατρί σου ['your Father', vv. 4, 6, 8, 18]): he is a Father who is in secret (vv. 6, 18), who can see into the secrets of his children (vv. 4, 18) and can reward his children (vv. 1, 4, 6, 18); he always knows and hears the pleas of his children before they ask him (vv. 7-8, 18, 33); he cares for his children and for his creation and provides for them (vv. 26-30); he cares for them and for the creation and provides for them altogether (6:6-13, 25-30; cp. 7:7-11; 10:20, 29-32; 18:10-14, 19-20; 24:20; 26:36-44).

God's fatherly care and aid includes his readiness to deliver his children from the evil one (6:13). Martin Stiewe and François Vouga have reasonably described this action of God as '*l'expression de l'esprit de la gratuité et du don*'[27] (i.e., 'the expression of the spirit of gratuity and of gift'). The experience and promise of God and Jesus' continual presence, as an expression of God's grace, also strongly adds to the evidence. At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, God is said to be with his people (including the disciples) in Jesus' presence (cf. the name Ἐμμανουήλ 'Emmanuel', 1:23; cp. 8:25; 14:30; 18:20; 28:20).

2. Jesus' Royal Status

The emphasis on Jesus' royal status is one of the particularities of Matthew's Gospel. This is made clear through a number of features, the main ones being Jesus' title υἱος Δαυὶδ ('son of David') and its frequency in the

[26] Roger Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (SNTSMS 48; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 80 (italics original).

[27] Martin Stiewe, François Vouga, *Le Sermon sur la montagne: un abrégé de l'Évangile dans le miroitement de ses interprétations* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2002), 128-33.

Gospel, and the title Χριστός (the 'Messiah') ascribed to him. The literary placement of the Jesus' Davidic origin texts in the first Gospel and the structure of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus are very important for discerning and explaining this emphasis. R.T. France is among a few who have recognised the emphasis on Jesus' royal rank in the first Gospel. He writes, 'The theme of Jesus' Davidic descent and the actual title 'Son of David' are no less emphasized in Matthew's prologue.'[28] More than just acknowledging this fact, he also links the υἱος Δαυὶδ theme to that of Χριστός ('Christ') highlighting the clear role played by David the *king* in the structure of the Matthean genealogy of Jesus, and the significance of that. In his own words,

> The title "Son of David" stands alongside Χριστός in the first verse in Matt 1, and David "the king" plays a key role in the structure of the genealogy (1:6,17), which is in fact a tracing of the line of Davidic kings of Judah, actual or presumptive. The following narrative focuses on Joseph, the final name in the list, and explains how he came to accept Jesus into his family, and the theological point of this opening scene is underlined when the angel addresses Joseph as "son of David" (1:10).[29]

Regarding the title 'son of David', we note that at the very beginning of the Gospel, Jesus is called υἱος Δαυὶδ ('son of David', 1:1). Then the υἱος Δαυὶδ ('son of David') motif is taken up throughout the Gospel (1:17; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42; in 12:23 the crowds are wondering about his identity as υἱος Δαυὶδ - 'son of David'). Jesus' birth in the royal town of Bethlehem adds significantly to the evidence and it also appropriately fulfills the Davidic prophecy (2:6). France has recognised this feature; he has highlighted this title of Jesus by contrasting its occurrences in the first Gospel with the other Gospels and the rest of the NT. He writes:

> [T]he title "son of David" occurs more frequently in Matthew's Gospel than in the whole of the rest of the New Testament; and seven of his nine uses of it are peculiar to his Gospel. Mark and Luke both share the double use of the title in the story of Bartimaeus, and the discussion about whether the Messiah is the son of David, but otherwise make no use of the title as such, even though Luke's introductory chapters emphasise the fact of Jesus' Davidic descent no less than Matthew does (Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11). John raises the issue only as a matter of public speculation (John 7:42). It is clear that Jesus' Davidic origin was a feature of early Christian preaching (Acts 2:29-36; 13:22f; Rom 1:3), but other New Testament references to Jesus' Davidic origin are very few (2 Tim 2:8; Rev 3:8; 5:5; 22:16). It seems clear then that Matthew had an unsually strong interest in this issue.[30]

Jesus' title Χριστός ('Christ') is another distinctive feature that can be taken as evidence for the emphasis on Jesus' royal rank in Matthew. The Messiah motif appears at the beginning of the Gospel (1:1) and runs throughout (1:16-

[28] R.T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989; reprinted in 1997), 281.
[29] France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, 284.
[30] France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher,* 284.

17, 18; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16; 27:17, 22; 26:68). In Luke's Gospel this title does not appear until 1:26.

Further evidence for Jesus' royal status in the first Gospel can be discerned from people's actions towards him, feelings about him, and their expectations of him as the prince/king and the Messiah. It is as a king/prince that the baby Jesus is honoured by the Magi who give him presents of great value (2:11); it is as 'king of Jews' (2:2) that he is perceived as Herod's rival (cp. 2:3-8,13-18); it is as 'king of Jews' (28:37) that Jesus is crucified. Additionally, the kingdom of heaven (6:10; 18:23; 21:43; 26:29) is God's kingdom, God being depicted as the king who owns the kingdom. Yet at the same time, we also read from the Gospel that Jesus also owns the kingdom. As a matter of fact, in 16:28 and 25:31-34, it is clear that Jesus as the Son of Man owns the kingdom. In 25:34, it is as king that Jesus the Son of Man himself carries out the final judgement. The request from the mother of the sons of Zebedee in 20:20-23 presupposes that Jesus is king. Jesus holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and promises solemnly to Peter that *he* will hand over these keys to him (16:19). In 6:10, Jesus is prince by implication.

As noted previously, Allison has observed that, if one leaves aside the sentences with ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ/τῶν οὐρανῶν ('the kingdom of God/of heaven'), one is surprised to realise that in the Synoptics God is seldom portrayed as a king.[31] Why is it so? One possibility is to think of 'Jesus' habit of speaking of the deity as father.'[32] Another possibility is to imagine that 'Jesus himself is … the eschatological king, or destined to be such.'[33] There is some logic in each line of thought. These proposals are not mutually exclusive; rather they are complementary insofar as both link the frequency of depicting God as a king to Christology in the Synoptics. Perhaps the second proposal is more direct in stating clearly that Jesus is more than just a prince, he is a king.

Matthew's narrative on Jesus' infancy serves to highlight the reality of the birth of the Messiah and king as well as Jesus' mission as both the Messiah and king. Allison is probably correct as he writes, 'The mainspring of Matthew's infancy narrative is that the Davidic Messiah (Χριστός) has been born, and he will rule "my people Israel" (2:6).'[34] This prophecy about Jesus clearly states his future kingship. As 'son of David' and the Messiah to come, Jesus was meant to both shepherd his people Israel (2:5, cp. Micah 5:1,2) and 'save his people from their sins' (σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν [1:21]). His shepherding and saving mission can be discerned from his life and ministry. He was active among his people, shephering them in various ways.

---

[31] Allison, *Constructing Jesus,* 244-45.
[32] See Richard Bauckham, 'Kingdom and Church according to Jesus and Paul', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 18 (1996), 1-27.
[33] Allison, *Constructing Jesus,* 245.
[34] Allison, *Constructing Jesus,* 245.

His activities included teaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing diseases and sicknesses (4:23; 9:35). Jesus' deeds spread far and wide, eventually reaching even John the Baptist who was in prison (11:2). With these signs Jesus fulfilled eschatological messianic expectations, and the coming of a Messiah in God's name has long been the expectation of Israel. As Francois P. Viljoen has written, 'For Matthew to associate Jesus as Messiah follows from expectations attested in many texts, according to which another eschatological figure would bring eschatological instruction.'[35] What this Messiah was to look like, however, seems not to have been that obvious. Whether or not Jesus was this very figure has been a puzzle for many people ever since. In this essay, it is assumed that he was the Messiah.

Summarising the Exegesis

These texts show as clearly as possible that the themes of the kingship and fatherhood of God, and Jesus' royal status were significant for the first Evangelist. It was also noted that the literary placement of the 'Jesus' Davidic origin' texts in Matthew's Gospel and the structure of Matthew's genealogy with regard to Jesus' royal status stress that Jesus is the Messiah and king.

The following implications can be drawn from the concepts of the kingship and fatherhood of God, together with Jesus' royal status in Matthew's Gospel. The picture of God in this Gospel can be summed up as follows: a gracious, merciful, loving and forgiving king (except in 18:23-35) and father. These attributes of God seem to be so interwoven in the Gospel that one cannot easily or neatly separate them. To begin with God as a gracious king and father, the Evangelist seems to have viewed God's person, character and behaviour through Jesus' person, life and ministry towards his people and children as an expression of grace. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' sympathy with tax collectors (τελῶναι), Gentiles (τελῶναι... ἐθνικοὶ/ἔθνη), sinners and prostitutes (πόρναι) supports this. Jesus turns Matthew, a tax collector (τελώνης), into a disciple (9:9). The disciples had experienced God's grace by their initial calling, as well as in their walk with the earthly Jesus. Jesus was known as a friend of tax collectors and sinners (11:19) because he could eat and drink with them (9:10-13). A prophecy was made about his mission to the Gentiles and that they would find hope in his name (12:18, 21, for Jesus' mission to the Gentiles, cp. 10:18; 24:14; 28:19). This is supported when he heals a centurion's servant (8:5-13) and the Canaanite woman's daughter and then praises her faith (15:21-28). All these are expressions God's grace.

The Gospel's portrait of God as a merciful and forgiving king and father can be found in the following texts: 6:12, 14; 9:2-8, 13 (Jesus); 12:7 (Jesus); 18:23-35. The concepts of mercy and forgiveness are more prominent in the

[35] Francois P. Viljoen, 'Jesus' Teaching on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount', *Neotestamentica* 40.1 (2006), 149.

Gospel of Matthew than in the whole of the rest of the NT.[36] The payment of a full day's wage to labourers who have worked only one hour is such an act of God's mercy (20:1-16). Jesus' attention to the children (παιδία) and the 'little ones' (μικροί in Matt 18), and to the blind and the lame in the temple (21:14-16) also add to the evidence.

Finally, we have the picture of God as a loving person. In Matthew, God's love is described as reaching beyond boundaries of racial differences or social rank. In 2:1-12, for example, God brings Gentile wise men to worship Jesus. He chooses Galilee of the Gentiles as the place for Jesus to begin his earthly ministry (4:15-16). The faith of the Roman centurion (8:5-13) and that of the Canaanite woman (15:21-28) are probably best understood as acts of God's love and grace. For Matthew, the love of God/Jesus to the world is the model *par excellence* for the love of the disciples to humankind (25:31-46).

Ethical and Practical Implications

The fundamental issue in this section is how one should treat others, as members of the kingdom. Findings of this study can be discussed under the *imitatio Dei/Christi* ('imitating God/Christ'). As Allison suggests, the main focus seems to be on 'abandoning animosity and demonstrating unexpected generosity.'[37] The *imitatio Dei*[38] ('imitating God') in the first Gospel includes being a loving person (5:44-45); this command is given to the disciples who are to emulate the heavenly Father. The concept of *imitatio Dei* ('imitating God') also comprises being perfect (5:48); the disciples of Jesus are to be perfect just as their heavenly Father is perfect. Furthermore, this concept includes being forgiving (18:32b). The *imitatio Christi* ('imitating Christ') aspect can be found in the way in which Matthew related the mission of the disciples to that of Jesus: as Jesus is meant to *primarily* preach to Israel (9:35), so the disciples are sent *primarily* to Israel (10:5-6); as Jesus has power to heal the diseases (4:24; 9:35), so have the disciples (10:1); as Jesus shows mercy and forgives sins (9:2-8, 10-13), so the disciples are expected to do the same (6:12; 9:13; 18:27, 32b-33). To extend this aspect a bit further, in the first Gospel the call to exercise mercy and forgiveness towards others is grounded in the person and character of God and Jesus. So, God's mercy and

[36] The notion of mercy is conveyed by the verb ἐλεέω (8x in Matt vs. 3x in Mark and 4x in Luke), by the adjective ἐλεήμων (1x vs. 0x in Mark and 0x Luke) and by the noun ἔλεος (3x [9:13; 12:7; 23:23] vs. 0x in Mark and 6x in Luke). Other instances of mercy may include Joseph's attitude in not wanting to put Mary to open shame (1:19) and an appeal that a husband is to show mercy to his wife by not divorcing her (5:31-32). The discussion over this theme is provided elsewhere (cf. Isaac K. Mbabazi, 'The Significance of Interpersonal Forgiveness in Matthew's Gospel'; a PhD Thesis; The University of Manchester [2011], 44-51).

[37] Allison, *Constructing Jesus,* 322.

[38] For more discussion on the notion of *imitatio Dei/Christi* ('imitating God/Christ'), see Allison, 311, 320-22, 325, 349, 355-56, 358, 368, 375.

forgiveness exemplified in Jesus' person, life and ministry constitutes a paradigm for the disciples to teach and practice mercy and forgiveness.

The central point of Matthew's teaching about discipleship is the necessity for radical obedience to Jesus' commandments. Disciples are radically conformed to Jesus' teaching and commandments (cf. 28:19). In Matthew's view, it appears that a disciple is somebody to whom Jesus' commandments have been taught, and of whom obedience to them is expected. A change of one's way of life is thus required from a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, being a true disciple is being a Christian and a member of the new people of God.

Clearly, in the Gospel of Matthew, the Christians' mercy, love and forgiveness are modelled from God's mercy, love and forgiveness. Christians are called to love others, including their enemies, as God/Jesus loves the righteous and the unrighteous. They are called to be merciful as God/Jesus is merciful (5:7, 48). They are called to forgive people as God/Jesus forgives them (6:14; 9:2, 6; 12:7, 31-32; 18:21-22, 27, 33; 26:28). They are thus called to be perfect as God/Jesus is perfect (5:48). Although important qualifications must be made because God is God and humans are humans, for the first Evangelist, the mercy, love and forgiveness of God as displayed by Jesus provide the paradigm for how the members of his community understand their status and vocation as members and heirs of the 'royal family'.

Conclusion

This essay has explored the notion of royal family membership of Christians in the Gospel of Matthew. This teaching is typically Matthean. Although similar teaching may be found in other Gospels, in Matthew the note is sounded much more loudly through family membership language. It refers to the relationship between God and Jesus' followers (5:3, 10; 5:44-45, 48; 12:46-50). As members of a 'royal family', contemporary Christians in all contexts – even in a violent world similar to Matthew's – are to behave in a certain way whether others are within the family or outside it. They are to show behaviour worthy of their family membership, a behaviour that reflects the character of their king and father. This translates into showing mercy (5:7; 18:22b-33), loving their enemies (5:44-47), not taking revenge (5:38-41), seeking and granting forgiveness (6:12b, 14; 18:21-22, 32b-33), and seeking and granting reconciliation (5:23-24; 18:15-17). Grant Osborne says it well:

> We are to love our neighbors even when they are hostile and do evil acts against us. Love for enemies, moreover, is not restricted to feelings of benevolence but meant to be shown in acts of kindness. The model for this difficult activity is nothing less than God himself, our Father. Like obedient children we must emulate our Father and act toward evil people as he does. If God can be merciful to wicked as well as good people, so must we. The perfect love of God will guide our reactions to their animosity.[39]

[39] Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary: New Testament; ed. Clinton E. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 214.

Bibliography

Allison, Dale C. *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History*. London: SPCK, 2010.

Bauckham, Richard. 'Kingdom and Church according to Jesus and Paul'. *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 18 (1996): 1-27.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*. JSOT Sup 76. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

Caragounis, C. C. 'Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven'. In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Edited by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall. Downers Grove: IVP (1992): 417-30.

France, R.T. *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1989. Repr. 1997.

France, R.T. *The Gospel of Matthew*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

Funk, Robert. *Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium*. New York: Macmillan, 1996.

Marshall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

Mbabazi, Isaac K. 'The Significance of Interpersonal Forgiveness in Matthew's Gospel'. PhD Thesis. The University of Manchester, 2011.

Meaders, Gary T. 'The "Poor" in the Beatitudes of Matthew and Luke'. *Grace Theological Journal* 6.2 (1985): 305-18.

Mohrlang, Roger. *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives*. SNTSMS 48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew*. NIGTC. Edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Osborne, Grant R. *Matthew*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary: New Testament. Edited by Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.

Pennington, Jonathan T. 'The Kingdom of heaven in the Gospel of Matthew'. *SBJT* 12.1 (2008): 44-52.

Riches, John K. *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew*. Studies of the New Testament and Its World. Edited by J. Barclay, J. Marcus and J. Riches. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000.

Robinson, James M. 'Theological Autobiography'. In *The Craft of Religious Studies*. Edited by Jon R. Stone. New York: Palgrave (2000): 144-145.

Saldarini, Antony J. *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Stiewe, Martin and François Vouga. *Le Sermon sur la montagne: un abrégé de l'Évangile dans le miroitement de ses interprétations*. Genève: Labor et Fides, 2002.

Vermes, Geza. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Rev. edn. London: Penguin Books, 2004.

Viljoen, Francois P. 'Jesus' Teaching on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount'. *Neotestamentica* 40.1 (2006).

keeping up with contemporary Africa . . .

BookNotes for Africa

BookNotes for Africa is an occasional (usually twice-yearly) specialist journal offering reviews of recent Africa-related publications relevant for informed Christian reflection in and about Africa.

Each issue contains 40 one-paragraph evaluative reviews of titles selected especially for likely interest to theological students, educators, libraries, and researchers in Africa and overseas.

Now in its sixteenth year of publication, *BookNotes for Africa* has already provided learned reviews for more than a thousand recent Africa-related publications. The journal represents a uniquely handy, affordable means of keeping current with contemporary Christian reflection in Africa.

BookNotes for Africa is jointly sponsored by distinguished theological colleges in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia. Reviews are provided by a team of contributors drawn from throughout the continent and overseas. A simple mode of production enables modest subscription rates for the intended readership.

Subscriptions are organised on a 4-issue cycle, with airmail posting included. For addresses within Africa the rate for 4 issues is US$10; for addresses overseas the rate is US$15. Back issues are also available at $4 a copy in Africa, and $5 a copy overseas. Cheques should be drawn on a US bank, and made payable to "BookNotes for Africa" (or you may propose a practicable alternative). For inquiries or orders contact: booknotesforafrica@gmail.com, or write to:

BookNotes for Africa
PO Box 250100
Ndola, Zambia

Africa Christian TextbookS

Africa Christian TextbookS (ACTS) is a leading provider of theological literature in Africa. ACTS imports and also publishes serious theological textbooks and reference books, mainly in English, to equip Christian leaders for the challenges facing Africa today.
Some titles are available in Hausa (Nigeria) and Swahili (Kenya).

The mission of Africa Christian TextbookS is to strengthen the church in Africa by providing evangelical, relevant and affordable theological literature and literature-related services for Christian leaders and institutions in order to advance the cause of Christ.

ACTS Kenya is willing to visit theological institutions within Kenya – a book table can be set up for students for a day. If a conference is taking place then ACTS may be able to offer a book table for the occasion.

ACTS Kenya can be contacted in the following ways:

1. Via website - www.actskenya.org
2. Via email - acts.kenya@gmail.com
3. By phone - 0711 613 797
4. By post - P.O. Box 145-00502 Karen, Nairobi, Kenya
5. Visit - ACTS is on the campus of Africa International University, Karen

ACTS is based in Bukuru, Nigeria, West Africa

ACTS is registered as a non-profit trust with the Corporate Affairs Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. ACTS operates under a Board of Trustees and thus is like an NGO (non-governmental organisation) or FBO (faith-based organisation) contributing to the development of resources for the training and education of Christian workers in Africa.

Africa Christian TextbookS,
Theological College of Northern Nigeria,
PMB 2020, Bukuru, 390008,
Plateau State, Nigeria
See the ACTS website for more contact information:
www.africachristiantextbooks.com

Energizing Church Development in Africa Through the Gifts of the Spirit

by Danny McCain

Introduction

The gifts of the Spirit are special abilities given to individual Christians that aid in the building up of the body of Christ and the spreading and strengthening of God's kingdom on earth. This definition or one similar to it is the common understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The question is whether this is as complete and comprehensive a definition as it should be. It is the thesis of this paper that the definition is not comprehensive enough to include all that is implied by the "gifts of the Spirit."

The word "gift" comes from the Greek word *charisma* and is most often simply translated "gift." The verb form of the word, *chariszomai* simply means to give something to someone graciously. Several things were given in the New Testament including sight (Lk 7:21), safety of people (Acts 27:24), an inheritance (Gal 3:18), suffering (Phil 1:29), and a name (Phil 2:9). Perhaps the most extensive use of the verb form of the word refers to forgiveness that is freely given (Lk 7:42, 43, 2 Cor 3:7, 10, 12:13, Eph 4:32, Col 2:13, 3:13).

Apart from Peter's statement which says, *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others"* (1 Pet 4:10), all of the other 16 references to the noun *charisma* are found in Paul's writings. Paul uses the word *charisma* to refer to the gift of eternal life (Rom 6:23), Christ's gift of salvation (Rom 5:15-16) and the gift of singleness (1 Cor 7:7). Paul uses the word in a more intangible manner where he tells the Philippians, *"For it has been **granted** to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him"* (1:29). We would not ordinarily think of suffering as a gift. However, that is the way Paul describes it. However, most of the time, Paul uses the word *charisma* to describe those special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers that made them strong (Rom 1:11). These no doubt included many different abilities but Paul specifically mentions the gift of healing three times (1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30). Though this is not the exclusive way gifts were given to people, Paul tells Timothy that the gifts were given through the laying on of hands (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6).

The general idea is that when individuals become believers, the Holy Spirit either gives them a special spiritual ability or enhances in a special way a natural ability they already have so that they are capable of contributing to the building up of God's kingdom. Everyone has something to contribute. No one has been left out of being a part of God's team to build and strengthen the church. Therefore, every believer has been given some kind of special ability to bless and build up the church.

An Overview of the Gifts of the Spirit

Although there are disagreements about individual gifts, especially the supernatural gifts, the issue of the gifts of the Spirit is not overly controversial. The following questions and answers provide a brief overview of the basic issues related to the gifts of the Spirit:[1]

1. *What is the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit?* They are designed to build up and support the body of Christ.
2. *Are the gifts of the Spirit supernatural or natural?* Most of them are natural abilities that have received special enhancement by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some gifts, such as the gift of miracles, are definitely supernatural.
3. *Who has these spiritual gifts?* Every believer has been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and at the same time was given at least one special gift by the Spirit.
4. *Is it possible to have more than one gift?* Yes, it is possible and likely that most people have multiple gifts.
5. *Is the list of the gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament complete?* Probably not. Nowhere in the New Testament is the gift of music mentioned. However, it is almost certainly a gift of the Spirit that blesses and benefits the body of Christ.
6. *Are all the gifts of the Spirit still with us?* Some believe in the cessation of the supernatural gifts after the apostolic age. In light of any clear statement in Scripture to that effect, I do not accept the cessationist theory. Though we may not often see the supernatural gifts, the Holy Spirit has the authority to distribute them as he wishes.
7. *How can Christian believers discover their spiritual gifts?* This is a difficult question to answer quickly. However, I would encourage people to focus on these ideas:
   a. Experiment with opportunities.
   b. Examine your feelings.
   c. Evaluate your effectiveness.
   d. Expect confirmation from others.
8. *What is the primary illustration of the gifts of the Spirit?* The various gifts of the Spirit are compared to various members of the body.

[1] I discuss the gifts of the Spirit in more detail in *We Believe: Vol. 1 An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, ACTS, Bukuru, 2004. The chapters include “Introduction to Spiritual Gifts” (pp. 265-280) and “Individual Gifts of the Holy Spirit” (pp. 281-306).

9. *What are the gifts of the Spirit that are mentioned in the New Testament?* The gifts of the Spirit can be divided into three general categories:
   a. *Speaking Gifts*
      1) Apostle (Ephesians 4:11)
      2) Prophet (Ephesians 4:11)
      3) Evangelist (Ephesians 4:11)
      4) Pastor-Teacher (Ephesians 4:11)
      5) Teaching (1 Corinthians 12:28)
      6) Exhortation (Romans 12:8)
      7) Knowledge (1Corinthians 12:8)
      8) Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)
   b. *Serving Gifts*
      1) Service/Helps (Romans 12:7a; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
      2) Hospitality (Romans 12:13)
      3) Giving (Romans 12:8)
      4) Administration (1 Corinthians 12:28)
      5) Mercy (Romans 12:8)
      6) Discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10)
   c. *Supernatural Gifts*
      1) Healing[2] (1 Corinthians 12:9)
      2) Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)
      3) Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:9, 27)
      4) Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)
      5) Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)

A Broader Application of the Gifts of the Spirit

Although there are some variations within the way the gifts of the Spirit are understood and applied, there is general agreement about that which has been presented so far. However, there is another application of the gifts of the Spirit that I would like to stress.

Not only are individual believers given to support and strengthen the local church, I also believe this same kind of individual gifting and blessing applies to larger bodies as well. In other words, some local churches or other sub-divisions within Christianity develop certain specialties and use those to bless the wider body of Christ. Those individual churches or bodies, in turn, become like arms and eyes and ears to a bigger portion of the body of Christ or even the overall body of Christ like an individual does to a local congregation.

This thesis is supported in several ways in the New Testament. First, the word church is used in both a local and corporate sense. When Jesus was

[2] The gift of healing may not always be supernatural. It is likely that many physicians, nurses, therapists and other health professionals have a special ability to aid in healing, though it would not be supernatural.

teaching his disciples how to correct a brother who had fallen, the ultimate step of discipline was to *"tell it to the church"* (Matthew 18:17). This obviously was referring to the local worship assembly of which the person was a part and not all of the believers in the world. However, when Jesus said, in response to the confession of Peter, *"I will build my church"* (Matthew 16:18) he was not referring just to a local congregation but to the worldwide movement we call Christianity. In the only two times Jesus used the word church, he used it in two different senses.

This same distinction is made in the epistles. Paul wrote to the *"churches"* (plural) *in Galatia* (Galatians 1:2) These were individual local congregations that make up the overall body of Christ in that area. He wrote to individual churches (1 Corinthians 1:2) and even a church that met in a house (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:9; Colossians 4:15)). However, when Paul refers to the church in Ephesus, he was referring to all of the followers of Christ wherever they are. Christ is the head of all Christians in the world not just the local Church (Ephesians 1:22). It is the whole body of Christ that submits to Christ (5:23) and it is all the believers all over the world who make up the bride of Christ (5:27).

The local church and the worldwide Church have similar characteristics.

- They both have leaders over them.
- They both are made up of smaller units.
- They both represent Jesus Christ on the earth.
- They both are submissive to the lordship of Christ.

The passages in 1 Corinthians 12 that talk about the *"body of Christ"* appear to be referring to the local church and therefore the primary application is that individual members of various local churches are the ones that possess the gifts necessary for that local body to function. However, the reference to the body of Christ in Ephesians 1:22 (see also Colossians 1:18, 24) is clearly a reference to the worldwide body of Christ. Although these passages do not make this specific point, it is reasonable to assume that just as individual believers make up the local church and bring various expertise and wisdom to that local congregation, so various congregations and other corporate Christian groups make up the various components of the larger body of Christ. If that is true, then we can apply the "parts of the body" illustration equally to the worldwide body of Christ as we can to the local congregation.

I believe this is precisely what we must do if we are going to energize Church development in Africa. We must recognize that various denominations and para-church organizations have individual gifts and abilities and expertise and emphases that can be a blessing to other parts of the body of Christ. In fact, we must go beyond just recognizing this and actively cooperate together to make sure that each body part that is strong in one area helps to compensate for those who are weak in that area.

It is generally known that not all segments of the body of Christ are equally developed or knowledgeable in all areas just as individual Christians are not equally developed and knowledgeable in all areas. Some denominations have a better understanding of one particular doctrine or practice of Christianity than others. And those who have a particular specialty in one area tend to stress and emphasize that and see the whole of Christianity through that particular mixture of understanding and specialty.[3] In so doing, they provide that emphasis and specialty to other parts of the body of Christ that may not yet have a good understanding of that particular issue.

Unfortunately, when a particular group of people discover or rediscover a particular truth, sometimes they appreciate it so much they tend to over-emphasize it and, at times, will so over-emphasize it as to get it out of balance. However, their overemphasis of a particular Christian doctrine or practice helps to pull the rest of the body of Christ back closer to a more balanced approach to that doctrine. In actual fact, the peculiarities of a particular denomination or group sometimes are the very things that the rest of Christianity needs to balance it up properly.

Two Illustrations

I believe that this is the value of various movements throughout church history. Two examples will illustrate this point.

---

[3] Bill Gothard gives an illustration of this on an individual basis in a story in which a plate of food falls on the floor in a room with seven different people who have seven different gifts of the Spirit. Each responds in a different way (See *We Believe*, p. 278).

1. The Gift of Prophecy
   a. "That's what happens when you're not careful."
   b. The Motivation: To correct his life.
2. The Gift of Mercy
   a. "Don't feel badly. It could have happened to anyone."
   b. The Motivation: To relieve embarrassment.
3. The Gift of Serving
   a. "Oh, let me help you clean it up."
   b. The Motivation: To fulfill a need.
4. Gift of Teaching
   a. "The reason that fell is that it was too heavy on one side."
   b. The Motivation: To discover why it happened.
5. The Gift of Exhortation
   a. "Next time, let's serve the dessert with the meal."
   b. The Motivation: To correct the future.
6. The Gift of Giving
   a. "I'll be happy to buy a new dessert (or plate)."
   b. The Motivation: To give a tangible need.
7. The Gift of Administration
   a. "Jim, would you get the mop. Sue, please help pick it up and Mary, help me fix some other dessert."
   b. The Motivation: Achieve the immediate goal of the group.

1. The Holiness Movement

In the 19th century, the followers of John Wesley gradually divided into two parts. One group became the followers of John Fletcher who emphasized the progressive nature of sanctification. The other followed Adam Clarke, who emphasized the crisis or instantaneous aspect of sanctification. These men would probably not have disagreed with each other. Each man believed in both a crisis and process aspect of sanctification. However, these two emphases gradually led to two movements. The John Fletcher emphasis led to the mainstream Methodist Church which has had a distinctive history, especially in the pioneer days of America.

The Adam Clarke stress on crisis sanctification led to what has been called the "holiness movement." This group was made up in America of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of Churches, the Free Methodist Church, the Pilgrim Holiness Church (which merged with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1968 to form the Wesleyan Church) and the Church of the Nazarene. The Salvation Army in the UK also grew out of this same emphasis. There were smaller groups and mergers and coalitions within this movement.[4] There was also some disagreement in the movement about the best way to describe this crisis experience of sanctification. However, the overall stress of the movement was on personal holiness. This was preached and taught and looked for in Bible passages and stressed so much that it is likely that the movement over-emphasized the doctrine of holiness and, in so doing, strayed into error. However, the emphasis of this movement, though not always entirely balanced, helped to influence the overall body of Christ, particularly in the 19th century. This encouraged a greater consciousness of sin in the overall American church and a greater emphasis on personal piety. I believe it can be demonstrated that as the holiness movement began to lose some of its emphasis and to decline as a movement in America in the 20th century, there was a corresponding decline in public and private holiness in America.

Whereas the American holiness movement over-stated some doctrines and even misunderstood certain concepts of holiness, and certainly emphasized the doctrine of holiness beyond what is found in the Bible, the strong emphasis on holiness influenced the whole Christian community to some extent, making it more aware of the seriousness of sin. Even though the overall body of Christ did not accept or even appreciate all of the beliefs and emphases within that movement, they were influenced in a positive way to practice more holiness because of the emphasis of this movement.

2. The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement

In the 20th century, we have seen a similar phenomenon in the growth and development of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. The primary

[4] See Donald Dayton, "Holiness Movement, American," *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Editor: J. D. Douglas, Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1974, pp. 474-475.

characteristic of this movement has been a return to a stress on the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit, including the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal movement began similar to the holiness movement (and in fact, grew directly out of the holiness movement). By stressing certain doctrines and practices, people who were sympathetic to these ideas gradually gravitated to this movement, and churches and denominations were born that emphasized these distinctives.

However, in about mid-century, a new phenomenon took place. There gradually developed a stress of similar issues within the mainstream branches of the Christian church through organizations like the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International and other Charismatic bodies. In this way, the refocus of attention on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which was being practiced by individual churches and denominations, now began to show up in practically all denominations. The separate movement had now influenced the whole body.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in Nigeria. Pentecostal styles of worship have penetrated nearly all churches in the last 20 years. Pentecostal terminology and Pentecostal music have become commonplace in evangelical and even mainline denominations.

From the viewpoint of the overall body of Christ, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have gone too far with their beliefs related to the Holy Spirit. It is believed by the mainstream denominations that they over-emphasize the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit to the point that they are in error. However, there is little question about the significant influence of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements on the overall body of Christ. It certainly can be argued that the Pentecostal movement has helped to pull back the mainstream church closer to a more balanced and Biblical understanding and appreciation of the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit and a more "spiritual" form of corporate worship.

Regional Gifts of the Spirit

Just as various movements have had contributions to make to the overall body of Christ, various regions of Christianity also have developed strengths and specialties that can be of assistance to other parts of the worldwide Christian communion. We see some hints of this in the church as it developed during the apostolic period. When Paul writes to the Thessalonians, he compliments them on their spiritual progress and then says,

> *You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia - your faith in God has become known everywhere* (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8).

Paul felt the way the Thessalonians had received the gospel and had started adjusting their lives and even the way they were evangelizing others was a model to various parts of the body of Christ in other places. That meant this particular strength in their church was making a contribution to the church in other parts of the world. In some sense of the word, it was a gift of the Spirit to other parts of the Church.

We see this support and blessing of one part of the body of Christ to another demonstrated in practical ways through financial support. Even the brand new church in Antioch was apparently financially stronger than the church in Jerusalem and sent a gift to the church within a short time of its creation (Acts 11:29-30). Paul later took up additional offerings from the missionary churches in Macedonia to help the church in Jerusalem in its time of need (2 Cor 8:10-21).

In addition, when one looks at the seven churches in the book of Revelation, again one sees specific characteristics or "strengths" in the various churches.

- The Church at Ephesus was hard working and persevered.
- The Church at Smyrna was spiritually rich, in spite of persecution.
- The Church at Pergamum was faithful loyal in times of stress.
- The Church at Thyatira was characterized by deeds, faith, love, service and perseverance.
- The Church at Sardis was characterized by a few pure and holy people.
- The Church at Philadelphia was characterized by deeds and opportunities.
- The Church at Laodicea was characterized by wealth and some deeds.

It is true that most of these churches were also known by certain weaknesses or negative characteristics. However, even in their weakened and compromised conditions, most of the churches still had something to contribute to other parts of the body or some strength that was worth modeling by others.

These examples suggest that there is a strong precedent for one segment of the body of Christ developing an ability or a strength or asset that can be useful to another part of the body of Christ that may not be quite as strong in that area. We can assume that these are gifts of the Spirit, just as much as individual abilities are gifts of the Spirit to the local church. We can also assume that these strengths and abilities of one part of the body of Christ are designed to assist the rest of the body of Christ. If this was true in the New Testament time, we can assume that it is true today.

Perhaps the best example of this is in the field of missions. Where one part of the body of Christ is strong, it can help another region of the world develop. The church in the western world planted the church in Africa and then for the next one hundred years aided it in its development. The church in the western world has also aided the rest of the world through a growing

awareness of human rights. This started during the time of William Wilberforce who helped to outlaw slavery in the British Empire. Over the next two centuries this movement has helped to make the worldwide body of Christ more sensitive about discrimination and human rights.

The African American Church in the last 100 years has experienced many things, including the Civil Rights Movement. This movement was primarily led by pastors and Christian leaders such Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Rev. Andrew Young, Rev. Jesse Jackson and others. The African American church leadership has learned much about responding to discrimination, suffering, violence, hatred, injustice, racism, prejudice and other social evils. They overcame these things in a most amazing and commendable way. It is my conviction that those Christian leaders who led that movement have something to contribute to the rest of the body of Christ around the world, especially where those vices are still be practiced. African American Christian leaders have something to teach the rest of the world about justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, non-violence, and social mobilization to respond to evil. Certainly these are examples of the work of the *"Spirit of truth"* working in the lives of this distinct part of the body of Christ. This work becomes one of the gifts of the Spirit to help other parts of the body.

Contributions of the African Church

In light of the general principles outlined above, what application is there in this for the church in Africa? How can these observations help to energize and mobilize the African church to move forward?

Here are two additional questions that will give direction to the response: What are the gifts that the various parts of the Christian community in Africa have that they can share with each other and, in so doing, strengthen the whole? In addition, what are the gifts of that the African Church have that can be useful to the worldwide body of Christ?

1. Using African Gifts to Build Up the Body of Christ in Africa

Although the church in Africa is quite strong overall, it is unfortunately uneven in its development. Obviously, there are very strong parts and other parts that are still weak and vulnerable. The church in Africa is still relatively young, compared to the church in Europe or America. However, I believe that the church in Africa has matured to the point that it has the ability to offer substantial assistance to the less developed parts of the church in other parts of Africa. I will mention two specific illustrations.

1.1 Assistance with Evangelism and Missions

Although the church was initially planted by foreigners in Africa, it is now being spread almost exclusively by Africans. And Africans are proving to be very adept at evangelism and missions. The ECWA Missionary Society (EMS) is the largest African missionary agency in Africa, with over 1000 missionaries doing cross-cultural missions work. The Nigerian Evangelical Missions

Association (NEMA) is a coalition of over 100 missionary agencies that are all doing cross-cultural missions work. These kinds of agencies are why the church in Nigeria continues to grow at a phenomenal rate.

However, only about 50 percent of the continent currently identifies themselves as Christians. Who is going to reach the rest of the continent? Will it be necessary for foreigners to come from outside to expand the church in Africa? I think not. Various bodies in Africa have developed expertise and demonstrated that they are capable of evangelism and church planting. Thus, it will be Africans who complete the evangelism of the rest of the continent.

In light of this, I think it is necessary for the church in Africa to continue looking inward for the personnel, the financial resources and the strategies to continue expanding the Christian message in Africa. I believe that there is now enough experience and expertise in African missions that Africa Christianity is very capable of completing the evangelization of the rest of Africa.

1.2 Responding to HIV and AIDS

The HIV and AIDS pandemic that has exploded across Africa in the last 25 years is the biggest single problem facing the African continent. Though from my perspective, the church was a little slow in getting engaged in the HIV and AIDS battle, it has been the church and individual Christians who have primarily led the fight against HIV and AIDS. The first body, outside of the medical field, to respond to the AIDS crisis in Plateau State was the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS). Their response eventually led to the "Aid for AIDS" division of FCS. FCS has trained of millions of young people and thousands of teachers in public schools. In addition, their leadership has led to the creation of many different kinds of responses and organizations that are responding to the HIV crisis. The major denominations in Nigeria have also not been idle. Several denominations have created strong responses to the HIV/AIDS problem including the Catholics, Anglicans, ECWA and COCIN.

What these successful examples demonstrate is that there is experience and expertise related to HIV and AIDS in several parts of the body of Christ. And, using the body illustration and the lessons we can learn from individual gifts of the Spirit, we believe that there is enough strength and "gifts" in the church in Africa to help all other churches in Africa respond appropriately to the AIDS crisis.

The Church in Africa has grown to the point that it needs little from outside Africa. What it does need is to be challenged to look inward to those denominations, para-church organizations and other bodies who have the gifts of the Spirit that can guide and support other parts of the body of Christ as they develop their responses to the AIDS crisis.

2. Using African Gifts to Build Up the Body of Christ Around the World

Not only is the African Church capable of aiding the other parts of the African church in various kinds of specialty ministries, the African Church is

capable of using its many gifts to assist and strengthen the church outside of Africa as well. The time is past when the Africa church can be viewed as a "receiver only" church. The African Church is now strong and has the ability to aid other parts of the body of Christ. How is that going to be done and, specifically, what are the contributions that the African church can make?

2.1 Historical Orthodoxy

For the last 250 years or so, orthodox Christianity has been battered by various movements including classic liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, secularism and other less than orthodox interpretations and applications of Christianity. Obviously some of these issues and proponents found their way to Africa. However, as the African Church has matured and taken over the leadership of their denominations and theological institutions, there has been a decided shift back toward historic orthodoxy within the African Church.

A case in point is the Anglican Church. A generation ago, many Anglican priests had studied abroad in institutions sympathetic toward non-traditional theologies. However, with the growth of Anglican seminaries and training institutions in Nigeria and the taking over of the leadership of the various Anglican provinces by African leadership, there has been a steady move back to traditional orthodoxy and even evangelicalism.[5]

The Primate of Nigeria, the Most Revered Peter Akinola, gave a press conference in Lagos on 30 January 2008 in which he announced the upcoming Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) to be held in Jerusalem. He explained the purpose of the conference: "That conference is called by those members of the Anglican Family who see themselves as orthodox Anglicans, who are upholding the authority of scriptures, and believe that the time has come to come together to fashion the future of our Anglican family."[6]

One major contribution of the Anglican bishops has been to resist the pressures from the US and Canada to remove prohibitions against ordaining practicing homosexuals. Without this resistance, it is likely that the Anglican Communion would have changed their rules against homosexuality, which

[5] Why is it that the African church feels more comfortable with traditional orthodoxy and is not attracted to theological liberalism? I believe the answer lies in the traditional worldviews of most Africans. Theological liberalism is based upon rationalism which is primarily anti-supernatural at its foundation. However, traditional life in Africa has been anything but anti-supernatural. African traditional religions were characterized by all kinds of supernatural phenomenon. Therefore, it was easy for new believers to accept and appreciate the supernatural aspects of Christianity and there was no attraction to get rid of them. Therefore, attempts to compromise the Christian faith have not been well received, especially since the Christian church has matured in Africa.

[6] GAFCON Website: http://www.gafcon.org/

would have been a serious step away from historic orthodoxy.[7] In fact, due to ongoing pressure from African bishops, the American and Canadian branches of the Anglican Communion were not invited to the following Anglican Consultative Council, because of their failure to repent over the homosexuality issue.[8]

However, not only is the church in Africa holding onto traditional orthodoxy and in some cases returning to it, the African church is serving as a catalyst to call the western church back to her historical and theological heritage. In an interview with the BBC during the 1998 Lambeth conference, the Right Reverend Benjamin Kwashi, bishop of the Jos Diocese, said, "The American church must look inward, seriously looking at how to call its own people to faith and order."[9] In the same article, an American bishop, the Right Reverend Keith Ackerman, Bishop of Quincy, Illinois, declared, "The people of Africa and Asia for the most part have been able to take us back to the scriptures, and they've been very specific about the authority of Scripture."[10] This demonstrates the point very clearly. The African church understands and is committed to traditional orthodoxy and is well prepared to correct the other parts of the body of Christ that are straying from the faith. This commitment to traditional orthodoxy is certainly a gift of the Spirit of truth that is positively influencing the worldwide body of Christ.

2.2 Holistic Christianity

During the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century, western and particularly American Christianity fought many battles over what was then called the "social gospel."[11] The social gospel was an attempt to address the many ills of society using Christian principles. Its opponents, however, believed that an overemphasis on the social gospel encouraged the church to neglect the more important parts of Christianity such as evangelism and discipleship. It is likely that many churches did swing too far in one direction or another. For example, the opponents of the social gospel were no doubt overly influenced by the secularism of the western world, accepting the belief that the work of the church was primarily "spiritual" and not social.

However, African Christianity was developed in a culture with two distinct qualities that made it more sympathetic toward the church being involved in compassionate ministries and issues related to justice and human rights. First, Africans have not been baptized by the western concepts of secularism, in which some parts of society are considered sacred and others are considered

---

[7] *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, August 7, 1998; "Lambeth Conference, Part Two," http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week149/feature.htm

[8] *BBC News, Q&A*: Anglican Church Split, 26 February 2008; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4298253.stm

[9] *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, August 7, 1998

[10] *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, August 7, 1998

[11] See *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Gospel

secular. Africans move more freely back and forth between the "religious" and the other parts of society. Second, most Africans were raised with a first hand understanding of poverty, disease, injustice, ethnic conflict and other social ills. Therefore, these issues are less theoretical and more personal than they are in large portions of the western world. Thus Jesus' addressing such issues is natural and expected.

Because of this, the dichotomy between the spiritual and the secular really does not exist in the same way as it does in the western world. Evangelism is obviously God's work but taking care of the poor and needy is just as much God's work. In my humble opinion, the African church has gotten the wholistic gospel concept right and this is a major "gift" that must be shared with the rest of the Christian world.

Prerequisites to Being A Blessing to Others

If the corporate gifts of the Spirit found in various churches and institutions and other bodies are going to be a blessing to others, there are certain attitudes that the various parts of the body of Christ must have. These are suggested in the body illustration. Although the interpretation and primary application of this illustration relates to individual gifts that serve and assist the local congregations of which they are part, I believe there is a legitimate application of local bodies and other corporate entities relating to the larger body of Christ.

The body illustration begins in 1 Corinthians 12:12: *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."* Paul continues:

> *Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.* (1 Cor 12:14-18).

How does the body illustration help energize the development of the African church?

1. We Must Celebrate the Diversity of the Body of Christ.

The body illustration shows us the diversity of the human body and consequently the diversity of the body of Christ. Paul specifically refers to the foot, the hand, the eye and the ear. Each of these has a unique function that is designed to support the entire body. All look different and have different functions and none exists simply for its own benefit.

Obviously the original application is that we as individual members of the church have different gifts that enable us to fulfill different roles in the body of

Christ. Some of these roles are specifically outlined later in 1 Corinthians 12. However, as stated above, I believe that there is an application of this truth to the relationship between the corporate bodies and the overall body of Christ. There is diversity within the body because of culture, personality and conviction. And that is to be acknowledged as something good, not something bad. Each of the distinct members of the body of Christ has something to offer.

- The Catholic Church tends to focus more on a ceremonial and celebratory approach to Christianity. Protestants tend to focus on a more expositional and individualistic approach to Christianity.
- The Wesleyan/Arminian tradition focuses on human responsibility. The Calvinistic tradition focuses on divine sovereignty.
- The Baptist Church focuses more on evangelism and outreach. The denominations from the pietistic movement focus more on personal and spiritual development.
- The Pentecostal movement focuses on the subjective and emotional part of humanity. The Reformed part of Christianity focuses on the rational part of humanity.
- The old-line churches are much more formal. The newer independent churches are much less formal.

It is my conviction that all of these bodies have an element of truth in them and something from which others can learn. It is also true that all of them may have some element of error in them. I believe that God has given to each of these movements a particular focus and emphasis and particular distinctives that are part of the gift of the Spirit to the whole body. Understanding that fact is the first step in energizing the church for development.

No one person can teach Sunday School, lead the choir, take up the offering, serve as an usher and preach the sermon at the same time. It is also true that no particular church or denomination can have all the knowledge, skills, gifts and emphases that the whole world needs to respond properly to God. Thus, it is essential to acknowledge the diversity found within our denominations and other Christian bodies and find ways to work together rather than looking for ways to criticize and compete with each other.

2. We Must Appreciate the Unity of the Body of Christ.

The body illustration also demonstrates to us the unity of the body. Not only is the body a diverse thing having many different parts, all of those parts join together to make one unified whole. As Paul said, the ear does not complain because it is not an eye. Both are attached to the same body, both are fulfilling a role for the body as a whole and the body would be considered handicapped without each one.

Sometimes individual Christians get so involved in their own ministries they forget how important other members of the body of Christ are. For example, those to whom God has given the gift of evangelism tend to think that evangelism is about all that there is to Christianity. Teaching does not

really interest them; fellowship seems to be a waste of time; worship is good but the end product should always be the "salvation of souls." However, the evangelist must recognize that without the gifts of all the other members of the body of Christ, all of his or her effort would be in vain. If there was no one to teach and build up the new believers in the faith, they would be like the seed that springs up for a while, but because of the heat of the sun and the shallowness of the roots, they soon fall away (Luke 8:7). If there were no believers interested in Christian fellowship, which helps absorb new believers into the body of Christ, evangelism would simply be wasted effort.

I believe this same parallel exists within the overall body as well. We are one unified whole. The truth and ministry of Christianity does not exist within just one denomination. It exists in all of the diverse parts of the body of Christ. Therefore, the whole body of Christ is actually one.[12] Paul stresses this when he said,

> *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all* (Ephesians 4:3-6).

The emphasis of the book of Ephesians is upon the whole body of Christ. Thus, this passage, which refers to this oneness as the *"unity of the Spirit"* seems to be referring specifically to the unity and oneness of the whole body of Christ all over the world.

Too often we Christians have been narrow-minded and jealous of the strengths of other Christian traditions or organizations. If the church in Africa is going to be energized to move forward, we will need to recognize that the diversity within the church is a part of our overall unity and is a strength to be appreciated, not a liability to be criticized. The diversity that helps produce unity is one of gifts of the Holy Spirit to the body of Christ as a whole.

3. We Must Accept the Interdependence of the Body of Christ.

Though the various parts of the body are very different from one another, they are also interdependent upon one another. The eye needs the hand and the foot needs the eye. In fact every body part needs every other body part. If there is only one member of the body that is missing or is in some way incapacitated, the whole body is handicapped to that extent.

In 1 Corinthians 12:25, where the illustration of the body is developed, Paul says, "*There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*" The various body parts

[12] This is not a denial that there are heretics or false believers or cults that use the name "Christian" nor is this a call to embrace every *"wind of doctrine"* (Eph 4:14) that blows through the Christian community. It is an acknowledgement that there is great diversity within the body of Christ as illustrated in Romans 14.

are not in competition with one another. They are working together for the common good of the whole body.

Again, I acknowledge that the primary application of this passage must be related to how individual believers interact and respect each other. However, I also believe that as we recognize that various corporate parts of the body of Christ also have gifts, specialties and special insights into certain truths that they can offer to the rest, should we not have that same level of commitment to and respect for and interdependence upon our various Christian faith traditions?

- Should not COCIN Church be concerned if an ECWA Church is burned?
- Should not the Protestant Churches celebrate when schools are given back to the Catholic Church?
- Should not the Assemblies of God offer the right hand of fellowship and promise of cooperation to the new independent Pentecostal church nearby?

If what I have said is true, this means that there should be greater interaction and communication between the various parts of the body of Christ. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) must become more than just a tool to speak to government on behalf of the Christian community. It or some similar body needs to create a forum whereby the various parts of the body of Christ are encouraged to take greater advantage of their unity and diversity and encourage a greater appreciation for our interdependence. Older and stronger churches should reach out with encouragement and assistance to the newer ones. We must all recognize that we need each other if we are to see God's kingdom established on earth as it is heaven.

Conclusion

James declares, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows"* (1:17). Since there is unity in the Trinity, a gift from God is also a gift from the Holy Spirit. One of the particular gifts that Paul asked from God was this: *"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better"* (Ephesians 1:17). The Holy Spirit is a gift to us that provides us with wisdom and revelation. The Holy Spirit also gives to individual parts of the body of Christ special abilities. It is only as we recognize those special and unique abilities in our denominations and para-church organizations and become willing to share them with others and recognize them in others and receive them from others that we will be known as people of *"one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all"* (Ephesians 4:5). Thus, it is the gift and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that must energize the church in Africa to establish God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Bibliography

BBC News, Q&A: *Anglican Church Split*, 26 February 2008; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4298253.stm

Dayton, Donald. "Holiness Movement, American," *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Editor: J. D. Douglas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, pp. 474-475.

GAFCON Website: http://www.gafcon.org/

McCain, Danny. *We Believe: Vol. 1 An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Bukuru: ACTS, 2004.

Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, August 7, 1998; "Lambeth Conference, Part Two," http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week149/feature.htm

Wikipedia Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Gospel

Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

The *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* invites the submission of previously unpublished Articles and Book Reviews from an evangelical perspective.

Format: Electronic (soft) copies are the easiest to deal with in today's world. The article should be written, single-spaced, in MS Word or a program fully translatable into Word. The preferred Font is Arial 10 for the main text, or Times New Roman 11, if Arial is unavailable. Titles and headings will be reformatted to comply with the AJET Style Guide. Please ensure that full documentation of every source used, including sources from the Internet, appears in the Bibliography. Footnotes are required and these should follow the guidelines of a scholarly publication – we recommend the Chicago/Turabian style manual.

If the article contains Hebrew, Greek or other specialized, non-English fonts please ensure these are Unicode fonts and embedded in an accompanying PDF copy of your article to avoid printing problems. Download the free Unicode Cardo fonts on the Tyndale House website if necessary - www.TyndaleHouse.com.

Length: All articles normally should be between 3500 and 8000 words. Longer or shorter articles are considered on their individual merits.

Biographic Information: Please include a brief biographic sketch of your present vocational work, together with the last degree obtained and the name of the institution from which the degree was obtained.

Articles and Book Reviews should be emailed to:
ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke

View our website at www.scott.ac.ke
The *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*
is published by Scott Christian University,
a fully accredited and chartered university
in Kenya, East Africa.

AJET has been published since 1982 and is widely circulated. Become one of the many institutions and individuals around the world to subscribe to AJET.

Holy Spirit and Ecumenical Division:
Identifying the Theological Implications of Pentecostal-Charismatic Growth for Western Christianity

by Robert P. French II

Introduction

Christianity is experiencing a considerable paradigm shift. The Church is growing at a rate unprecedented in two thousand years of Christian history. While many articulate the decline of Christian faith in the West, the Church is rapidly increasing throughout the world. This increase has changed the geographic center of Christianity from the North to South. "The Christian church has experienced a larger geographical redistribution in the last fifty years than in any comparable period in its history, with the exception of the very earliest years of church history."[1] "This geographic and cultural shift has resulted in a plethora of new forms and expressions of Christian faith."[2] Never in the Church's history has Christianity been expressed through such a staggering array of idioms, languages, and cultures.

It is generally agreed this growth and array of expression is attributed to the spread of indigenous churches and the influence of Pentecostal or Charismatic characteristics, well summarized by Mark Noll:

> In the past one hundred years, the course of evangelical Christianity has been accelerated and complicated by two notable developments: first, the rise of Pentecostal or Charismatic expressions of the faith and, second, the rise of indigenous Christian churches that may have some vestigial connections with traditional denominations but that are essentially independent. Fueled especially by Pentecostal and independent movements, Christians with more-or-less evangelical commitments are found almost everywhere on the globe.[3]

Not only has the church experienced a geographical shift, it has done so primarily through charismatic expression. "This movement [Pentecostal-Charismatic] has been a major force in world evangelism and has exerted deep influence on the global Christian community."[4] The statistics of

---

[1] Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009): 21.

[2] Darrel L. Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World" in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, edited by Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006): 53.

[3] Noll, *The New Shape*, 42.

[4] Wilbert R. Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 3 (2001): 101. Concerning the term "[Pentecostal-Charismatic]" used above: Pentecostalism, Neo-Pentecostalism, Charismatic, and Neo-Charismatic will be referred to as Pentecostal-Charismatic. Utilizing the label of Pentecostalism carries with it theological connotations for a

Pentecostal-Charismatic growth astonish. In roughly one hundred years, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement accounts for a large majority, second only to the Roman Catholic Church, representing a quarter of all Christians.[5] Some scholars speculate that in the next century it will surpass the Roman Catholic Church, as everyday 8,000 people leave Catholicism in Latin America to join Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.[6] Not only has Pentecostal-Charismatic growth been astonishing, it has far-reaching implications for the global Church and "has contributed to the reconfiguration of the nature of Christianity."[7]

Two aspects of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, identified as the cause of successful growth, have influenced the reconfiguration of the Church's nature.[8] First, Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches have been effective evangelists and indigenous church planters. They have established churches on every inhabited continent, meeting the needs of local Christians in a variety of diverse cultures and environments unmatched by other Christian traditions.[9] This has led to hundreds, if not thousands, of cultures developing and embodying Christianity through their own unique cultural expression. Second, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches emphasize the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. This poses a challenge to many long-established Christian traditions, claiming they have largely neglected the Holy Spirit.[10]

Coupled with this theological neglect, many note that Western theologians and seminaries have ignored the global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. "Despite the significance of the Pentecostal movement and the danger it poses to the established churches, academic study of it by professional theologians is almost ridiculously insignificant."[11] This is echoed throughout the world, not only as it pertains to this movement but also to worldwide Christian growth. These movements need to be addressed, studied, and interacted with throughout the global Church. Western Christianity must acknowledge this

---

Western reader that do not well represent the expression of churches throughout the World or the present discussion.

[5] See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 1; Noll, *The New Shape*, 76; Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007): 164.

[6] Walter J. Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon: Historical Roots of the Pentecostal Movement" in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* edited by Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996): 3.

[7] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 14-15; Noll, *The New Shape*, 23.

[8] Noll, *The New Shape*, 42; Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 182-184.

[9] Shenk, "Recasting Theology," 102; Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 165.

[10] Clark Pinnock, "The Recovery of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Theology," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 1 (2004): 4.

[11] Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street," 3.

growth and the significance of Pentecostal-Charismatic influences. Identifying the distinctive elements of Pentecostal-Charismatics illuminate significant implications for Western Christianity.

1. Pentecostal-Charismatic Distinctives

It is a difficult task to attempt a comprehensive definition of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Yet several clear distinctives are easy to identify: emphasis upon the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and miracles, a supernatural worldview, and unique expressions of worship. Perhaps the most universal is an emphasis on the personal and immediate experience of the Holy Spirit.[12] "Their personal experience with the Holy Spirit gives them reason to believe that the same Holy Spirit who acted supernaturally in the lives and witness of the apostles is active today in similar ways."[13] Pentecostal-Charismatics believe this is a reality for all Christians as the Holy Spirit operates the same today as during the timeframe of the Apostles.[14] This is the first, and most universal core belief that distinguishes Pentecostal-Charismatics.

Second, Pentecostal-Charismatics believe that the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts. Many associate Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians by this foundational tenant. It is believed that the "full range of gifts and miraculous manifestations of the Spirit present in the New Testament are available for believers today."[15] The list of gifts vary among Pentecostal-Charismatics, but prophecy, speaking in tongues, exorcism, and healing are commonly identified and accompanied by all the gifts listed by Paul in his letters (e.g. 1 Cor 12:8-10). "These phenomena have been characteristic of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches throughout the world, are widespread," and have been incorporated in a great variety of churches.[16] Emphasis on spiritual gifts and miracles is possible through a worldview that is supernatural.

A supernatural worldview is the third defining characteristic of Pentecostal-Charismatics. Based on the Bible, they implicitly advocate a supernatural view of the world in which all the powers, spirits, and beings of both heaven and hell are inherently part of life. Throughout the world, most societies hold a holistic worldview in which there is no distinction between the spiritual and the physical.[17] Phillip Jenkins affirms this by identifying "many churches take the

[12] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 187; Shenk, "Recasting Theology," 102
[13] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 179.
[14] David W. Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Introduction to Theological Hospitality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006): 244.
[15] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 166.
[16] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 103.
[17] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 196.

supernatural worldview that pervades the Christian Scripture, with the recurrent themes of demons, possessions, exorcism, and spiritual healing."[18]

Finally, the fourth distinctive of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches is the unique ways in which they worship. "Worship is dramatic and participatory. There is a sense of the immediacy of the Holy Spirit."[19] "Pentecostals are known for less formalized and expressive forms of worship, including lifting hands, dancing, shouting and clapping."[20] It is questionable to identify this distinctive as indicative of Pentecostal-Charismatic worship, as much of what is considered 'expressive' or 'dramatic' can be viewed through indigenous people groups of different cultures. Additionally, exceptions can be found throughout the world; for example "the largest Pentecostal denomination in Chile, the Methodist Pentecostal Church uses Methodist liturgy."[21] Regardless of these concerns, it is important to note the distinctive nature of Pentecostal-Charismatic worship in relation to established Christian churches.

These four distinctives help us understand the ways in which Christian tradition and long-established Churches in the West respond to Pentecostal-Charismatic influences. These influences have the potential to cause both unity and division. Addressing the questions and answers that inform belief is helpful in identifying differences and similarities. It is possible to compare Christian tradition with Pentecostal-Charismatic expressions by presenting the four distinctives in the form of questions. What is the work and role of the Holy Spirit? Do miracles and spiritual gifts occur today? Is the inherent worldview of the Bible supernatural? How is dramatic or expressive worship viewed?

2. Exploring Christian Tradition

The Church has traditionally understood the Holy Spirit by His relationship in the Trinity and described His work as ongoing and mysterious. Theologians have, for the most part, been much more willing to extensively study the Spirit's character, His role in creation, and His work in establishing the Church. Many scholars have produced outstanding works detailing the Church's history and understanding of various theological issues.[22] This article is less concerned with replicating or challenging these works than in identifying general trends. General trends highlight how the Church has understood the

[18] Phillip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006): 12-13.
[19] Shenk, "Recasting Theology," 102.
[20] Tennet, *Theology in the Context*, 167.
[21] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 13.
[22] It is worth noting that Western study of Church history has been excellent, even though such study has been and is a one-sided approach. Church history has been and continues to be limited by many Christian leaders, educators, theologians, and teachers in that they often neglect, or are largely unaware of, Christian histories and theologies from other areas of the world. This is well exemplified by Pentecostal-Charismatic histories, which will be discussed in the next section.

Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts and miracles, the claim for a supernatural worldview, as well as worship. If many traditions in the Church have neglected the Holy Spirit, as some claim, then it is necessary to determine the reasons and causes.

Several contemporary Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars have produced works attempting to address this claim. *Quenching the Spirit*, by William DeArteaga, articulates his examination of the Church's history in order to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit has indeed been neglected in practice and study. The theory of his work seeks to identify the presence of the Holy Spirit on the peripheries of Christian history while asserting the failure of the Church to live in the power of the Spirit. DeArteaga suggests that "when churchmen resist the prompting of the Holy Spirit, other unfortunate consequences result. The community is diverted from the purpose of God and eventually falls prey to some form of religiosity or legalism. To this type of resistance we give the biblical name Pharisaism."[23] Pharisaism, in DeArteaga's estimation, is a serious heresy, one that has occurred throughout the Church's history. Although the premise to identify why the Church has neglected the Holy Spirit is a worthy study, his understanding of and interaction with Church history is largely skewed to demonstrate this premise. Unfortunately, many of the details and information provided from influential Christian figures, movements within Christianity, and heretical movements are inaccurate and unbalanced.

Allan Anderson provides a more balanced view of Church history through his work *An Introduction to Pentecostalism.* It is easy to discern that during the timeframe of the New Testament,

> The Early Church was a community of the Holy Spirit, and the freedom of expression and spontaneity of its worship may not have been very different from that of many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches today. Some of the characteristic features and ecstatic phenomena of Pentecostalism like prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues were common. Although not all scholars agree on their frequency, the New Testament at least bears witness to unusual manifestations of the Spirit.[24]

There is little disagreement throughout the Church today that during this timeframe the Holy Spirit was actively pouring out gifts upon believers through miracles, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and healing. However, there is significant disagreement concerning if this changed, why this changed, when it changed, or why the Holy Spirit's word continued or ceased.

In the time after the New Testament, early Christian writings contain scattered references to charismatic gifts.[25] Many believe that during the time between the apostolic age and Christendom, Christians continued to expect

---

[23] William L. DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit* (Alamante Springs, FL: Creation House, 1992): 15.
[24] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 19.
[25] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 20.

charismatic gifts and the involvement of the Holy Spirit as a normative part of Christian life. Despite these references, "it seems that the decline in the practice of spiritual gifts began quite early" with the rise and spread of Montanism in the second century.[26] While Montanism was an essentially charismatic movement emphasizing the continuing work of the Holy Spirit through spiritual gifts such as prophecy, its founder is generally seen as moving the group into heresy. This posed a danger to the Church and helped lead to the formations of creeds and doctrine.

Despite this heretical movement, the Church Fathers and the Eastern Orthodox churches continued to expect such experiences as normative for Christian life.[27] The Church Fathers affirm this through their writings, as they "never suggested that any of the gifts of the Spirit had ceased."[28] Similarly, the "Orthodox churches have always recognized, expected, and controlled the charismata, including speaking in tongues, which has been a continuing experience throughout all the ages, though confined mostly to monasteries."[29] While the Eastern Church has largely continued in their understanding and practice of charismatic gifts, they became almost a "closed book in Western Christianity."[30]

The Roman Catholic Church significantly contributed to closing the book for Western Christianity. "By the year 1000, the liturgy book *Rituale Romanorum* explained to a priest when exorcism from demons was necessary: charismatic gifts were now seen as signs of the demonic in the official church, which was dominated by the scholasticism of this period."[31] This doctrine not only affected the way in which spiritual gifts are viewed, but also dictated authority over the demonic as the responsibility of priests. It would not be until the growth of world Christianity, that the Catholic Church would revisit and revise its understanding of charismatic gifts and the Holy Spirit. This Roman Catholic doctrine and theological vantage point greatly influenced the Protestant Reformation.

"During the Reformation, gifts of the Spirit seem to have been virtually unknown, apart from occasional reports in the Anabaptist movement that brought such occurrences into further disrepute."[32] Not surprisingly, the founders of the Protestant Reformation were reacting to what they perceived as inadequacies of the Roman Catholic Church. With few exceptions, these Reformers were members from the Roman Catholic Church and continued in

---

[26] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 19.
[27] Robert Davis Hughes III, "Starting Over: The Holy Spirit as Subject and Locus of Spiritual Theology," *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 3 (2001): 457-458.
[28] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 20.
[29] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 21.
[30] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 21.
[31] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 22.
[32] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 23.

their understanding of the Holy Spirit and charismatic gifts. The reactions of Protestants towards Anabaptists are indicative of this continuation,

> The established Protestant churches were even more firmly opposed to 'religious enthusiasm' than the Catholic Church had ever been, and it took over four centuries for this to change. Spiritual gifts would continue to appear, mainly in the radical periphery of Protestantism, and were almost always regarded as sectarian movements at this time.[33]

Without question, during the timeframe between the Reformation and the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement there have been significant movements within the Church that have contributed to, influenced, or provided the foundation for Pentecostal-Charismatic expressions: such as the 'Inner light' movement by the early Quakers, the 'Holiness' emphasis by Methodists, and the 'Higher Life' emphasis by the Keswick movement.[34]

A variety of Christian revivals are usually included to demonstrate that spiritual gifts have continued on the 'radical periphery' of Protestantism. Many of the Western revivals are thoroughly interacted with in Church history. Not discussed are the revivals that occurred in other parts of the world, which clearly demonstrate the need for further research in the Church's history as it relates to spiritual gifts, understanding of the Holy Spirit, and the response to supernatural phenomenon. It is also evident that any additional study must include a global perspective, examining international influence and incorporating the experience of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Despite the inadequacies and brevity of the summary provided, trends emerge that help frame the understanding of Western tradition as it relates to Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives.

Western tradition, for many years, had largely 'closed the book' on spiritual gifts, yet Anderson's account of the Church's history demonstrates, "that 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'."[35] His account is particularly helpful to identify the ways in which Western Christianity has interacted with or responded to charismata. In the Western tradition, it is clear that after the New Testament period an implied change occurred in the way in which the Holy Spirit operates in the lives of Christians. Timothy Tennet's observation that the change occurred as a result of the Church's circumstances is especially helpful to account for some tendencies in Western theology:

> Because the ecumenical discussions [during the period after the apostolic age] about the Holy Spirit were focused primarily on his deity and his relationship within the Trinity, there was a serious neglect of a full development of his work... However this meant that, as was the case during the patristic period, a full development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was

[33] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 23-24.
[34] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 24.
[35] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 38.

> delayed and several vital aspects of his person and work were neglected in post-Reformation Protestant theology in the West. Over time, several major theological traditions developed that either denied completely or extremely limited the active role of the Holy Spirit in performing miracles, divine healing, demonic deliverance, prophecy, tongue-speaking, and other elements that later became central features of the Pentecostal doctrine of the Holy Spirit.[36]

This shift in theology, termed Cessationism, is a major theological tradition that impacts the way that certain traditions interact with Pentecostal-Charismatic influences.

Cessationism is the belief that the gifts and manifestation of the Holy Spirit during the early Church's history were given only during that time to further God's kingdom in establishing the Church. Cessationists acknowledge that there was a change in the way the Holy Spirit operated after the New Testament time period and therefore assert that this aspect of His role was completed when the Scriptures were written. Tennet effectively summarizes the varieties of cessationism, suggesting its influence upon Western tradition:

> Indeed, there are many different forms and degrees of cessationism. Some would go as far as to deny all subjective forms of guidance, such as people claiming that the Lord was leading them to do something that the Holy Spirit had helped them in understanding a particular passage of Scripture. Others are, practically speaking, partial cessationists, opposing the exercise of gifts, such as prophecy and tongue-speaking, but they are functionally continuationists when it comes to praying for the sick or believing that the Holy Spirit can directly speak to someone. But regardless of which of these schemes were followed, the point is that theological reflection in the West gradually became dominated by a range of theological systems that denied that the exercise of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit was a normative, much less essential, part of the church's ongoing life and witness in the world.[37]

Cessationism continues to influence and operate in a variety of theological systems within Western Christianity. Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives directly challenge the theological underpinnings of Cessationism.

Exploring traditions, especially established Western traditions, brings to light the complexity of interaction that Pentecostal-Charismatic influences pose for Western traditions. Western traditions generally differ in their understanding of the role and function of the Holy Spirit's activity in Christian life. Many Western traditions largely disagree with any claim that spiritual gifts continue or are normative of Christian experience. Similarly, the Western worldview is largely naturalistic, lacking a view of the world that incorporates the supernatural. Finally, the dramatic, and often emotive, forms of worship counter long-established traditional liturgies and practices found throughout much of the West. All of these differences can be perceived as a threat to

[36] Tennent, *Theology in the Context,* 171.
[37] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 171-172.

Western tradition. It is in the context of these differences that a proper understanding of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is necessary. A proper understanding must address a holistic account of Pentecostal-Charismatic history, as well as identify doctrine and practice.

3. History of Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements

Traditionally, Pentecostal-Charismatic movements have been primarily studied through a Western lens of observation. Allan Anderson emphasizes this as a "fundamental problem in [the] academic study of Pentecostalism [as it] has been a misinformed interpretation of Pentecostal and Charismatic history and theology, where the role players are mainly white North Americans and western Europeans."[38] Viewing these movements from this perspective has two unfortunate errors.

First, it assumes that the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement originates from the West while neglecting indigenous Pentecostal-Charismatic movements originating from other areas of the world. Second, studying this movement from a Western perspective dictates normative characteristics that are not reflective of the largest majority of Pentecostal-Charismatics. Correcting these common misperceptions through a holistic lens is an emerging field, approximately ten years old, which is in need of further study.[39] Despite this inadequacy, briefly reviewing the Western view of Pentecostal-Charismatic history will elucidate the gravity of these errors.

Scholars generally point to several influences that provide the precipitating cause of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the West. The vast majority of these influences began in the 19th century. The Wesleyan-holiness and Higher Life movements are the most commonly identified influences. Although these are the most consistently cited, there are a variety of other movements or revivals that have been noted such as a charismatic renewal in the 1830's by Edward Irving, or the early Quakers of the mid to late 1600's, who emphasized the 'Inner Light' of the Holy Spirit through a variety of manifestations.[40] Anderson notes, "the many and various revival movements at the turn of the century [19th to 20th] had the effect of creating an air of expectancy and longing for Pentecostal revival in many parts of the Protestant world."[41] Despite the inconsistencies as to which revivals and movements influenced Pentecostal-Charismatic growth in the West, there is widespread support concerning the significance of the Methodist-Holiness and Higher Life movements.

---

[38] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 15.
[39] Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street," 11.
[40] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 24; Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 229.
[41] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 38.

These are generally well studied in the West, especially the Methodist-Holiness movement. The Keswick movement was perhaps the most significant of the Higher Life movements to the formation of classic Pentecostalism because "it shared with the Methodist-Holiness movement an emphasis on the importance of a second sanctifying work of grace subsequent to conversion. However, whereas Methodists claimed that purity was the source of power, Keswick emphasized the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit."[42] These movements are important in understanding the Western Pentecostal-Charismatic movement as they identify its roots as a continuation of Protestantism.

It is from these roots that the Western Pentecostal-Charismatic movement commenced. Although scholars disagree as to which figure or revival was most influential in initiating the movement, all note the significance of Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour. Charles Fox Parham is generally noted for the Topeka Kansas revival in 1901 and his influence on William J. Seymour's famous Azusa street revival in 1906.

Charles Fox Parham, known as the doctrinal father of Pentecostalism, founded Bethel Bible College in 1900.[43] Soon after, he asked his students what evidenced baptism of the Holy Spirit. Through the study of Scripture, they concluded that it was from glossolalia or speaking in tongues. Days later, during a New Year's Eve service, a student asked Parham to lay hands on her so that she would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. That morning Agnes Ozman experienced glossolalia: speaking in Chinese while no longer being able to communicate in English for three days.[44] Parham later opened another school in Houston Texas (1905), continuing to teach on the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the experience of tongues as a third experience for Christian life.[45]

A student at this school, William Seymour, would take these teachings to Azusa Street, beginning the Western Pentecostal movement.[46] These teachings stressed that "baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of the normal Christian experience, and that speaking in tongues is the evidence of Spirit baptism."[47] These beliefs formed the distinguishing tenets of Western Pentecostal-Charismatic theology. A third Western theological distinctive became the disagreement over the two-step or three-step progression of sanctification. The Charismatic movement of the 1960's, initially referred to as Neo-Pentecostalism, would significantly challenge aspects of classic Pentecostal theology.

---

[42] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 230.
[43] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 231.
[44] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 230-231.
[45] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 231.
[46] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 231.
[47] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 231.

The Charismatic movement agreed with the Pentecostal emphasis on personal holiness and the work of the Holy Spirit but differed in its understanding of Spirit baptism.[48] While Pentecostalism arose through independent and nondenominational churches, the Charismatic movement occurred from within mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. During this movement, most Charismatics stayed within their established traditions and therefore were arguably more influential to mainstream Western Christianity than was Pentecostalism. So much so that "by 2000, there were an estimated 120 million Catholic Charismatics, some 11 per cent of all Catholics worldwide and almost twice the number of all the classical Pentecostals combined."[49] Secondly, Charismatics acknowledge that speaking in tongues does not constitute the only evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

This brief account paints in broad strokes many of the aspects often associated as 'Pentecostal' or 'Charismatic' beliefs. Commonly in the West, Pentecostal-Charismatic movements and beliefs are taught from this limited vantage point reflecting a severe bias of "interpreting history from a predominantly white American perspective, neglecting (if not completely ignoring) the vital and often more significant work of Asian, African, African American, and Latino/a Pentecostal pioneers."[50] This bias severely limits the ability to accurately reflect the majority of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians as "most of the half a billion people are not classical Pentecostals at all and are predominately Africans, Latin Americans, and Asians."[51]

An accounting of Western Pentecostal-Charismatic expressions does not accurately reflect the majority, as North Americans account for only 15% of global Pentecostal-Charismatics adherents constituting a small minority.[52] This is exaggerated as "Pentecostalism has taken forms quite distinct from those of North America."[53] Many of the distinctive characteristics of Western Pentecostalism are absent from the larger global reality of Pentecostal-Charismatic beliefs. Speaking in tongues as initial evidence is a primarily Western doctrine.[54] Discussions about two-step or three-step sanctification have not been identified by global Pentecostal-Charismatics as important. What is representative of a global Pentecostal-Charismatic perspective is that "the empowerment of the Holy Spirit must be appropriated into the life of every believer."[55]

---

[48] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 144; Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 236.
[49] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 152.
[50] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 166.
[51] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 12.
[52] Noll, *The New Shape*, 22.
[53] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 13.
[54] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 13-14.
[55] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 166.

Defining Pentecostalism by too limited a definition "cannot be supported from a global perspective, as this excludes multitudes of Christians whose equally authentic experience of the Spirit is different from those who speak in tongues."[56] In addition, it is commonly recognized that there are vast diversities of Pentecostal-Charismatic beliefs and practices. Many bear little similarity with the Western expression of classic Pentecostalism, except in Christology and emphasis upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is more reflective to define Pentecostalism "in a much broader context concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts."[57] Accompanied with this definition it is necessary to include a more holistic account of Pentecostal-Charismatic history.

Alan Anderson supplies such an account, although it too is in need of further study and research. His attempt to begin a compilation of such history is excellent, and illuminates several Pentecostal-Charismatic movements that were independent of their North American counterparts. Anderson suggests that while this must occur "without minimizing the importance of Azusa Street, we must give due recognition to places in the world where Pentecostal revival broke out independently of this event and in some cases even predated it."[58] Several revivals have been recognized as occurring before the American movement took place: Korea (1903 and 1906), Wales (1904), and India (1905-1906).[59] Accompanied with these, Mark Noll notes that "in Africa, a whole series of churches, revivals and movements that now are rightly viewed as Pentecostal were up and running before Azusa Street."[60] Identifications of these accounts indicate the need for further study, as the extent of their influence is as yet unknown.

The extent of influence is potentially significant. A pertinent example is the 'Korean Pentecost'.

> [It] began among missionaries in Pyongyang in 1903 and soon spread to thousands of Korean people. This revival seemed to have been unaffected by the nineteenth century Evangelical Awakenings; it predated the 1904 Welsh Revival 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, and irrevocably changed the face of East Asian Christianity.[61]

The influences of this revival are yet to be fully realized as there is little certainty concerning the characteristics of Chinese Christianity. Scholars estimate that the majority of Christians in China, comprised of underground house churches, are of a Pentecostal-Charismatic nature.[62] Similarly, before

---

[56] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 10.
[57] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 14.
[58] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 172.
[59] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 173; Noll, *The New Shape*, 124.
[60] Noll, *The New Shape*, 124.
[61] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 172-173.
[62] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 13.

the 1905-1907 revival in Mukti India there was a Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in 1860-1865 in Tamil Nadu.[63] There has been little study of how the revival in Tamil influenced the later revival in Mukti. As demonstrated by the lack of available research, it is clear that a more holistic history is required to accurately study and account for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian expressions. It is further evident, that the nature of these movements is far broader than a Western definition has accounted for or acknowledged.

What can be observed are the trends and affects that current Pentecostal-Charismatics have upon world Christianity. The statistics that are associated with Pentecostal-Charismatic growth are simply remarkable, yet a word of caution is needed. It should be remembered that many Christians throughout the world do not label themselves as Pentecostal-Charismatics, yet from a Western perspective they exhibit characteristics of a Pentecostal-Charismatic variety. The aforementioned Chinese Christians are an excellent example. Further, there is little consensus concerning the extent of growth in these same Chinese Churches as numbers range from 50-90 million.[64] This is but one example of the variance that could plague such statistics. Readers should be aware that "measuring the growth of churches is a complex task, and whenever figures are quoted the tentative nature of these statistics has to be kept in mind."[65] Even amidst these concerns, the influence of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians and Churches are clearly significant.

4. Exploring Pentecostal-Charismatic Influence on World Christianity

The statistical growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic movements contributes significantly to the overall influence upon world Christianity. This influence is two fold. First, it should be viewed in conjunction with the indigenous growth of Christians from around the world. World Christianity is experiencing an enormous expansion. While Christianity is declining in the West, Christian growth throughout the world is expanding at a staggering rate. This growth has caused a geographical shift from North to South. The statistical majority of Christians now live in the global South.[66] The statistical center of Christianity is now located in Timbuktu with 67 percent of Christians living outside the Western world.[67]

The magnitudes of these statistics expose trends that indicate significant changes for the worldwide Christian Church, perhaps most significantly for the

---

[63] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism,* 174.
[64] Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 132; Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 235; 238.
[65] Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003): 113.
[66] Jenkins, *The New Faces*, 2; Jonathan R. Wilson, *Why Church Matters: Worship, Ministry, and Mission in Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006): 127.
[67] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 8.

West. Lamin Sanneh identifies the significance of these changes by noting "at present one is struck by the disparity: Africa has become, or is becoming a Christian continent in cultural as well as numerical terms, while on the same scale the West has become, or is rapidly becoming a post-Christian society."[68] Philip Jenkins also extensively interacts with these figures through several of his books. He notes that by 2025, "Africa and Latin America will vie for the title of the most Christian nation" and 75 percent of the Roman Catholic Church will be comprised of adherents living in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[69]

North America, in 2008, accounted for less than 15% of Christian adherence (see table 1.1), while Africa, Asia, and Latin America comprised 69% of the world's Christians. The growth indicated in Africa, Asia, and Latin America is largely attributed to the indigenization of the Gospel into local languages, idioms, and cultures. These changes have and continue to occur across denominations and cultures.[71] Mark Noll summarizes this reality; "today's Christian situation is marked by multiplicity because of how deeply the Christian message, fully indigenized in local languages, has become part of local cultures. The new shape of world Christianity offers a mosaic of many, many varieties of local belief and practice."[72] The effect of this, he notes, is that many of these now embedded local practices do not conform to Western norms.[73]

Table 1.1: Christian Adherence by UN-defined Region (in millions)[70]

	1800	1900	2008
Africa	4.3	8.8	423.7
Asia	8.4	20.8	335.0
Europe	171.1	368.2	556.4
L. America	14.9	60.0	530.2
N. America	5.6	59.6	220.4
Oceania	0.1	4.3	22.8
Totals	204.4	521.7	1,868.1

These figures indicate that within the larger growth of world Christianity, translating the Gospel into the local idioms and cultures has resulted in unprecedented expansion. This is extremely important to the growth of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Excluding Western culture, many societies make little, if any, distinction between the physical and spiritual. The prevalent worldview is a supernatural one in which the Bible "lends itself startlingly well to contemporary purposes."[74] The reality of life in many non-

[68] Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003): 36.
[69] Jenkins, *The New Faces*, 9.
[70] Noll, *The New Shape*, 22. Cited from: David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "Statues of Global Mission, Presence, and Activities, AD 1800-2025," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 32 (2008): 30.
[71] Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity*, 71-72.
[72] Noll, *The New Shape*, 27.
[73] Noll, *The New Shape*, 26.
[74] Jenkins, *The New Faces*, 69.

Western cultures mirrors life as described in the New Testament. Jenkins notes, "around the world, sorcerers, mediums, spiritual healers, and other spiritual professionals are familiar figures in everyday life, much as they were in the milieu of the book of Acts. Then as now, a trip to the marketplace might well mean an encounter with a magician claiming to invoke pagan forces."[75] Exorcism, healing, spiritual warfare, and spiritual gifts all easily incorporate into cultural worldviews that believe in and experience a supernatural reality.

Secondly, Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity addresses the prevalent worldview of many societies. Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives meet the needs in the lives of many Christians. This reinforces the importance of a holistic historical account of the movement, as it was not a primarily Western movement exported to others. Rather, it occurred in various places independent of outside prompting because it addressed the needs and realities of people throughout the world.[76] Further, Pentecostal-Charismatic characteristics, as described in this work, are inherent to Scripture. This holistic history and incorporation of indigenous Christian translation help explain the astounding Pentecostal-Charismatic growth.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is the fastest growing movement in Christian history.[78] In 100 years, 500 million Christians were added to Pentecostal-Charismatic adherents (see table 1.2) comprising 28% of world Christianity. Pentecostal-Charismatics comprise thousands of denominations, established churches such as Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican have seen waves of charismatic renewal, and many other Protestant and non-denominational churches have also been influenced by this movement.[79] Scholars such as Mark Noll, generally note that while new churches throughout the world may continue to be Roman Catholic, Methodist, or Anglican, all embody Pentecostal-Charismatic characteristics and might accurately be labeled as such.[80]

Table 1.2: Pentecostal-Charismatic Adherents (in millions)[77]

	1900	2000
Africa	.9	126.0
Asia	0.0	134.9
Europe	0.0	37.6
Latin America	0.0	141.4
North America	0.0	79.6
Oceania	0.0	4.3

[75] Jenkins, *The New Faces*, 101.
[76] Future research should consider and discuss Christian understandings of the theological or spiritual significance concerning four distinct Holy Spirit movements that occurred independently from one another at roughly the same time.
[77] Noll, *The New Shape*, 22: cited from David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia,* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University, 2001).
[78] Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street," 3.
[79] Tennent, *Theology in the Context,* 165.
[80] Noll, *The New Shape*, 34.

Abundantly clear are the ways in which Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives permeate world Christianity. It seems reasonable to suggest that the statistical growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic adherents is due to translatability. First and foremost, the translation of Scripture into the mother tongue of local languages, and secondly in meeting the needs of Christians.[81] The reality of this growth for world Christianity, specifically Pentecostal-Charismatic practice, challenges Western practice and the prevalent Western worldview. These challenges pose significant obstacles for the West, which are identified well through the four Pentecostal-Charismatic distinctives previously described.

It is generally well noted in Western Christian literature that there has been neglect of the charismatic work and role of the Holy Spirit.[82] Western theology has been far more comfortable discussing the character of the Holy Spirit and has produced several outstanding works identifying His character.[83] Craig Keener posits a description of and a reason for this neglect,

> In Western Christianity today, issues like Spirit baptism and spiritual gifts are far more controversial than discussion about the Spirit's character, but perhaps for this very reason we have neglected to learn as much about the Spirit as we should. The Holy Spirit, like the Father and Son, is not just a doctrine, an idea, or an experience to be tagged onto the other doctrines and experiences of our Christian life – He is the God who has invaded our lives with His transforming presence.[84]

Issues surrounding theologies encompassing Spirit baptism in classic Western Pentecostalism are far less significant for global Pentecostal-Charismatics. Global Pentecostal-Charismatics and a minority voice within Western Christianity are calling for a renewed sense of urgency in describing the role and work of the Holy Spirit, begging the question: do miracles and spiritual gifts occur today?

Spiritual gifts have been and continue to be an issue of division in Western Christianity.[85] This increased after the Western Charismatic movement influence moved beyond the reach of classic Pentecostalism.[86] Despite these

---

[81] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture 2nd ed.* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009).
[82] Consider Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 126; Roger E. Olson, "The Future of Evangelical Theology," *Christianity Today* 42, no. 2 (1998): 48; Raiser, "The Holy Spirit," 375; and Albert C. Winn, "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life," *Interpretation* 33, no. 1 (1979): 48.
[83] Consider, for example, Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology, Volume III* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1992).
[84] Craig S. Keener, *Three Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996): 131.
[85] Lois M. Douglas, "Globalizing Theology and Theological Education" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 278.
[86] Keener, *Three Crucial Questions*, 81.

disagreements, Scripture affirms that spiritual gifts continue today, as well as affirming a call to live by the Spirit. Tradition also affirms the continued experiences of spiritual gifts and miracles as demonstrated by Christians throughout the world, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the writings of the Church Fathers. Worldview greatly influences the way in which spiritual gifts and miracles are viewed in the West and the Majority World, "If there is a single key area of faith and practice that divides Northern and Southern Christians, it is this matter of spiritual forces and their effects on the everyday human world. The issue goes to the heart of cultural definition and worldviews."[87] Inherent to spiritual gifts and miracles is the question of worldview.

Is a supernatural worldview the view from which Christians should see the world in which they live? In a word, yes. Throughout the Old and New Testament a plethora of sources advocate precisely this view. The Incarnation is a vivid example. "The Christian worldview acknowledges that everything is ultimately 'supernatural', because even the food on our table is a gift of God's providence."[88] Despite the Bible's clarity, the Enlightenment has heavily influenced Western worldviews: "it is an accepted rule in the West that religion may be allowed within the bounds of reason alone, and so revelation, miracle stories, and notions of the supernatural must be sifted to mesh with the refined rules of reason."[89]

A variety of scholars and works within the West have attempted to shed light on the Western worldview and the presuppositions that influence it. Phillip Jenkins is particularly helpful in framing the differences between Western and Majority World Christian worldviews:

> For post-Enlightenment Christians in the West, the demonic elements in the New Testament mean so little that they are scarcely even an embarrassment anymore. Most Northern readers today would label believers in demons and witchcraft irredeemably premodern, prescientific, and probably preliterate [as] such beliefs would cast doubt on believers' claims to an authentic or intelligent religion.[90]

The worldview of Christians in the West was often offered to others in the midst of their 19th century missionary journeys. Thankfully, many indigenous people groups have kept their worldview in spite of Western pressure. Again, Jenkins provides a voice to a Majority World response:

> Yet many Africans and Asians respond that their views are grounded in the abundant evidence of scripture; they ask how any reasonable reader could exclude healings and miracles from the Christian message. Have liberal Americans and Germans never read the gospels or the book of Acts, in which

---

[87] Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002): 123.
[88] Keener, *Three Crucial Questions,* 107.
[89] Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity*, 61.
[90] Jenkins, *The New Faces,* 98.

> miracles and exorcisms so proliferate? If Southern Christians have compromised with animism, have not Northerners sold out to scientism, materialism, and determinism?[91]

This is a pertinent question to Western Christians today: have Northerners sold out to scientism, materialism, and determinism while ignoring the supernatural reality of the Bible?

Western Christianity is in the midst of wrestling with this very question: how much of its view of the world has been informed by the culture in which it resides? It is well known that Western theology is largely rationalistic, intellectual, and typically concerns itself with orthodoxy over orthopraxy.[92] Pentecostal-Charismatic influences pose a significant critique of Western theology for this very reason, which will be discussed in the next section. Simultaneously, Pentecostal-Charismatic worship also challenges Western tradition.

The differences in worship are most properly emphasized by the indigenousness cultural expression of local Christians. Although there are aspects of this worship that engage in spiritual gifts and spiritual experiences, by and large the differences stem from cultural expression as opposed to strict Pentecostal-Charismatic influences. Even so, elements of spiritual warfare or gifts that are included are not very different from Western evangelical beliefs. Consider, for example, Jonathan Wilson in his description of worship, "when we sing praise to God, declaring the truth about God and ourselves, we too engage in spiritual warfare that drives back the kingdom of sin and participates in that victory already won in Jesus Christ."[93] Many in the West view dramatic or expressive worship as inherently not Christian, as it does not mesh well with their traditions. This view must be challenged; it is a culturally biased view that inherently claims superiority over other cultural expressions of worship.

It is unmistakable that many of the distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity have considerable implications for Western Christianity. Several areas of consideration have been drawn out through this discussion, yet require more detail. Three areas of Western Christianity warrant discussion: theology and worldview, awareness of the growth of Christianity throughout the world, and possible implications for the West. Discussion concerning the possible implications for Western Christianity should identify how these factors influence theological education in both seminaries and local churches.

---

[91] Jenkins, *The New Faces*, 16.
[92] Harold A. Netland, "Introduction: Globalization and Theology Today" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 27.
[93] Wilson, *Why Church Matters*, 31.

5. Theological Implications

Generally, Western Pentecostal-Charismatics have been leery of formal creeds, doctrines, and systemized theologies for the sake of adhering to a high view of Scripture.[94] Many see this leeriness as a reaction against the elevation of orthodoxy over orthopraxy. While holding to the authority of Scripture, Western Pentecostals have often negated any need for rationalized or systematic accounts of their theology, instead emphasizing experience. Western Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars are slowly acknowledging this as detrimental, and in need of correction.[95] Despite this detriment, Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars bring an important reminder to theologians. They remind us that theology must be practical for everyday Christian life.

Throughout the world, Christians have echoed this call. Leslie Newbigin cautions, "True theology does not begin in the realm of ideas. It begins with praxis."[96] This is because "theology is essential and indispensable for Christian living."[97] Our knowledge of God, our theology, must influence and inform Christian life. "Increasingly, theologians in Africa, Latin America, and Asia are more interested in orthopraxis than orthodoxy. Theology must be relevant, and it must make a difference: it must address people's concerns, and it must transform the structures of everyday life."[98] The shift from ontology to epistemology, accompanied by the call from the Majority World to rethink the forms, content, and categories of academic theology, have led Vanhoozer to associate theologizing from the Majority World with certain elements of postmodern Christian thought in the West.[99]

The call to rethink Western theology has been sounded since the 1970's as the reality of global trends in world Christianity were emerging.[100] It is with humility that the West must listen to and accept correction from these new Christians that form a large part of the Christian body.[101] Many resonate with this call to humility, equality, and the necessity of the Western Church to listen to the theological critique of Christians throughout the world.[102] The Church, in

---

[94] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 235.
[95] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 245-246; Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street," 3.
[96] Leslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission 2nd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995): 95.
[97] Tite Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era of World Christianity" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 39.
[98] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "One Rule to Rule them All?: Theological Method in an Era of World Christianity" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 96.
[99] Vanhoozer, "One Rule to Rule," 89.
[100] Netland, "Introduction: Globalization and Theology," 26.
[101] Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 139.
[102] Eloise H. Meneses, "Bearing Witness in Rome with Theology from the Whole Church: Globalization, Theology, and Nationalism" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 246.

all its various expressions, is a hermeneutical community in which contextualization of the local must be checked by the universal. Similarly, "to say that the theological task is a shared one means that it cannot be done by one person or even a single group of people; the theological task is a communal one."[103] With the emergence of world Christianity and globalization this task becomes a tangible reality in which local expressions can be tested by the universal Christian body.[104]

Unfortunately this reality has not been realized in much of Western Christian theology. Perhaps it is because of the perceived 'global domination of Western theology' that many Western Christians fail to view the hermeneutical process of discerning their local forms of faith through the eyes of the global community as necessary.[105] Illuminating this reality, Tienou argues that theology is the property of the entire church and it will not effectively address the needs of the majority of Christians until the West listens outside of itself, dropping its claim as the center of faith, and begins to work with churches as equal members in an international community hermeneutic. This is the consensus of world Christians and is well demonstrated by the Western tendency toward theological introspection.[106]

A constant underpinning of theological thought in the West is the concept that cultural context informs worldview at fundamental levels. In an attempt to shed light onto his own culture, Jonathan Wilson warns "When the church neglects, fails to understand, or denies its cultural context, it runs the risk of distorting the gospel under the unrecognized influence of culture."[107] He continues by noting that "this truth [the gospel] can easily be distorted so that it confirms to [the] world's sense of things."[108] He concludes by indicating his belief that the Western church has indeed done so as a result of the influences of modernity. The consequence of a worldview influenced by cultural context has remained uncorrected by many Western theologians.

Western Christianity suffers from cultural myopia, seeing only one view of the Gospel while neglecting the ways in which culture has influenced its worldview. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians, and the larger community of

---

[103] Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era," 39.
[104] Consider David K. and Cynthia A. Strong, "The Globalizing Hermeneutic of the Jerusalem Council" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 2; and Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing," 65; Wilson, *Why Church Matters*, 127.
[105] Paul G. Hiebert, "The Missionary as Mediator of Global Theologizing" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 299; Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era," 50.
[106] Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era," 50.
[107] Wilson, *Why Church Matters*, 90.
[108] Wilson, *Why Church Matters,* 91.

world Christianity, reveal the cultural bias within Western Christianity.[109] "It is just here that Western systematic theologians have much to learn. Western theologians must be aware of the cultural beams in their own eyes before attempting to remove specks from non-Western eyes."[110] A failure to do so distorts the Gospel by reading it through cultural lenses, as demonstrated by Cessationism.

Theologies of cessation occur only in societies influenced by the Enlightenment. Tennet suggests, "doctrines of cessationism or partial cessationism are, in the final analysis, detrimental concessions to an Enlightenment worldview that has unduly influenced the church with its naturalistic presuppositions."[111] Keener affirms this cultural bias as "no coincidence that cessationism arose only in a culture dominated by anti-supernaturalism."[112] The implications of Pentecostal-Charismatic influences for Western theology are indeed significant, especially when viewed through the wider lens of world Christianity.

Inherent to these movements is a challenge to Western theology, worldview, and the importance of experience. Hollenweger summarizes these influences while providing questions the West must continue to wrestle with:

> The Pentecostal movement confronts us with the basic question of what theology really is. Is theology only what is taught in our universities, i.e. a rational systematic discourse based on Aristotelian logic, which operates with concepts and definitions? Or could it not be that for example the parables of Jesus, the stories of the Old Testament, the hymns of the Reformation, the stories of Catholic and Orthodox traditions, are also theology, but in other categories? If the latter is the case, then what does this mean for theology as a university discipline and for ecumenical community?[113]

It would seem that Christian education is perhaps the largest obstacle toward unity within the body of world Christians, implying the need for serious changes.

In the West, the importance placed on education is unquestionable. However, the movements within world Christianity call into question the ways in which seminaries and local churches educate Western Christians. Western theological education often neglects or ignores non-Western leaders, theologies, and history. As identified through this study, Western scholars have neglected global Pentecostal-Charismatic movements. This case study identifies the narrow view that permeates theological education as well as its impact upon Christian education in the pews.

---

[109] Peter C. Phan, "Doing Theology in World Christianity: Different Resources and New Methods," *The Journal of World Christianity* 1, no. 1 (2008): 41.
[110] Vanhoozer, "One Rule to Rule," 116-117.
[111] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 179.
[112] Keener, *Three Crucial Questions*, 82.
[113] Hollenweger, "From Azusa Street," 12.

The references utilized for this paper include several Western Christian scholars that are not associated with the study of world Christianity. The three following examples illustrate well the lack of appropriate interaction with the Christian movement occurring outside of the West. Jonathan Wilson's book, *Why Church Matters*, is an excellent work seeking to reignite the importance of worship for Western churches. To his credit, he does indicate his awareness of world Christianity. This awareness, consisting of one paragraph, supports his call for ecumenical unity. W. David Buschart's book, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, seeks to demonstrate the similarities and continuation of several significant Protestant traditions. Throughout his work, he does not interact with anything beyond the West, including in his overview of Pentecostalism. Likewise, Thomas Oden's *Life in the Spirit* provides a comprehensive, systematic study of Western theology detailing the Holy Spirit and the Church. *Life in the Spirit* is an outstanding and extensive volume. However, it is strangely silent concerning the movements within world Christianity, the experiential aspects of the Holy Spirit, and makes little reference to those outside the West. This should not be surprising as "it is a well-known fact that 'standard' textbooks of systematic theology either lack any reference to theologians of non-European descent or contain only passing references to some without significant interaction with their ideas."[114]

Academic work is primarily presented from a Western perspective, both in study and attention. World Christians wonder why philosophy and German theologians are more intensely studied than the roughly 1 billion Christians that comprise world Christianity or the approximate 1 billion Muslims who challenge its growth.[115] Tennet addresses Western theological education with several significant warnings:

> Any seminary who wants to remain at the forefront of theological and ministerial training today must recognize that in today's context we must be better prepared not only to train people from around the world, but also to put far more emphasis on training people to serve within the many newly emerging, cross-cultural ministries, both here in the West and around the world. Today, all of our academic and vocational preparation must train with a deeper sensitivity to the larger global context in which Christian ministry takes pace.[116]

Many Christian scholars throughout the world are calling for change, such as John Mbiti who is considered a pioneer of African Christian theology. Mbiti stressed "how 'utterly scandalous' it is for students of Western theology to know more about the theology of heretics long dead than they do about the living theology of hundreds of millions of living Africans today."[117] John Mbiti's

[114] Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era," 50.
[115] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 16-27.
[116] Tennent, *Theology in the Context,* 19.
[117] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 16.

comments demonstrate both the urgency and sadness for many non-Western Christians concerning this reality.

> He once lamented how Africans had dutifully traveled to the eminent European and North American theological institutions for higher studies without finding corresponding interest in their own theological reflections. He said, "We have eaten theology with you; we have drunk theology with you; we dreamed theology with you. But it has all been one-sided; it has all been, in a sense, your theology… We know you theologically. The question is, do you know us theologically? Would you like to know us theologically?"[118]

The Western church, its seminaries, its leaders, and its members "can no longer afford to study the doctrine of God in a vacuum, apart from these new global realities."[119] Although the changes that are needed are far from realized or accomplished, transformation begins through interaction with and acknowledgement of Christian growth throughout the world.

"For many Christians, especially those in the West, there is unfortunately a serious intellectual lag in coming to grips with what this new reality means."[120] Western Christians are largely unaware that Christianity is flourishing outside of its borders. There is still a prevalent mentality that Western societies are the majority of Christians still evangelizing the world. Through the development of this work, it should be evident that Western Christianity has not realized the dramatic changes that have been and continue to occur in world Christianity. It should also be evident that the implications of these changes have yet to be responded to.[121] It will be through the training of the Church's leaders, that these leaders will spread the joy of this growth through their local Western communities. The longer the West continues to ignore these realities, the more difficult it might be for continued ecumenical interactions and incorporation into the larger community of world Christianity. Indeed, ecumenical discussions have proven exceedingly difficult when members are unaware of this reality concerning non-Western Christian growth and Pentecostal-Charismatic influences.

6. Growth Towards Ecumenical Unity

Several ecumenical discussions engaging Pentecostal-Charismatics were studied for their application towards ecumenical unity. Without question it was noted that "the lack of understanding of global Christianity by some participants continued to be a handicap," needing correction for effective dialogue.[122] This ecumenical dialogue occurred between Pentecostals and

---

[118] Tennent, *Theology in the Context,* 15-16.
[119] Tennent, *Theology in the Context,* 27.
[120] Dale T. Irvin, "World Christianity: An Introduction," *The Journal of World Christianity* 1, no. 1 (2008): 11.
[121] Tennet, *Theology in the Context,* 11.
[122] Ecumenical Dialogue. "Word and Spirit, Church and World: The Final Report of the International Dialogue between Representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed

Reformed Christians over a five-year period from 1996-2000. Although disagreeing on some minor points there was major agreement on many issues with both parties continuing to work towards ongoing dialogue, worship, prayer, and Bible study.

Secondly, a review by Konrad Raiser of ecumenical councils over roughly a fifty-year period identifies trends that signify issues related to the Holy Spirit are of increasing importance.[123] His research indicates that the understanding and role of the Holy Spirit has continually been identified as an essential doctrine for ecumenical unity. Finally, a compilation of articles and responses in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* interact with Pentecostal-Charismatic influences as it relates to ecumenical unity. The editors note "the dialogues in this issue show that there are only a few fundamental differences between the traditional churches and the New Pentecostal churches, while they have much in common."[124] Commonly recognized are the many similarities between Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians and Christians from 'established' traditions.

It is precisely because of the larger reality of world Christianity that ecumenical unity is essential. Not only does Scripture mandate it, but for far too long Christian divisions have been a stumbling block for many in the world. The dynamic growth of indigenous churches outside of the West has multiplied the variety and diversity of Christian expression. In the recent World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001, "thirty-four thousand denominations are identified, an increase from twenty-three thousand in the previous edition."[125] The Church is in need of proper teaching on the difference between diversity and division.

Some Christians teach and believe "that diversity and divisions are inherently sinful."[126] One Christian scholar finds division alarming enough to claim that the Holy Spirit has left the Church as a result of divisions and diversity.[127] However the Church is not an either or proposition: either unified in holiness or divided in sinfulness. "The church is, and ought to be, characterized by both unity and diversity."[128] It is the Incarnation that allows for such a statement, as all contextual expressions of Christianity are, in the end,

---

Churches and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders, 1996-2000," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 1 (2001): 46.

[123] Konrad Raiser, "The Holy Spirit in Modern Ecumenical Thought," *Ecumenical Review* 41, no. 3 (1989).

[124] Jurgen Moltmann, "Pentecost and the Theology of Life" in *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge* edited by Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996): 123.

[125] Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing," 53.

[126] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions*, 259.

[127] David S. Cunningham, "A Response to Ephraim Radner's The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West," *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 1 (2001): 89.

[128] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 259.

unique to the time and culture of their people.[129] Diversity is an important and necessary feature of Christianity, but so is unity. "The pursuit of genuine Christian unity includes working to eliminate division, but not working to eliminate diversity" as "no individual or community exhaustively or unerringly apprehends the truth about God and his ways."[130]

Throughout the New Testament, the imagery of a body is utilized to describe the form and function of the Church. Each part, although different, serves a function that the other parts need in order to operate and fulfill their created purpose. The interplay between Pentecostal-Charismatics and non-Pentecostal-Charismatics exemplify this function as "they help noncharismatics rediscover the power of the Holy Spirit and the unseen world" while "noncharismatics help keep Pentecostal-Charismatics grounded in Scripture."[131] Pentecostal-Charismatic emphasis upon the Holy Spirit reminds the Church that it needs the daily experience of the Holy Spirit to live empowered to minister to others for Jesus; that there is a continuation in the way that the Holy Spirit works from the Resurrection to the Second Coming of Christ; that miracles, spiritual gifts, and spiritual warfare are realities which a majority of the world experience; it helps Western Christians recognize the cultural blinders that influence their own worldviews; and it represents diverse cultural expressions of dramatic and empathic worship.

Pentecostal-Charismatics also have much to learn from the other parts of the Church. Systematic theologies and Bible scholarship have much to add to and encourage reading of Scripture. Just as Pentecostal-Charismatics challenge Western worldviews influenced by the Enlightenment, so Western traditions challenge Pentecostal-Charismatics in seeking God through rational thinking. Experiences need to be weighed against Scripture and then the larger Christian community. Pentecostal-Charismatics need to recognize the need for discernment of experience in both their local contexts and the universal. Pentecostal-Charismatics can learn much from the 'established churches' liturgy and worship styles. Finally, there are "real-problems of negative spiritual phenomenon in Spirit-filled movements."[132] It is through the collective discernment of the global Christian body that such issues should be addressed, not for the sake of unity through sameness but rather unity through Jesus.

Far too long, especially in the West, divisions have been a reality that continues to separate Christians, which is difficult for non-Christians to accept.

---

[129] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 259; Oden, *Life in the Spirit,* 293.
[130] Buschart, *Exploring Protestant Traditions,* 264.
[131] James E. Plueddemann, "Theological Implications of Globalizing Mission" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 257.
[132] William L. DeArteaga, "Michael G. Moriarty, The New Charismatics: A Concerned Voice Responds to Dangerous New Trends," *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 2 (1995): 287.

Western pastors and teachers have continued teaching and preaching in a way that isolates their local church from other churches in the area, in the country, and most assuredly from the world. There is significant work to do towards ecumenical unity. Ecumenical divisions often occur over different understandings of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. Yet these topics need to be addressed by theologians, church leaders, and ecumenical discussion. Sixty years ago, working in the ecumenical dialogues in the 1950's between Catholics and Protestants, "Leslie Newbigin wondered if "the way forward may be found in a new understanding of the Holy Spirit."[133] There is a unanimous call for a renewed need of and openness to the Holy Spirit.

The distinctive characteristics of Pentecostal-Charismatics help the Church move towards this need and openness. It is time the Western Church appropriately acknowledges the mass growth of world Christianity while working towards ecumenical unity.[134] Ignoring the work of the Holy Spirit through this amazing growth is unconscionable. Further, many believe "that there is a growing realization that the Majority World church may play a crucial role, not only in revitalizing the life of Western Christianity, but in actually contributing positively and maturely to our own theological reflection."[135] The Church must learn to listen as a body, as:

> The Church is a learning community. Part of that learning will be the prophetic discernment in the power of the Spirit of the issues where evil is to be encountered and endured. Part of it will be the receiving of correction and enlargement by those whom the Spirit calls in discipleship. The Spirit is not the property of the community but its lord and guide, going ahead of the church and using both its proclamation and its endurance to bring fresh people to conversion.[136]

Ecumenical unity will only begin once the Church is willing to listen, receive instruction, make corrections, and endure with one another in loving fellowship. Further, the growth of world Christianity will result in more opportunities for ecumenical councils and discussions whose participants must be aware of the larger movements of the Spirit throughout the Church. This necessitates openness to the Spirit and a knowledge concerning how Christian growth is affecting the Church abroad. As world Christianity continues to emerge, diversity will continue to increase. The implications for Western Christianity are significant and as yet unknown. What is known is that theological critiques have been communicated from the Majority World through Pentecostal-Charismatic practices, which must be listened to and addressed by the West within its own Western context.

---

[133] Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 118.
[134] Craig A. Ott, "Conclusion" in *Globalizing Theology,* Ott and Netland, 310.
[135] Tennent, *Theology in the Context*, 13.
[136] Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 40.

Conclusion

The growth of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement and its influences are unprecedented and striking, as is Christian growth throughout the world. Clearly Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians are well within the bounds of orthodoxy. Their history and distinctive features help the West understand the Majority world as they bring an important check to Western worldviews. They remind Christians that theology must translate into lived experience, helping to illustrate that differences in worship style reflect cultural issues more than theological issues. One of the struggles for the Church will be in discerning the influences of theology vs. cultural expressions.

Western Christianity desperately needs to hear and learn what is happening outside of North America. Western Christians need to hear how the Gospel is speaking into the worldviews of each and every culture it touches. Christians in the West need to hear with certainty the ways in which the Holy Spirit is working in people's lives because of their faith in Jesus. Western Christians need to be encouraged that the Gospel message is unique, true, and momentous in its impact on all people and their cultures. This message, information of this growth, and communication with Majority World Christians may very well revitalize the Western Church.

Bringing awareness of world Christian growth will likely be the labor of local pastors. Seminaries need to be able to interact with church history, theology, and a host of other fields through the eyes of Majority World Christians. This interaction, exposure, and general awareness will indeed train Western leaders to work with other cultures, as well as in their local context. The Church is in the midst of an enormous paradigm shift. It is unclear how these changes are influencing world Christianity, specifically Western Christianity, but it is certain that the significance of change requires our attention. It might very well be what several Christian leaders in the 19th century spoke of concerning a future time when "the Western church would be the beneficiary of a 'blessed reflex.' They anticipated the time when the so-called sending churches in the West would be challenged and renewed by the churches then springing up in Africa, Asia, and Latin America."[137]

Christian growth throughout the world is ushering in a beautiful and exciting time for the Church. Christian Churches have 'sprung up' in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They are now challenging the West. The question is will the West allow itself to be challenged and renewed by world Christianity? Will it humbly accept and move towards this 'blessed reflex'? It is difficult to estimate how the Western Church will react to these changes and challenges, but what is certain is that to do so it must demonstrate a new openness to the role and work of the Holy Spirit. Paul Hiebert identifies the way forward for Christians in the West. "As Christians, we must be humble about the

[137] Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission," 105.

limitations of our knowledge and learn to discern the understanding that comes through the Spirit."[138] The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has much to teach, correct, and encourage Western Christians if they will receive this 'blessed reflex'.

Bibliography

Anderson, Allan. 2004. *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Buschart, W. David. 2006. *Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Invitation to Theological Hospitality*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Cunningham, David S. "A Response to Ephraim Radner's The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West." *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 1 [Winter 2001]: 89-100.

DeArteaga, William L. 1992. Quenching the Spirit: *Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit*. Alamante Springs, FL: Creation House.

DeArteaga, William L. "Michael G. Moriarty, The New Charismatics: A Concerned Voice Responds to Dangerous New Trends." *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 17, no. 2 [Fall 1995]: 283-287.

Douglas, Lois M. 2006. "Globalizing Theology and Theological Education." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 267-287. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Escobar, Samuel. 2003. *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Ecumenical Dialogue. "Word and Spirit, Church and World: The Final Report of the International Dialogue between Representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and leaders, 1996-2000." *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 1 [January 2001]: 41-72.

Hiebert, Paul G. 2006. "The Missionary as Mediator of Global Theologizing." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 288-308. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Hollenweger, Walter J. 1996. "From Azusa Street to the Toronto Phenomenon: Historical Roots of the Pentecostal Movement." In *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*, ed. Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel, 3-13. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Hughes, Robert Davis, III. "Starting Over: The Holy Spirit as Subject and Locus of Spiritual Theology." *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 3 [Summer 2001]: 455-472.

Irvin, Dale T. "World Christianity: An Introduction." *The Journal of World Christianity* 1, no. 1 [2008]: 1-26.

Jenkins, Phillip. 2006. *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Phillip. 2002. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

[138] Hiebert, "The Missionary as Mediator," 307.

Kenner, Craig S. 1996. *Three Crucial Questions about the Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Meneses, Eloise, H. 2006. "Bearing Witness in Rome with Theology from the Whole Church: Globalization, Theology, and Nationalism." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 213-249. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Moltmann, Jurgen. 1996. "Pentecost and the Theology of Life." In *Pentecostal Movements as an Ecumenical Challenge*, ed. Jurgen Moltmann and Karl-Josef Kuschel, 123-133. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Netland, Harold A. 2006. "Introduction: Globalization and Theology Today." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 14-34. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Newbigin, Leslie. 1995. *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Noll, Mark. 2009. *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith*. Downers Grover, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Oden, Thomas C. 1992. *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*. 3rd Vol. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Olson, Roger E. "The Future of Evangelical Theology." *Christianity Today* 42, no. 2 [Fall 1998]: 40-48.

Ott, Craig A. 2006. "Conclusion." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 309-336. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Phan, Peter C. "Doing Theology in World Christianity: Different Resources and New Methods." *The Journal of World Christianity* 1, no. 1 [2008]: 27-53.

Pinnock, Clark. "The Recovery of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Theology." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 1 [October 2004]: 3-18.

Plueddemann, James E. 2006. "Theological Implications of Globalizing Mission." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 250-266. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Raiser, Konrad. "The Holy Spirit in Modern Ecumenical Thought." *Ecumenical Review* 41, no. 3 [July 1989]: 375-387.

Sanneh, Lamin. 2009. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Sanneh, Lamin. 2003. *Whose Religion is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Shenk, Wilbert R. "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 3 [July 2001]: 98-107.

Strong, David K and Cynthia A. 2006. "The Globalizing Hermeneutic of the Jerusalem Council." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 127-139. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Tennet, Timothy C. 2007. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Tienou, Tite. 2006. “Christian Theology in an Era of World Christianity.” In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 37-51. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 2006. “One Rule to Rule them All?: Theological Method.” In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 85-126. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Wilson, Jonathan R. 2006. *Why Church Matters: Worship, Ministry, and Mission in Practice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

Winn, Albert Curry. “The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life.” *Interpretation* 33, no. 1 [January 1979]: 47-57.

Whiteman, Darrell L. 2006. “Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World.” In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland, 52-69. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Spirituality and Social Transformation:
The Samson Syndrome and National Progress - Judges 13-16

by Joseph Quayesi-Amakye

Abstract

This essay examines the African church's role in the socio-economic and scientific-technological transformation of the continent against the African claim of religiosity. Taking the Samson story (Judges 13-16) of resource dissipation as a case study, the paper challenges the African church to reexamine its understanding of spirituality so that it becomes meaningful and relevant to Africans. Such reexamination will enable the church to take up its rightful place as the prophetic voice for the reconstruction of the continent so that Africa will move from its nonchalant stance to become a key player in global progress and development. To this end the church must transform its theological education programmes to reflect the real needs of African people so that they can be equipped to participate in this programme of reconstruction.

Introduction

This paper argues that any spirituality, theology or ideology that does not take the general good seriously, but dissipates its purpose, must be questioned and rejected. It is my conviction that the African church has a mission to African peoples so that Christianity permeates their religion, culture, politics, economics and social relationships. This issue of a liberative Christian mission brings to the fore three key questions that demand scholarly investigation. Firstly, we may ask, "What is religion?" This question is about the way African peoples perceive their world and their quest for spiritual reality. Secondly, we ask ourselves "What role should the African church play in effecting religio-economic, socio-political and cultural transformation in its environment?" The contemporary theologian sees different modes of engagement that demand that theology becomes action-oriented. That is, praxis must become the first act of theology, a commitment to progressive development. Thirdly, we ask "What ways can the African church 'immanent' the transcendent Being of God into the existential realities of African societies so that God-talk will permeate the socio-economic, political and scientific-technological 'new world' realities?" An appropriate answer will ensure that the African will shift from a latecomer status to respond to contemporary world possibilities and opportunities.

It was Harry Sawyerr who wrote: "In spite of the difficulties inherent in the term African, there is a strong case for a Theologia Africana which will seek to interpret Christ to the African in such a way that he feels at home in his new

faith."[1] Sawyerr was interested in seeing an African theology that does not depart from the basic biblical teachings. He was equally interested in the development of a kind of Christianity that adopts a philosophical attitude to basic socio-religious factors of human society, as opposed to a mythopoeic approach, which attributes to psychic phenomena an explanation of the Christian way of life.[2] This is where my paper comes in.

As an African Christian theologian I am bothered about how my people continue to demonstrate great faith in God and endure all kinds of dehumanising circumstances and yet fail to catch up with the rest of the world. It seems to me that the African's Christian spirituality keeps him/her from taking seriously the mundane realities of the times such as scientific and technological developments. Kwame Bediako's position that in the Akan worldview "accepting Jesus as 'our saviour' always involves making him at home in our spiritual universe and in terms of our religious needs and longings" must be closer to the reality of African spirituality.[3] No matter how 'enlightened' the African may appear he or she is still haunted and controlled by his or her worldview. Similarly, as stubbornly religious as he or she is, his or her Christianity will not 'free' him or her from this primal worldview. Thus the issue is not so much about the authenticity of the African worldview than its relevance in Christianising the African. That is why we have to agree with Louise Tappa that true spirituality must embrace all that is material and physical about human and communal lives.[4]

Clarification of Some Terms

Before proceeding we will have to clarify our use of some key terms. Ideology is a "system of social beliefs, a closely organised system of beliefs, values, and ideas forming the basis of a social, economic, or political philosophy or programme. [It is also a] meaningful belief system, a set of beliefs, values, and opinions that shapes the way an individual or a group such as a social class thinks, acts, and understands the world".[5] The above definition elicits a number of implications. An ideology can be a social or political philosophy with practical and theoretical elements that have a focus of explaining the world and transforming it. As such ideologies affect people's worldview. Consequently, an ideology, like religion, has a strong potential in

---

[1] Harry Sawyerr, "What is African Theology?" in *African Theological Journal* 4 (August, 1971), 24.
[2] Sawyerr, "What is African Theology", 19.
[3] Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in African Culture: A Ghanaian Perspective* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990), 9.
[4] Louise Tappa, "The Christ Event From the Viewpoint of African Women: A Protestant Perspective" in Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (eds.), *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 31.
[5] *Encarta World English Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1999), 934. See also *DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd, 1998), 403.

shaping people's lives positively or negatively. In other words, an ideology may, on one hand, be humanising, empowering, and affirming of individual and communal worth; but on the other hand, it can be dehumanising, demoralising, disempowering and depersonalising. This means also that the formulator and possessor of an ideology determines a people's destiny either for good or for evil.

Theology and ideology relate as far as "theology is prevented from crossing the invisible line into ideology only by one thing … namely, the necessity, inherent to it, of sustaining an ongoing dialogue with the world, and thus of being continuously judged and corrected by the transcendent Word to which it can only bear secondary witness".[6] The contextualisation enterprise of the church demands prompt responses to the challenges of the times. It is about the church's vulnerability to an unambiguous, risky, open and willing dialogue with the socio-historical context to hear things that it "had not anticipated and to which it cannot readily respond".[7]

According to Bernadette Mbuy-Beya, "spirituality is what permits us to make sense of life. It is at the very centre of the life and culture of the individual and of the community. Spirituality is a basic dimension of life, the soul of all culture, its essential element".[8] The African's socio-cultural spirituality intelligently explicates life in all its dimensions to him or her. Spirituality is foundational to the African in terms of the vicissitudes of life.[9]

The word 'demon', with its adjective 'demonic', is derived from the Greek *daimon* which originally held no inherently evil connotation. It denotes a neutral force, which is inherently neither good nor evil. This term, together with *daimonion*,

> appear to have been used to specify a god or a minor deity against the background of popular animistic beliefs. Homer appeared to differentiate *daimon* from *theos* in that the former term constituted the divine power at work among people, while the latter isolated the concept of divine personality. Prior to the NT however, *daimon* was used for personal intermediary beings who were believed to exercise supervision over the cosmos. These beings, at least in popular belief, were considered to be the spirits of the departed, who were endowed with supernatural power. While the connection of demons with specifically evil practices slowly developed in Greek thought, this appears to have been consistently implied in the Hebrew use of such terms as *sedim* and *setrim.* Though the OT offers little speculation on the subject, the practices of idolatry, magic, and witchcraft were related to demonic forces (Deut. 32: 17;

[6] Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 78.
[7] Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 79.
[8] Bernadette Mbuy-Beya, "African Spirituality: A Cry for Life" in K.C. Abraham and B. Mbuy-Beya (eds.), *Spirituality of the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 64.
[9] Mbuy-Beya, "African Spirituality", 65.

> Ps. 96: 5). Such practices clashed with Israel's monotheism, they were specifically prohibited for the people of God (Deut. 18:10-14; 1 Sam. 15: 23).[10]

In our case 'demonic' is used to suggest wrong utilization of 'daimon' for evil purposes. Against this backdrop we may proceed with our analysis.

The African Blindness and Entertainment

Samson is one of three persons in the Bible whose births can boast of angelic annunciations. The others were John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. John was the Isaianic lone voice in the wilderness who called on Israel to prepare their hearts to receive God's kingdom through the Servant of the Lord. Jesus was to save Israel and the world from their sins. Samson, whose name means 'little sun', was to provide deliverance for Israel in the face of Philistine oppressive rule and domination (Judges 13:1-5). Unfortunately, unlike John or Jesus, Samson's life may be said to typify a life of resource wastefulness because he failed to appreciate his purpose in this life. He was an ignorant fellow who thought he could make sport with the divine anointing on his life. As such he dissipated his great strength by carrying out unnecessary raids among the Philistines just to entertain Israel. In the process he ended up being raided by the very people he was supposed to raid. This became possible because as 'a little sun' his captors succeeded in eclipsing him through the betrayal of the woman who he foolishly and blindly believed loved him.

Delilah, the name of Samson's Philistine girlfriend, has an obvious association with *dallah* (hair) and is reminiscent of *laylah* (darkness). In fact, through his sexual escapades Samson had been walking in blindness of purpose long before his captors put out his physical sight. It was this same blindness that made him think he could ignore God's explicit command to live as a Nazirite and God's call to deliver Israel from the Philistines and still enjoy divine favour and anointing. When eventually his enemies put out his sight, they brought his consistent propensity for entertainment to a logical conclusion.

According to Scott Thomas, scholars of international relations have tried to determine the impact of religion, nationalism and spirituality in world politics to account for the resurgence of religion in both the Third World and the developed world.[11] His work shows a close affinity between world politics and religions and how the dominant economies manipulate Third World countries to their own advantage. In the face of Africa's socio-economic backwardness, this religio-political interface alarmingly questions the so-called African

---

[10] Walter R. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (2nd ed) (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001), 331.

[11] Scott Thomas, "Religion and International Society" in Jeff Haynes (ed.), *Religion, Globalisation and Political Culture in the Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 29-41.

religiousness and opens it up to pessimism.[12] It appears that African peoples' spirituality is insufficient for dealing with the problems of the continent. The issue is Africans are full of God-talk as if such 'godly' clichés are adequate panacea for their myriad problems. The African continent is blessed with enormous human and material resources. Unfortunately, like Samson many Africans, if not all, have allowed themselves to become blind to the realities around them. Pitifully, instead of acknowledging their self-induced negligence, many Africans delight in playing the blame game that always sees the West as the culprit. It is true that the West has a role in the persistent impoverishing of the African continent. But the fact still remains that like Samson this has been possible because Africans have chosen to make sport of themselves.

As the Samson story shows it was not the Philistines who made Samson engage in sport. He had been making sport of his life and destiny all along. Samson therefore represents many people who fail to appreciate their purpose in life and so choose to dissipate their lives through frivolity. The way many Africans live their lives with ease makes them appear oblivious of global happenings. They love to waste their lives on unprofitable chatter, organise and patronise programmes that help to derail individual and national progress the more rather than promote them. When others are busily exploring and conquering space and the universe to make the world a better place for human existence, many Africans are busily engaging in sports. In Ghana for example, television programmes for children do not seek to enhance the innate scientific and technological abilities of our children. Similarly, many young people and their parents have come to believe that life is all about making quick money. Consequently, many young men drop out of school to play football, which, in itself, is not wrong. The problem is that they fail to realise that knowledge is more powerful than physique; and that when all the strength is sapped, knowledge can still secure the future.

The African unbridled drive for entertainment does not promote creativity in people. It succeeds in creating a strong consumer desire for the products of those who conquered the world more than a hundred years ago. From the way many Africans live, they appear ignorant about being late conquerors of the earth. In many ways, especially scientifically and technologically, Africa seems years behind others in the world. And yet they can afford to make sport. This is indeed strange. The foregoing leads us to reflect on the use or misuse of spirituality and its effects on individual and national development.

Removing the Scales of Irrelevancy

All developed nations have had to reorient their attitude to work at one point or the other. Yet lest it should be thought that humans depend on their own ingenuity for the advancement of their society, Kudadjie offers this advice:

---

[12] J.N.K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Theology After the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), 33-34.

> Many take the influence of religion on society and development for granted. In matters of attaining high moral standards, such people would advocate the use of reason, buoyant economy, effort, effective preventive and deterrent measures, high moral ideals, and so on. Yet the truth is that throughout human history, the quest for God has inspired the art, poetry, music, literature and morality that have enriched human civilisations; and it still does.[13]

Kudadjie's comment reinforces the need for making African theology relevant to offer the needed hope for Africans' development. And yet religion must take its proper place in social development and advancement. This is why the wrong use of religion must not be entertained. An appropriate spirituality or/and religion must consider a hermeneutics of social development. Such hermeneutics must aim at undoing the socio-economic reversals of African peoples as satirically captured by Jean-Marc Ela:

> The African today resembles a person running in the dark, not knowing which way to go. Run, run, but where? To the fore, to the rear, toward the tom-tom and the dance in the moonlight! Back to village life? Impossible. Ahead, to the future, the unknown future, mystery? Unthinkable.[14]

This apt description of today's African sounds much like Samson's situation. And it is the graphic representation of a people who ignore their purpose in this life but choose to play to the gallery of others. Like Samson, the African has become confused about his/her reason for living and is just following the dictates of others. This is something the new hermeneutics must seek to correct. This is why we insist, with J.N.K Mugambi, that Africans create new and better myths and also re-interpret old ones since "a society which is incapable of making its own myths or re-interpret its old ones, becomes extinct".[15] One of the old myths is that Africans are unable to manage their affairs without the help of foreign intervention.

Unfounded as this may seem to us, everyday African socio-economic and political experiences seem to confirm it. There are ample illustrations to the effect that many African governments irresponsibly grind their economies down, fail to maintain existing infrastructure, show blatant disregard for law and order, supervise rather than combat the high spate of corruption, thrive on nepotism, do not open up for accountability and are unwilling to accommodate dissenting views from those in opposition to them.

As Mugambi has rightly argued, a twenty-first century Christian theology in Africa must include such motifs like the Exilic, Deuteronomic, Reconstructive and Restorative since the 1970s Exodus motif failed to focus on transformation and reconstruction. Mugambi's is a good suggestion, since most African theologies, and Third World theologies in general,

---

[13] J.N. Kudadjie, "The Role of Religion and Ethics" in *Accountability in National Life* (Proceedings of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1994), Vol. 28, 1990, 60.
[14] Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986), 100.
[15] Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 37-38.

overemphasise socio-political liberation to the detriment of technological development. Indeed, socio-political liberation without the compensating technological development results in neo-dependency. It is to this end that the suggestion that "ICT must be introduced to schools right from the primary level" in Ghana is a welcome one.[16] For the same reason the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology's decision to introduce a new programme to train young and brilliant students for doctorate degrees is laudable and innovative.[17]

Of course, such lofty ideals ought not to remain on drawing boards but must translate into reality. The emergence of many Christian private universities in Ghana with programmes aimed at responding to the technological development of Ghanaians and Africans in general is a welcome relief and response to the Christian theological task of liberating Africa from its dependency on Euro-America. Indeed, African theology owes it as a matter of duty to send the message to African peoples and governments about the need for technological and scientific liberation.

Towards a Relevant Christian Spirituality

"Every man has the right to decide his own destiny
And in this judgement there is no partiality".[18]

Our discussions so far require us to do a relevant theo-praxis. Such theo-praxis demands a reflection on the actions required to reverse the negative trends that beset the African continent and peoples. It is important to appreciate the destructiveness of ignorance of purpose. This is because it results in frivolous living. Failure to sustain one's goal within the general purpose leads to abuse and mismanagement of potential and resources.

In the long run mismanagement of resources and potential is akin to abuse of the future. Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-16; see also Matt. 25:14-30) underscores this. Similarly, we see in everyday life situations that people who live without the future in focus approach life with a short circuit mentality. Oftentimes, the solution such people provide is short term rather than long term. But human beings are created to offer permanent rather than intermittent solutions to the world. People who place a low premium on their spirituality are exposed to the ridicule of their enemies. Such spiting of spirituality emanates from complacency. Complacency disguises vulnerability and provides false hope and false security. But complacency is a sure sign of vulnerability; and indicates one's blindness to reality. The serious-minded have no room for fools. In a scientific-technological world physical strength and blind spirituality are not good enough for positively contributing to history. Its

[16] "ICT: Gold Mine of the Mind", *Daily Graphic,* Thursday, Sept. 2, 2004, 7.
[17] "Editorial", *Daily Graphic,* Monday, September 6, 2004, 7.
[18] A statement made by Malika Lee Whitney and cited in *Bob Marley: Reggae King of the World* (Kingston, Jamaica: Kingston Publishers, 1984), 100.

consequence is disillusionment and fatalism. Many times our failure to understand the times and our objectives in life makes us waste our remaining energies on our supposed enemies. Samson prayed to die with the Philistines. But his real enemy was his ignorance to understand the purpose of his existence and the demands of the time. Those who rely on physical strength and blind spirituality become sport to those who know how to use their brains or minds. Wisdom and skill are more powerful than mere physical strength or blind spirituality. Those who rule do so via the ignorance of the ruled.

To respond to the challenge of relevancy, the church must take the theological training of its leaders and faithful seriously. Such training must shift from the traditional curricular focus to include non-theological matters like politics, law, economics, science and technology and sociology. In a time when African Pentecostals are beginning to see the wisdom in theological education we cannot think that theological education is irrelevant to our development. After all, over the years Pentecostals worldwide showed some antagonism towards education in general, and theological education in particular, because for them anointing and spiritual empowerment trumped theological training.[19] This was particularly so with African Pentecostals. No wonder African Pentecostal literature rarely makes its way to the academic shelves of the West.[20] This lack of accessible literature has been the bane of the Pentecostal movement because practitioners have not been able to articulate concisely and intelligently the faith they claim to espouse. Yet Pentecostal empowerment has been associated with radical critiquing of the existing socio-religious status quo

> because its proponents were unflinching in refusing to be co-opted into any other agenda than the one for which they knew they had been empowered by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In this sense it was a prophetic religion, a religion similar to that of Elijah and Jeremiah.[21]

But Pentecostalism should not be seen as a religion of low critical thinking. This is what the immediate past General Secretary of the Ghana Pentecostal Council (GPC) meant when he noted that many Pentecostal predecessors' failure to balance spirituality with scholarship made them lose considerable influence in society. But the acquisition of doctoral degrees by Pentecostal pastors shows that "scholarship will show the way to Pentecostal delivery".[22] In fact, since Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity has come to stay it is necessary for practitioners to realise that whatever the level of their spirituality, they need the counsel of scholarship to sustain them in the ministry. Indeed,

---

[19] Rosalind I.J. Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana" in *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 28. 3 (1998), 262.

[20] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, "Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies.* 36.2 (1998), 175.

[21] Mathew Clark, "Questioning Every Consensus: A Plea for a Return to the Radical Roots of Pentecostalism" in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 5:1 (2002), 73-76.

[22] Apostle Ekow Badu Woode, 1st National Prophetic Leadership Conference.

while glossolalia unlocks the mystery of empowerment it does not in any way suggest that it sums up the totality of Pentecostal spirituality. It just serves as a foretaste of divine empowerment. In fact, what is said about Pentecostalism is applicable to African Christianity in general.

Commenting on Pentecostal hermeneutics among African Pentecostals Allan Anderson notes that "the significance of this Pentecostal hermeneutical process is that a reciprocal relationship between the Bible and the Spirit occurs".[23] He further observes:

> One presupposition that conditions this hermeneutical approach … is the emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit that is common to Pentecostals, including African Pentecostals. The Bible is used to explain the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit in the church with supernatural "gifts of the Spirit", especially healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues and prophesying - although there are sometimes differences between the churches in the practice of these gifts.[24]

Today, however, the tides are changing; there seems to be some unexplained movement towards theological education among many Ghanaian Pentecostals. As the Pentecostal fellowships or ministries metamorphosed into churches, neo-Pentecostals gradually began to shift away from their mockery of theological education. They set up their own Bible schools to train and equip their potential leaders to 'catch' the principal leaders' or founders' visions. Others also travelled to far away lands to pursue some level of biblical education.

Hopefully, when the church tailors out appropriate theological education to meet the contemporary needs of Africans it will be able to arise to fulfil its prophetic mission of righting the wrongs in the socio-economic and political fibre of our societies. Of course, this will be attainable when the church cleans its own stables of any filth of competition, covetousness, hypocrisy and manipulation of the poor to enrich the aristocratic priests who load their followers with burdens too difficult for the poor laity to bear.[25] For when the leadership is inconsiderate of the people's plight, and are seen to be part of the 'without and within rejecters' behind the sufferings of the masses, the church will lack the will to confront the political 'principalities, powers, thrones and dominions' that manipulate our poor in the guise of international trade

---

[23] Allan Anderson "The Hermeneutical Processes of Pentecostal-Type African Initiated Churches in South Africa" www.geocities.com/missionalia/missalia.htm (also in *Missionalia* 24:2, August 1996)

[24] Anderson "The Hermeneutical Processes"

[25] Christopher J.H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, (Nottingham: IVP, 2011), 122. See Simon Maimela, "Current Themes and Emphasis in Black Theology", 103, and Itumeleng J. Mosala, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology", 194, in Mosala J. Itumeleng, and Tlhagale Buti (eds.), *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology From South Africa* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986).

inequality.[26] Ela cries loudly against the insolent luxury of a privileged few who vainly try to hide the misery of the great majority of African peoples:

> Social class differentiations are becoming more accentuated in society as a whole. The atmosphere is permeated with illusion. The wretched masses are being plied with a mass culture that they imbibe like a drug and that prevents them from ever becoming aware of the growing injustices against them. The dominant ideology has a ready-made explanation for the current difficulties: the crisis of the international situation and inflation … One begins to realize that the rapid, exciting prosperity of a minority is not always the fruit of productivity. It can be the fruit of corruption … the basic living conditions of the masses have scarcely changed, and the profits of development, which accrue at the national level, accrue to a select few only.[27]

Laurenti Magasa similarly opts for a paradigm shift in African Christology. This praxis-oriented Christology of liberation sees liberation as a religio-cultural, socio-economic and political fact of reality and as a duty that incarnates Christ in human sufferings for the total liberation of the African person.[28] When the African church understands its purpose in the world, it will then be in a position to make its voice heard on national issues without having to echo other people's voices. It then will be able to fulfil its prophetic mission as a true messianic church with a clear understanding of the politics of Jesus. This is because it would be in a position to tap into religion's potential for revolutionary transformation to bring about true and authentic biblical liberation of African peoples.[29]

In reality, Africa is rich. The only problem is how Africans harness, mobilise, insure and maximise their physical, human and collective assets so that they become profitable to the continent. Africans cannot afford, for example, to allow their human resources to waste away through debilitating diseases like HIV/AIDS.[30] Nor should Africans encourage the negative use of religion or spirituality that diverts the right use of time from productive services into the holding of prolonged fasting and prayer vigils. Such pious practices only create conditions akin to laziness, and a false and misplaced belief that

---

[26] Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "A Theology of Isaiah" in Roy B. Zuck, et al (eds.), *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 307. See J. M. Waliggo, "Africa Christology in a Situation of Suffering" in Robert J. Schreiter, (ed.) *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 164-180. See also Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry*, 83-84.

[27] Ela, *African Cry,* 84.

[28] Laurenti Magasa, "Christ the Liberator in Africa Today" in Robert Schreiter (ed.), *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 151-163.

[29] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 60-75. See also "Final Statement of the Fifth EATWOT Conference" held in New Delhi (August 17-19, 1981) in Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983), 201.

[30] W. Asenso Okyere, *Wealth Accumulation, Utilization and Retention: A Converse To Treatise On Poverty Reduction* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2001), 12-13, 15-37.

God blesses according to how much one prays or fasts.[31] God blesses industry but not religious pomposity. Even the practice of tithing on one's income needs to be examined to bring out its theological and economic significance. It is only when people work that they can receive income to tithe on to support God's work. He does not bless people simply because they tithe even if they are lazy. He blesses their work and not the tithe per se. What Africa needs is a new work ethic. Indeed, God desires responsible citizenship of his children, such as honouring their tax obligations for national development. He also demands that we adopt frugality and employ proper economic measures to safeguard our future and posterity. A people who do not know how to avoid waste and are unable to save little crumbs cannot expect to be economically and scientifically viable or relevant.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to critically examine the relevancy of African spirituality in the face of debilitating problems. The contention of this paper is that the African church must blaze the road to socio-economic and scientific-technological reconstruction of the continent. To this end, a new spirituality, which carves new humanising myths of Africans, is demanded of all African people, especially the faith community. The church has the power to make this work by adopting appropriate theological education for its leaders and laity.

Bibliography

Anderson, Allan. "The Hermeneutical Processes of Pentecostal-Type African Initiated Churches in South Africa" www.geocities.com/missionalia/missalia.htm (also in *Missionalia* 24:2, August 1996)

Bediako, Kwame. *Jesus in African Culture: A Ghanaian Perspective*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990.

Chisholm, Jr., Robert B. "A Theology of Isaiah" in Roy B. Zuck, et al (eds.), *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.

Clark, Mathew. "Questioning Every Consensus: A Plea for a Return to the Radical Roots of Pentecostalism" in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 5:1, 2002.

DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary. London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 1998.

"Editorial", *Daily Graphic,* Monday, September 6, 2004.

Ela, Jean-Marc. *African Cry.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986.

Ellis, Stephen and Gerrie ter Haar. "Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies.* 36.2, 1998.

Elwell, Walter R. (ed.). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001.

Encarta World English Dictionary. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999.

[31] W. Asenso Okyere, *Wealth Accumulation, Utilization and Retention,* 19.

"Final Statement of the Fifth EATWOT Conference" held in New Delhi (August 17-19, 1981) in Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983.

Hackett, Rosalind I. J. "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana" in *Journal of Religion in Africa,* vol. 28, number 3, 1998.

Hall, Douglas John. *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

"ICT: Gold Mine of the Mind", *Daily Graphic,* Thursday, September 2, 2004.

Kudadjie, J.N. "The Role of Religion and Ethics" in *Accountability in National Life* (Proceedings of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1994), Vol. 28, 1990.

Magasa, Laurenti. "Christ the Liberator in Africa Today" in Robert J. Schreiter, (ed.), *Faces of Jesus in Africa.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.

Maimela, Simon. "Current Themes and Emphasis in Black Theology", in Itumeleng J. Mosala and Tlhagale Buti (eds.), *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology From South Africa.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986.

Mbuy-Beya, Bernadette. "African Spirituality: A Cry for Life" in K.C. Abraham and Bernadette Mbuy-Beya (eds.), *Spirituality of the Third World*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994.

Mosala, Itumeleng J. "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology", in Itumeleng J. Mosala and Tlhagale Buti (eds.), *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology From South Africa.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986.

Mugambi, J.N.K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Theology After the Cold War.* Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995.

Okyere, W. Asenso. *Wealth Accumulation, Utilization and Retention: A Converse To Treatise On Poverty Reduction.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2001.

Sawyerr, Harry. "What is African Theology?" in *African Theological Journal.* Vol. 4, August, 1971.

Tappa, Louise. "The Christ Event From the Viewpoint of African Women: A Protestant Perspective" in Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (eds.), *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Thomas, Scott. "Religion and International Society" in Jeff Haynes (ed.), *Religion, Globalisation and Political Culture in the Third World.* London: Macmillan, 1999.

Waliggo, John M. "Africa Christology in a Situation of Suffering" in Robert J. Schreiter, (ed.) *Faces of Jesus in Africa.* Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.

Whitney, Malika Lee. in *Bob Marley: Reggae King of the World.* Kingston, Jamaica: Kingston Publishers, 1984.

Woode, Apostle Ekow Badu. 1st National Prophetic Leadership Conference.

Wright, Christopher J.H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, Nottingham: IVP, 2011.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Book Reviews

John Stott

The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor

Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007. 192 pages. Paperback. $9.25.

Reviewed by Emmanuel Kwasi Amoafo

John R. W. Stott, an internationally respected evangelical English Christian leader, passed away in July 2011 at the ripe old age of 90 years. Written in Stott's eighty-sixth year, this book displays the same characteristic and forceful clarity of presentation and sound biblical reasoning that have made his earlier books such a significant contribution to modern Christian evangelical thought.

In *The Living Church*, Stott presents the essential characteristics of a living church from his perspective as a lifelong pastor. In the preface, Stott states: "*The purpose of this book is to bring together a number of characteristics of what I call an authentic or living church … I hope to show that these characteristics, being clearly biblical, must in some way be preserved*" (17).

I consider this book to be of particular importance to African church leaders today whose Church is often described as "a mile long and an inch deep" for its lack of meaningful discipleship and sound evangelical theology.

In the first chapter Stott draws his principles from Acts 2:42-47 and declares that because the Holy Spirit has already come at Pentecost and because His work imparted these qualities to the early Jerusalem church, today what we the church need to do is to *"humble ourselves before God, and seek His fullness, the direction and the power of the Holy Spirit… so that our churches will at least approximate to the essentials of a living church in apostolic doctrine, loving fellowship, joyful worship and outgoing, ongoing evangelism*" (34). In chapter two, Stott identifies biblical worship, congregational worship, spiritual worship and moral worship as being the four characteristics that mark the worship of a living church.

Stott argues in his third chapter that to make local church evangelism effective it must be incarnational; i.e., modeled after the mission of Christ who laid aside his heavenly prerogative to take on our human identity, to enter into our pain, and to die our death. In chapter four Stott draws on Acts 6 and concludes that, because the twelve apostles were called to pastoral ministry and the seven deacons were called to social ministry, "*God calls different people to different ministries*" (79). Stott then derives from Paul's valedictory

speech in Acts 20 three essential marks of a successful minister - thorough teaching, thorough outreach and thorough methodology – and advises that ministers who demonstrate these qualities will value the people of God and protect them from false teachers. In his fifth chapter, Stott laments the fact that the church today "*tends to be aggregations rather than congregations*" (92). Stott appeals for a return to the concept of dividing congregations into smaller church and fellowship groups similar to the house churches of the early New Testament church. It is in these small groups, Stott declares, that Christians today can best express their common inheritance, their common service and their mutual responsibility to encourage and comfort each other.

Stott addresses preaching in chapter six. He observes that in a world "*drugged by television, hostile to authority and suspicious of words*" in which "*preaching is regarded as an outmoded from of communication*" preaching in the living church today should, among other things, be biblical and contemporary, authoritative and tentative, prophetic and pastoral (116). In chapter seven, Stott presents ten principles for giving in the church today that are thoroughly wise and biblical. In the eighth chapter Stott reminds us that Jesus told Christians to be the salt and light of society. If darkness and rottenness abound in our world today it is largely the fault of the church and we must accept that blame (143). Stott suggests that the church today can effectively fulfill its salt and light mandate in the world through prayer, evangelism, godly living, and Christ-centered socio-political action.

In the book's final chapter Stott calls upon church leaders today to be ethical, doctrinal and experiential. He calls for modern Timothys to come forth and embody these principles in their leadership of God's church to make it a truly living church.

The book ends with three historical appendices "*related in different ways to the living church"* (163). In the first of these, originally written in 1966, Stott explains why he is still a member of the Church of England. He states that he chose to stay in the church because he believes "*in the rightness of belonging to it and of maintaining a faithful evangelical witness within it and to it*" (177). In the second appendix, as evidence of his long-held passion to see a living church, Stott presents a sermon entitled *I Have a Dream of a Living Church* that he preached on November 24th, 1974. It commemorates the 150th anniversary of All Souls Church, the church he pastored for thirty years. The third and final appendix is entitled *Reflections of an Octogenarian*, written on Stott's eightieth birthday, October 27th, 2001, in which he offers to today's church leaders three convictions about priorities, obedience and humility.

The scriptures reveal to us and the church affirms, by both experience and conviction, that the resurrected and living Lord Jesus, exalted and seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, is spiritually and vitally connected to His Body, the Church, here on earth (Eph. 1:20-22). The Church, in other

words, has its head in heaven while its feet and hands perform God's will physically here on earth.

What God purposed for Christ, He has also purposed for His Body, the Church (John 17:18 and John 20:21). To avoid the incongruity of having our Living Head uncomfortably connected to a lifeless, ineffective and irrelevant Body here on the earth today, the Church will do well to carefully and prayerfully put into practice the eight biblical and historically-proven marks of a living church that Stott, motivated by his faith in "*the power of God's word and Spirit to reform and renew the church*" (177), has so masterfully and passionately presented in this book. I whole-heartedly and unreservedly recommend it to Christian people everywhere burdened with a desire to see a living church.

Barend Johannes van der Walt

When African and Western Cultures Meet: From Confrontation to Appreciation

Potchefstroom, South Africa:
The Institute for Contemporary Christianity in Africa, 2006
R150, approx. $20.00 US ISBN 1-86822-510-0 pb 317 pages
To buy, contact the author at hannah@interkom.co.za

Reviewed by Jack Mitchell, Scott Christian University

In a world of super-sensitive cultural awareness and interchange, what happens when two of the world's largest cultural blocks meet? What are the points of interface that have provided the opportunity for great promise and yet great disappointment? What are the tensions and lessons one can gather from the meeting of Africa and the West?

Using Africa's many challenges and the Western world's attempts to assist in alleviating them as a backdrop, Prof. B.J. van der Walt has sought to illuminate the phenomena of cultural diversity and intercourse in the meeting of the African and the Western worlds. Until his retirement in 2002, the author was a professor of philosophy and then the director for Reformation Studies at the Potchefstroom University. At that time he became a Research Fellow at North-West University in S. Africa. His career in research, teaching, writing and speaking, enable him to contribute to this discussion from both an academic and insider's perspective.

In seven well-organized chapters, Prof van der Walt defines the most egregious challenges facing Africa, and uses each as a case study to help illuminate what happened when African culture met the West. Addressing issues such as development schemes, globalization, and leadership, the author's purpose is to both analyze the often troubling intersection of cultures in general as well as glean insights from the particulars of the meeting of Africa and the West that can be applied to the broader spectrum.

His thinking is based on an avowedly Christian and Reformed perspective. Furthermore, he states very early in the book that cultural diversity is a gift from God that is meant to enrich our experience as human beings (p. 15). He then sets about to analyze the specifics of Africa and the West in order to address why such a good thing from God has gone bad.

The author specifically pinpoints some of Africa's most challenging issues: poverty, the failure of development schemes, the troubling influence of globalization, leadership failures, the plight of women, and the agriculture crises. He enhances his study with two chapters - "A shame versus guilt-oriented conscience" (ch. 6); "The Western way of thinking compared with the

Eastern and African mode of thought" (ch. 7) - that further diagnose other causes of African and Western clashes. At the same time, he weaves the issues of cultural imperialism and relativism into his assessment, both of which have further complicated attempts at cultural conjunctions.

Finally, the author rounds out his study by focusing on two specific areas that will serve some readers well: "A Liberating Message for Women in Africa" (ch. 8); and "Direction in the Crisis in Agriculture" (ch. 9). The chapter on women has many helpful thoughts, and essentially follows a Western egalitarian argument for the recognition and enhancement of women's participation in all spheres, both private and public. Concerning agriculture, he begins by defining the crisis of agricultural methods amidst the presence of ubiquitous malnutrition in Africa. His discussion includes definitions of reality in competing worldviews, the role of political, social, and economic factors, and the questionable role of technology in resolving the crisis.

There are numbers of strengths that make this treatise a valuable resource for academicians, as well as thoughtful pastoral leaders who are seeking to lead at a time of radical transition amidst the forces of globalization. The author has provided numerous bibliographical resources for those who desire to explore more specific areas of interest. From a Christian perspective, his clear view of the Christian Church's role in cultural interchange is encouraging. His approach is critically constructive (i.e., objective and balanced) on a broad diversity of issues (e.g., use of power, pp. 144-146; worldviews, pp. 208-213; and learning styles, pp. 216-219), which he enriches with helpful recommendations to assist the reader in personal reflection and practical implementation. And last, but not least, the book is clearly written despite some translation oddities.

Weaknesses are few but good to keep in mind as one reads. The author's assessment, while African, is clearly from a South African perspective. Furthermore, many of his resources come from fellow Dutchmen, both South Africans and Europeans. He reached strong conclusive statements that at times seem based on insufficient evidence (pp. 245-246; 263). Finally, the book would be an even more valuable resource with the addition of indices.

As stated earlier, the strength of this book's contribution is its focus on key issues in the African-Western intersection. The author has sought to address issues that thoughtful African leaders in and outside the Church will find insightful and pragmatically helpful. It is potentially very helpful for African Christian pastors, particularly those seeking to lead congregations that straddle the traditional African worldview and methods and the contemporary technology-led culture of youth and urban areas. Understanding the issues is a giant step in knowing how to lead those who are caught in the competing forces of modern Africa. Prof. van der Walt's study is a good place to start for those who need basics, as well as for those who desire greater insights.

Dean Flemming

Contextualisation in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission

Leicester: Apollos, 2005.
£14.99 ISBN: 9781844741007

Reviewed by Georgette Short, Scott Christian University

Dean Flemming's award-winning book *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of how we should be living out the gospel in ways appropriate to different contexts. As a New Testament scholar and an experienced missionary, Flemming is well qualified to write on this subject. Although he has written widely about contextualisation, this book adds something new. It examines how the New Testament writers go about contextualising the gospel for their day. Drawing on the latest scholarship and illustrating his points with his own experiences, he makes a detailed study of key New Testament books to see how they can help us to contextualise the gospel in the 21st century.

Beginning with a study of Acts and Paul's letters and then going on to the Gospels and the book of Revelation, Flemming builds a detailed picture of the complex world in which the early church lived and sought to spread the good news. His careful exegesis of these texts is not simply for better understanding but also to examine the methods Paul and his fellow writers used in communicating the gospel so that we may learn from them as we seek to do the same thing in our time. His final chapter, which deals with how to contextualise the gospel today, draws together what he discussed earlier in the book to show how we today might use similar approaches to those used by the New Testament authors.

Flemming's excellent understanding of the context in which the New Testament was written and his detailed study of its texts give us insight into how its writers contextualised the gospel in their day. One of the strengths of Flemming's approach is to show that this was not a simple task for the early church any more than it is for us. Because the culture of the Roman Empire was as diverse as any culture today, there is no one method that fits all situations. Flemming makes this particularly clear when he examines how Paul presents the gospel to the different people he encounters in the book of Acts and identifies the variety of methods he uses to make the gospel accessible to them. He emphasises Paul's ability to adapt the way in which he presents the gospel according to the audience he is addressing. He also suggests that we need to keep a balance between sensitivity to the needs of the particular

group we are trying to reach and the gospel of God's saving action in Jesus Christ. His study of the Gospels demonstrates that because they are a different genre from the letters, they need to be treated differently. Dismissing the notion that each Gospel was written for a particular community, he nevertheless accepts that knowing their target audience in a broader sense helps us to understand them better and this enables him to show how each Gospel writer presents Jesus in a way appropriate to his audience. Flemming's chapter on the book of Revelation discusses how it would have spoken to its original audience as well as highlighting its relevance for us today. He demonstrates that while it is a highly contextualised response to the pagan situation his early church readers were living in, John's use of imagery and drama can help us as we seek to contextualise our message to a generation that is shaped largely through media and sensory experience.

The last chapter of the book, which discusses contextualisation today, is particularly significant for the contemporary church. It gives no trite answers or formulae but it does bring together much of what the author has looked at in previous chapters and gives some helpful guidance on how we might apply these insights to our evangelistic encounters today. He pinpoints the similarities between the 1st century milieu and ours and suggests ways in which we might employ similar approaches. He also argues that there is a need for constant re-evaluation and reformulation of our theology in the light of both Scripture and our changing circumstances. But, significantly, he also reminds us that the work is God's, not ours, so that our foolishness and mistakes do not cause the harm they might otherwise do. Therefore, as in the early church, the Holy Spirit continues to guide the church today.

The church in the 21st century, wherever it is seeking to share the good news of Jesus Christ, must think deeply about how to contextualise its message so that it is understandable to those outside the church. Flemming's book shows that this is not a new problem and that the New Testament is rich in insights that can help us carry out this task. He demonstrates the many ways in which the complex cultural landscape of the 1st century echoes our own. He offers us models of contextualisation that we can employ to incarnate the gospel message in ways that people from different cultures can understand. As the world's cultures continue to become more complex, the message of this book is one the Church needs to hear. This book is not only helpful to those engaged in cross-cultural ministry but also for the church in the West as it seeks to present the gospel to a post-modern society.

The Africa Society of Evangelical Theology (ASET)

A community of Evangelicals in Africa engaged in the full spectrum of theological scholarship for the benefit of the Church and society

ASET annual membership fees: Full, 1600 Ksh;
Associate, 1200 Ksh; Student 400 Ksh

The Africa Society of Evangelical Theology is a fully registered society within Kenya.

The mission of ASET is to foster Evangelical theological scholarship and facilitate collegial relationships among its members by:

Encouraging research and providing a forum for disseminating that research among members and to the wider Christian and academic communities.
Creating a context where evangelical perspectives on issues facing the African church and society are addressed.
Creating a context for fellowship and networking.
Raising funds to finance the activities and events of the ASET.
Publishing the findings of research in books and journals.
Contacting other societies that are in accordance with this constitution and the Societies Act in the Laws of Kenya as may be stipulated in the society's by-laws.

For more information, contact:

James Nkansah
james.nkansah@AfricaInternational.edu 0734419086
Bernard Boyo bboyo@daystar.ac.ke 0724694334
Rodney Reed rreed@anu.ac.ke 0733955586

Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

Cover: The emblem of Scott Christian University, shown on the cover, features the Mumbu Tree, a historic and cultural landmark on the University grounds. The Mumbu Tree is used by *AJET* as a symbol of the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the Mumbu Tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

Copyright: All rights to the *AJET* articles and book reviews are reserved by Scott Christian University and may not be reproduced without prior written permission from the Editor.

Viewpoint of Articles: The opinions expressed in the articles and reviews are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or sponsors.

Editorial Policy: We welcome previously unpublished Articles and Book Reviews from an evangelical perspective. Articles (3500 - 8000 words) and Book Reviews (750 - 1250 words) should be submitted in MS Word, with full documentation in Footnotes and Bibliography, and emailed to the Editor. Please include a brief biographic sketch of your present vocational work, together with the last degree obtained and the name of the institution from which the degree was obtained.
E-mail: ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke. Website: www.scott.ac.ke.

Subscription Rates	**One Year** (Two Issues)
Kenya (Surface)	Ksh. 450
Africa (Airmail)	US $10.00
World (Airmail)	US $24.00

ALL PAYMENT by cheques in *Kenyan shillings* must be made out to **SCOTT THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE.** ***ALL*** *other cheques* must be made out to **AIM INTERNATIONAL.** ***ALL*** US dollar cheques must be from a USA based bank. Cheques in Pounds Sterling or in Euros are acceptable and should be for the equivalent in US dollars.

Orders and Renewals: Orders, renewals, and changes of address should be directed to AJET Subscriptions, P.O. Box 49, 90100 Machakos, Kenya.
E-mail: ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke. Website: www.scott.ac.ke.

Back Issues: Available on request. The cost of back issues for the past three years or less is the same as the subscription rates. The cost of other back issues is at a reduced rate. A CD ROM of AJET 1982-2002 is available for US $20.00 in Africa and for $40.00 US elsewhere in the world.
E-mail: ajetjournal@scott.ac.ke.

Book Reviews

177 John Stott
The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor
(Reviewed by Emmanuel Kwasi Amoafo)

180 Barend Johannes van der Walt
When African and Western Cultures Meet: From Confrontation to Appreciation
(Reviewed by Jack Mitchell)

182 Dean Flemming
Contextualisation in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission
(Reviewed by Georgette Short)

***Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 30.2 2011**

Printed by Kijabe Printing Press
P.O. Box 40, Kijabe, Kenya