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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. Tennent 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

	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

	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 indigenously 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 leerness 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 Tennent 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 Tennent, *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'.

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

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