

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

Philippines Pentecostalism

Volume 8, Number 2 (July 2005)

PENTECOSTALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Joseph L. Suico

Religion is an important part of any culture, and in Philippine culture, religion encompasses the whole society. Thus, the Pentecostal phenomenon in the Philippines cannot properly be understood without considering its socio-religious context. It must be noted that the introduction of Christianity in the Philippines made a strong impact on not only the religious, but also the social, economic and political aspects of native Filipino culture. Ma. Elena Chiong-Javier (1991:19) wrote, "The Spanish missionaries who first came to Christianize the Filipinos also assumed other roles outside of their church roles. They played active parts as linguists, ethnologists, educators, estate administrators and public officials." Thus, the interrelationships between culture and religion in the Philippine society have had great impact in almost every facet of community life.

For this study a survey was undertaken in two stages: reconnaissance and main survey. The purpose of the initial fieldwork was to test the questions raised in the study. During this phase, the target churches were located and the towns where they are situated were verified as to their socio-economic profile (urban or rural status). The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part deals with socio-economic characteristics of the respondents: age, gender, civil status, occupation, education, annual income, monthly expenditure, assets and savings and investments, expenditure on habits, name of church, church status (elder, deacon, member, organization leader), and frequency of church attendance. The second part addressed the respondents' perceptions on social and political issues. The objective of exploring these characteristics is to examine how the demographic and socio-economic factors influence the members' response to social issues and their view of the role of the church in society relative to spiritual, religious and moral factors.

Interviews addressed the views of the respondents on the role of the church regarding socio-economic and political issues. The interview was divided into four sections: political, socio-economic, self-advancement, and church, theology and ministry. The total number of informants during the second stage was 322. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was administered to 72 Pentecostals (39 from International Charismatic Service, 33 from Christ is the Answer Assembly of God) and 207 Roman Catholics (102 from Our Lady of Consolation Parish Church, and 105 from St. Joseph the Worker Parish). Interviews were completed for 22 Pentecostals (15 International Charismatic Service and 7 from Christ is the Answer Assembly of God) and 21 Roman Catholics (11 from Our Lady of Consolation Parish Church and 10 from St. Joseph the Worker Parish).

1. The Pentecostal Churches in the Philippines

The coming of the Americans in 1898 paved the way for Protestant mission. It is said that Protestantism arrived in the Philippines wearing an American soldier's uniform because the first Protestant minister came as an army chaplain (Gowing 1967:125). The succeeding years saw the coming of missionaries from various denominations: the Methodists, Episcopalians and Baptists in 1900, United Brethren and Disciples of Christ in 1901, Congregationalists in 1902, Christian and Missionary Alliance and Seventh-Day Adventists in 1905. The first Pentecostal missionaries arrived in 1918 from the Church of God, then the Assemblies of God in 1926 and 1937, and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1937.

Pentecostalism, like Protestantism in general, has always been associated with the U.S.A. All major and some minor Pentecostal denominations in the United States have sent missionaries to the Philippines starting from the 1920s. Initially, they went to places not yet reached by Roman Catholic priests or in remote areas where the Roman Catholic Church did not have a strong presence. As a minority group, many Pentecostal churches are located outside of the city or town centers.

The Pentecostals' strong emphasis on the miraculous and divine healing is a major factor why people are attracted to its faith and practice. Another reason is their tendency to be "member-oriented" which results in effective mobilization of lay leaders in recruitment activities (e.g., evangelism). In contrast, classical and more established churches tend to

monopolize power in the hands of an elite clergy. Pentecostal churches are known to provide opportunities in empowering their members through the gifts of the Spirit. This means that any member in the congregation has equal opportunity to “move in the Spirit,” such as prophesying, interpretation of tongues, healing, or discerning of spirits.

The Pentecostal movement in the Philippines can be categorized in various ways but for this survey, the writer has limited it into two, namely: “classical” and “independent.” Classical Pentecostal churches are those that have strong links with their U.S. counterparts and are usually the oldest. The Independent Pentecostals are those that either have informal links with churches abroad or indigenous characteristics.

The word “independent” is chosen because of the difficulty with the term “indigenous.” Various disciplines attribute different meanings to the term. For instance, it is widely accepted within missiological circles that self-government, self-support and self-propagation define what an indigenous church is. In the social sciences, however, indigenization refers to a process whereby religions initiated by outsiders are transformed through contact with native religion and culture. Doctrinally, the basic tenets of faith of the independent churches are either similar to that of the classical groups or simply a derivative. In fact, many of them came into existence as a splinter group from the bigger and older Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Church. While it can be argued by some that these congregations are “self-propagating” and “self-generating,” and therefore indigenous, their basic theological perspective is one that is merely inherited from North America. Pentecostalism is more globalized than localized as far as the Philippine situation is concerned. A case in point is the Assemblies of God that merely adopts what its counterpart does in the United States. To date the Philippine Assemblies of God continues to maintain the sixteen Fundamental Truths introduced by the first missionaries in 1926.

2. Pentecostal Doctrine and Practice

Pentecostal doctrine in this paper refers specifically to a four-fold pattern (salvation, healing, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and the second coming of Jesus Christ), which expresses the logic of Pentecostal convictions (Dayton 1987:21). Although Pentecostals represent many denominations and a variety of theological positions, the four-fold pattern follows a broader way of

defining their beliefs. A more specific unifying belief among these divergent groups is the experience known as the baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to conversion (Johns 1993:63). Most Charismatic or neo-Pentecostal groups are those who have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit but do not necessarily espouse the evidence of speaking in tongues. For the classical Pentecostals, regardless of denominational affiliation, the four-fold pattern represents the core doctrines of their churches.

From its incipient stage, the Pentecostal movement has flourished mainly among the poor, the uneducated, those from the margins of society and the oppressed. As in other poor countries where Pentecostalism thrives, its doctrine is found by some to have economic relevance. Today the movement is increasingly reaching the middle and upper class and may no longer be restricted to the “disinherited.” Although Pentecostalism in the Philippines has now become socially multifarious, it is still a minority when compared with the Roman Catholics.

Although Pentecostals reject certain teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, they agree with them on the major beliefs of Christianity. Many of their converts were usually nominal Christians to whom they have pointed out a personal relationship with God. Much emphasis is given on experience which empowers its followers for the here and now, as well as in the beyond. They strongly believe that the gospel is relevant in their daily life and that God is wholly other yet intimately present in their lives.

3. Pentecostalism and Society

Although Pentecostals believe their message is relevant to people and to the larger society, they have also been perceived as indifferent toward social, economic and political issues. This impression has been attributed to various reasons such as eschatology, dualistic vision of the world and aversion to the Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps the most common critique is related to the Pentecostals’ other-worldliness which is rooted in various aspects of nineteenth century fundamentalism in North America. An important aspect of this is premillennialism and the need to live in expectation of the imminent return of Christ as taught by J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield (1843-1921) among others (Ferguson and Wright, 1988:502).

This perception is not without opposition however. For many years, the manner in which the Pentecostal movement was assessed has been quite inadequate, more particularly concerning social responsibility. A Pentecostal theologian, Doug Petersen, has argued that social scientists in the past utilized methodologies which were usually inferential and functionalist. He is convinced these scholarly works “had been undertaken without adequate definitions, data and perspective regarding the groups’ size, distribution, infrastructure, resources, and most importantly with insufficient understanding of the ethos of Pentecostal experience” (Petersen 1998:17).

Pentecostalism in the Philippines has been interpreted mainly by outsiders who tend to ignore the context, particularly the socio-economic dimensions of its members. There is an obvious lack of knowledge and understanding of the significance of the Pentecostal experience especially its institutional relationship to society. Consequently, the attitude of other churches and communities is often marked by theological and cultural prejudices. It is therefore pertinent that formal studies are undertaken to assess the validity of the prevailing perception of Pentecostals’ lack of involvement in socio-economic and political activities.

A study I completed in 2003 explored whether other contributory factors, both external and internal, are also influencing the external perceptions of socio-economic indifference of Pentecostals on the Philippines. The nature of Pentecostal social and economic activities was investigated by looking at how they understand the role and purpose of the church and how it relates to society. As an institution, what are the theological or philosophical frameworks used, what are the goals and purposes of their involvement? As individuals, what are the contributing factors that generate their conviction to participate progressively in the social and economic issues and activities? Factors influencing involvement/non-involvement—eschatology, socio-religious and political attitudes or marginalization are considered. Because the Pentecostal church in the Philippines is part of a broad process of religious and social change, its understanding requires a comparison of its members’ life and experience from those of people from the dominant religious group, which is the Roman Catholic Church.

The results of the survey showed that the ambiguity of the Pentecostals’ understanding of their role in society should not be construed strictly on the basis of their lack of participation in social protest actions. Other factors like socio-economic attitudes and behavior must also be carefully considered. Pentecostalism in the Philippines as a whole is in no sense a uniform or monolithic movement. On the question

of involvement in politics, for instance, there is a range of attitudes. It was also revealed in the study that, although the leadership of the Pentecostal churches under consideration did not have a formal position or theological reflection on the two significant political revolutions (EDSA Revolution 1 and 2), some individual members who were interviewed did actually participate in those events. Some lay leaders when interviewed felt the church ought to be actively participating when a particular situation arises. With regards to socio-economic matters, the results of the survey confirmed one of the hypotheses of the study that there is no significant difference in the socio-economic activities of the members of the Roman Catholic church (control group) and the Pentecostal church (subject group). The majority of the respondents in both groups cited prayer as the key in alleviating poverty in the Philippines.

While the results of the research have shown similar factors between the Pentecostals and Roman Catholics as discussed above, the crucial differences between them reveal the distinctive impact of Pentecostals. These distinctives are with relation to the individual experience and their self-sustaining empowering. The key distinctive is that, from the moment one becomes a Pentecostal, they are empowered to be a missionary. Unlike the Roman Catholic model, there is no long apprenticeship or probationary period. Pentecostals are empowered almost immediately as a soldier and as a contributor. The Pentecostal is personal; the Catholic is formal. The Pentecostal focuses on the development of the self; the Catholic subordinates the self to the institution thereby disempowering its people as it drafts a plan of life for everyone. The Pentecostal starts with the personal; the Catholic starts with the faith of the church. The Pentecostal is related to the experience of everyday life; the Catholic has fine theology, but it is unconnected with the experience of everyday life.

This concept of empowerment, in which any member has instant access to the power of God, has enormous implications for their strategy of development. The Roman Catholic churches, with all their capital of international links, theological expertise and position in society, do not represent any significant advance on the position of the examined Pentecostal churches, newly emergent from both poverty, the animated world of Philippine culture and working in isolation apart from some dependency on U.S. tutelage. The Roman Catholic churches in the study are clearly in a situation of sponsored development. The Pentecostal churches are in a situation of self-help and developing their own positions over time. This shows an important framework in order to understand their achievement fully and thus undermine the inaccurate

assumption that their people are lagging behind, whereas in fact they are taking crucial steps under their own power which will render their development the more sustainable.

The Roman Catholic Church benefits from the perceptions created by their hierarchy and theology and international links that they are well positioned in understanding and negotiating political reality. The Catholic churches are highly dependent on the wider international Catholic support, intelligentsia and theological interpretation. For instance, the urban Catholic church, which is located within the compound of the Recoletos Formation Center (training school for priests), benefits from the resources provided by the seminary. The seminarians themselves are actively involved in parish activities and outreaches of the church. Conversely, the Pentecostal churches benefit from no such perception; in fact they are viewed in entirely different perspectives as being totally dominated by North American dualistic Christianity.

However, there is a level of international Pentecostal understanding available that has been framed in different contexts. In order to interpret the results of the research appropriately, it is necessary to examine wider Pentecostal developments and relate the findings of the research in relation to those. The Pentecostal churches will need to negotiate between the reality of their spiritual experience and the wider reflection that is represented by Pentecostal intellectuals. This will also enable a proper comparison with the Roman Catholic community to take place. The task of the following section is to set the findings of the survey in this larger context by outlining some elements for this negotiation.

4. The International Pentecostal Framework

Frank Macchia's brief description of the Pentecostal movement's theological journey provides a good historical background for understanding the lack of critical theological reflection in the Pentecostal churches. Macchia points out: "The Pentecostal movement in its early decades was driven by a fervent eschatological expectation of the soon-coming kingdom of God. The basic tasks of biblical interpretation and proclamation gained the forefront of a vigorous effort to evangelize the world before the arrival of Christ in judgment and salvation" (Macchia 1999:8-9).

With this zealous expectation, the focus of training in Bible schools and colleges in the 1920s was placed on the mastering of doctrinal

positions and the memorization of the scripture rather than critical thought or scholarly research (Wilson 1988:61). For classical Pentecostals, according to Russell Spittler, “‘systematic theology’ is an elegant name for doctrine. And doctrine consists of a concise statement of biblical truth presented in a logical order and marked by gathered scriptural support.” Spittler further explained a very important point when he said that “[w]hat theology on this level does not do is to address social issues or cultural situations” (1991:297).

As Pentecostal membership worldwide is no longer strictly confined to the poorest of the poor, it now has within its ranks people from a wide range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Already there is a growing number of Pentecostals taking higher education and actively involved in various forms of academic disciplines. Hollenweger (1992:17) informs us of an increasingly significant core of “critical Pentecostals” who have dared to move beyond the arrested views of the Pentecostal establishment.

In the early 1970s, the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) was founded by leading Pentecostal scholars in North America. One of its objectives was to provide a forum so that Pentecostal scholarship would have a context within which to flourish independently of denominational supervision and censure (Macchia 1999:11). Similarly in Europe, the European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Association (EPCRA) was also founded in the 1970s.

Wonsuk Ma, a South Korean Pentecostal scholar, examines the past contributions and contemporary scholarly works by Pentecostals within the discipline of biblical studies. The number of publications in the form of journals, books and theses and dissertations by Pentecostal scholars as accounted demonstrates the immense interest of the Pentecostals in printed material (Ma 1999:57-61).

With this promising development in Pentecostal scholarship, Macchia (1999:11-12) believes the shift from “irregular theology” towards critical theology in Pentecostal scholarship has already started and is developing in North America and Europe. The coverage of issues addressed by the “critical Pentecostals” continues to expand as more Pentecostals are convinced of the need for serious theological reflection. For instance, Macchia argues for a “revisioning of Pentecostal eschatology.” He is convinced that Pentecostals need to “rediscover the original eschatological fervor that allowed them in the early years of the movement to swim against the stream of the spirit of the age and to advocate female participation in the ministry and interracial fellowship (1999:23). Powers (1999:313-14) has also stressed the prominence of

women in Pentecostal ministry. Women in the Pentecostal movement were allowed to preach and teach the Bible, administer educational institutions and conduct evangelistic campaigns.

Along with the practice of allowing women to be involved in church ministry was the Pentecostals' openness towards interracial fellowship even at a "time in American history in which such social relationships were considered demonic, insane, and criminal" (Macchia 1999:23).

Recent developments in Pentecostal scholarship have continued to address wide-ranging issues faced by Pentecostal churches. For example C. B. Johns (1993) proposed to integrate Paulo Freire's method of liberation pedagogy in Pentecostal spirituality. Johns develops a Pentecostal catechesis based on Freire's approach that bridges Pentecostal experience with situations of social oppression. The goal of Pentecostal catechesis, as defined by Johns "is the means whereby the faith community becomes aware of God's revelation and responds to this revelation in faithful obedience" (139). Eldin Villafañe (1993) from a Hispano-American perspective has also offered a social ethic which is based on a principle that churches must be equally understood as places for personal and social liberation. This also poses a challenge for Pentecostals to revision a much broader prophetic and vocational role of baptism in the Spirit.

Through the years, this earlier predisposition towards engagement in social issues has had tremendous effects in various parts of the world where Pentecostalism was present. Wilson (1991:89) writing on the influence of Pentecostals in Latin America has shown that the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America is attributed to the ability of its adherents to address the frustrations and insecurities of the masses in transition. Increasingly, Wilson believes, the Pentecostals are credited by observers with having acquired the potential for exercising significant social influence. The study of David Martin (1990:234) has demonstrated the inclination of the Pentecostal experience to create "free space" in terms of new priorities and statuses acquired by the movement's converts. Shaull (2000:197), looking at Pentecostalism in Brazil, has found in his research that the Pentecostal experience "not only frees them from subservience to rigid rules, but also provides them with an unusual capacity for discernment of what is going on in their own lives." Authors like Roberts (1968) and Willems (1967) view the growth of Pentecostalism not only as an indicator of social change, but also as a factor in modernization and improvement for the poor. Cecilia Mariz (1994:110) in her study of Pentecostals in Brazil notes that despite the claim of the Pentecostal leaders that they do not get involved in political

activities, her findings show the opposite. For example, she observed that “pastors frequently obtain paved streets or electrification of their churches through favors from politicians they have supported” (110).

Paul Gifford (1995:5-6), who writes from an African perspective, acknowledges the influence of Pentecostals in society. In his study he highlights the capacity of Pentecostalism to provide a “new notion of self” which empowers an individual to make personal decisions and within the “small area they have marked out for themselves” they can interact as equals. This view is joined by G. Francois Wessels (1997:366) who is convinced that, unlike the mainline churches in South Africa, charismatic congregations (including traditional Pentecostal groups) have a liturgy which empowers lay members for service. This empowerment lies in the initial experience of glossolalia, which Wessels (366) describes as,

...the most dramatic instrument of empowerment in charismatic liturgy. No one has gone through the bridge-burning, often embarrassing, exhilarating initial experience of glossolalia ever doubts that she has been called, sanctioned and empowered to speak to outsiders about her faith and to minister to whoever is in need.

It is then argued by Wessels that by enabling the Pentecostals with strategies to structure and order in their world amidst social lawlessness and lack of vision, the charismatic congregations in South Africa are far from being other-worldly but in many respects are active participants in dealing with the world in which we all live.

This kind of globalizing influence of Pentecostalism however has not confined itself to North America, Latin America or Africa, but even in Marxist contexts such as Eastern Europe, Pentecostals have also made their mark. Peter Kuzmič (1991:140), for instance, has argued that “Pentecostals as a ‘church of the working class’ and a movement of the full gospel are in a unique position to overcome Marxist prejudice and stereotype through the affirmation of the gospel in word, deed, and sign.”

While a connection with an international framework benefits the local Pentecostals in the Philippines, there is also a downside which must not be forgotten, for it has an influence on the witness of the Filipino churches. In his article “‘Pentecostalism and Global Market Culture’: A response to issues facing Pentecostalism in a postmodern world,” Harvey Cox (1999:387) urged the Pentecostals to develop a critical theology of culture. He highlighted the importance of recognizing the relationship between religion and culture, which is quite explicit in the New Testament writings (e.g., Acts 19:23-37). Missionaries did not emphasize

this in training the locals in the early days of the Pentecostal movement. Today, the lack of contextual analysis prevails in the missionary-initiated institutions including various aspects of church life and ministry. What works in the U.S. is usually assumed capable of yielding good results locally. One classic example is how the annual theme of the general council is chosen. Most of the time the local leadership merely adopts what its U.S. counterpart does. This mindset of the leaders has various ramifications in the life and ministry of the local churches.

First, the type of liturgy and music used in the churches has tended to be individualistic and often creates its own enclave culture. Nowadays, the songs and hymns used in the church services are mostly determined by a younger group of worship leaders and musicians. This means that the church music packaged from the United States, United Kingdom or Australia is likely to be chosen over that which has local cultural content. Often, church music is rarely scrutinized for theological rapport or socio-political relevance. There are occasions when the elderly are forced to sing hymns that are not familiar to them, particularly those that contain words with various North American connotations.

The second ramification is that the preaching and teaching ministries of the Pentecostal churches focus mainly on Christian devotional life and growth as shown in the results of the survey of this thesis. However, in the Bible, poverty and justice issues are basic to God's revelation to the world. Deryke Belshaw (2003:5) has correctly observed, "'Rich country' theologians have problems seeing the relevance of biblical materials relating to extreme poverty in agrarian society, although these are the contexts in which the great majority of the world's poor are located." While most Pentecostals came from poor backgrounds, there is a tendency for them to overlook the poor who are outside their churches.

Third, the projects (evangelistic or relief services) initiated by the missionaries are seldom conceived locally. The plan is always hatched somewhere else, and once a particular programme reaches the country, it is ready for implementation. The locals are expected to participate in a project initiated by the missionaries often budgeted at thousands or sometimes millions of dollars. The objective, however, of transformational development is to encourage the locals to assume ownership and responsibility at a given time. In practice, this does not work all the time and sometimes leads to disastrous results. To the present, most of the foreign-initiated programs are still managed, if not highly subsidized, by the missionaries or their sending agencies. One of the major reasons for this is the lack of contextual analysis. Many of their

projects are not locally sustainable; thus, when a missionary leaves, the locals find it difficult to maintain the original goals of the project.

The above discussion on the positive perspectives of international Pentecostal framework has shown us the possibilities for Filipino Pentecostals to negotiate their spiritual experience with the wider reflection of several issues by Pentecostals around the world. More than ever before, Pentecostals worldwide and those in the Philippines, can now benefit from the serious theological reflections on various issues by a growing number of Pentecostal scholars mainly from the United States, Latin America and Africa. Studies on Pentecostalism in Latin America in particular have become a benchmark for many Pentecostals particularly in their engagement with society.

The negative perspectives of international framework have also shown the limitations of the Filipino Pentecostals in their worship and ministry expressions. The findings of the study reflect heavy influence by the U.S. missionaries in church worship (musical numbers), preaching and relief distribution activities. However, these negative elements also act as a foil to show the achievement of the engagement of the Filipino Pentecostal churches despite these negative international factors working on them.

Having seen the international perspectives, both positive and negative, we are in a better position to identify the implications of this research identified in the study, both for the Pentecostal churches and for other churches surveyed. This survey of international viewpoints shows that there is a development in Pentecostal movements around the world to reflect critically on their theological heritage, and to be confident about the contribution that Pentecostal spirituality gives to the formation of people's identity and to their action based on hope in their situations.

For Filipino Pentecostals, who are in the minority, the Christian community is the primary context as well as the centre for worship and spiritual life. Church ministries are geared towards the members who face conflict in the family, tension in the community, unemployment, poverty and illness. Members of the Pentecostal churches are given both spiritual and practical advice about how to cope with these kinds of situations. These members also hold community responsibilities as laborers, farmers, government employees, teachers, nurses, doctors and factory workers. While they work as individual Christians, they also live in a larger community as members of the Pentecostal churches. Their practical involvement gives a *prima facie* case that this will be impacted by their spirituality and therefore we are justified in looking at the

research findings to see how they will express meaningful social engagement in these spheres.

Because of the findings of this research, the Pentecostals in the Philippines should no longer be viewed through the lens of North American-directed movement, but rather by considering the implications of their socio-economic activities and the wider scope of international linkage for understanding the potential of the findings for expressing and contributing to the needs of society.

5. Implications of the Study for Pentecostal Social Involvement

At the micro-structural level, Pentecostals have made a strong impact. The various programs they have been involved with, such as orphanages and mercy work, can readily prove this. The growth of Pentecostalism all over the world has caught the attention of sociologists and religious scholars. Although the movement is gaining more acceptance among the middle and upper class people, its social impact is still much felt among the marginalized masses in the Philippines and in Asia as well. The following are the major factors that put Pentecostals in the right position to engage in and benefit from active involvement in society.

First, perhaps the strongest impact Pentecostalism has on Philippine society is its commitment to rebuild families amidst communities shattered by social and economic dislocations. The focus on the family has been one of the significant emphases of Pentecostal ministries. Although not a unique emphasis for the Pentecostals, the fact that they are a minority in the Philippines, participation in the public life of the predominantly Roman Catholic society can be restricted. The Pentecostals, amongst others, believe their message is directed first to individuals and families rather than to social and political institutions. James Grenfell's (1995) study of Pentecostal churches in Guatemala showed how women are attracted to Pentecostalism's strong emphasis on thrift, punctuality and honesty and their hostility to domestic violence, gambling and booze. This is particularly true in the Philippines. For instance, when a member of a certain family becomes a part of the Pentecostal church, it usually results in better family relationships. The pastor of a Pentecostal church in Manila in the interview said, "...by providing its members with a venue where they can ventilate their ideas related to different issues and also a place for relationships to develop (marriage couple fellowship), the church has helped them to self-

advance” (Visca interview). One of the programs of the Philippine Assemblies of God that deals with marriage and family enrichment is the Marriage Encounter Weekends that aim to build better marriages in the denomination as well as those from other faiths. Other enhancement seminars designed to aid healthy family lives are conducted on a regular basis, albeit many of the resource speakers come from the United States.

The second is the empowerment of the laity. The research results show that lay empowerment lies at the heart of Pentecostal missions and evangelism. In a general sense, social empowerment depends on the community in which the individual participates. A comparison with the control group, the Roman Catholic Church, shows several distinct advantages of a Pentecostal empowerment experience. The Catholic Church, on the one hand, provides such a community, in which the individual participates and is resourced through the mass; through the mass the individual receives the Holy Spirit and the affirmation of the resurrection. On the other hand, the Pentecostal Protestant view is that the individual is empowered personally and directly by the experience of the Spirit in their own lives. The framework within which this empowerment can be expressed and make a difference is still the community.

The similarity between the activities and expressions of the Pentecostal and Catholic churches surveyed is attributable to the fact that they both are shaped by and located in the community culture of Philippine spirituality and life. The survey also revealed that Pentecostalism per se did not cause its adherents to be concerned for others as it is already inherent in the people’s consciousness. Under circumstances where the community is stable, the above process facilitates social empowerment of individuals through the community. However, the impact of the global forces of modernity provides a vastly increased range of choices for individuals. The traditional geographical communities cannot cope with these. The community fractures because individuals are expressing ever increasing choices which drive them apart from each other—the break up of families, participation in global or cyber communities. The elites look after themselves and the poor implode. The result is that individuals are not empowered because there is no community through which to express their empowerment. In this situation mere community empowerment is not enough. Individual empowerment is needed to cope with the pressures of poverty and social alienation. It is here that the Pentecostal experience of prayer and the Spirit is a crucial resource for individuals.

The third is the empowerment of the poor. The movement has established structures that empower the poor and the marginalized to have a greater voice and participation in the system. An ordinary Filipino whose opinion is not normally heard, upon conversion acquires a sense of worth, new meaning for life, new disciplines for work and new models for family life. The results of the research show that although Pentecostalism started among the poor, it has now attracted even those that come from the middle and upper strata of society. The economic consequences of Pentecostalism have yet to be explored fully. Members of Pentecostal churches are trained to give sacrificially. Thus, throughout the country sacrificial giving has already produced millions of pesos worth of properties including land, church buildings, retreat and conference centers, a television station and others. Pentecostal churches are known for their high percentage of giving to missions and evangelism. Hence, they can also be encouraged to express that same generosity towards development-related projects. Shaull (2000:229) is instructive: "By calling upon the poor to give rather than receive, Pentecostals contribute significantly to breaking the attitude of dependency so deeply rooted among marginal peoples."

Fourth, the Filipinos' rich heritage of shared aspirations and values from their religious faith contribute to the Pentecostal practice and provide a strong foundation for a contextualized approach to transformational development. Pentecostals should consider the potentials of these values in achieving a greater impact of the gospel beyond evangelism and church planting. Filipino writers have already made in-depth research pertaining to the potential contribution of Filipino values in the task of rebuilding a nation that has been crippled by the long-lasting effects of colonialism and dictatorship. The overarching value pointed out by many thinkers is called the *sakop* (group alliance). The *sakop* is a multipurpose group, it focuses on the welfare of the group rather than the individual. According to Leonardo Mercado (1975:55), a Catholic priest, "*sakop* can be a social security system, an employment agency, an emotional support." *Sakop* in the Philippines encompasses practically all levels of a person's relationship: relatives, peers, classmates, neighbors, officemates, extended family by consanguinity or affinity (58). The *sakop* value is best expressed in the family since to this day, it remains the strongest unit of Philippine society. Filipino anthropologist F. Landa Jocano (1992:1) amplified this concept by looking at the relationship of *sakop* with other Filipino values: "In a *sakop*, the positive aspect of Filipino values come into play: *pakikisama* (being along-with), *pakikipagkapwa* (continuing act of reciprocal action),

pakikiisa (being-one-with), *pakikibagay* (in-conscience-with), and *bayanihan* (unity).” The future success of a Pentecostal transformational development in the Philippines not only lies in the leadership of the Holy Spirit but also in using these rich resources that are already available in the form of positive cultural values embedded in society.

The above features discovered through the research identify the understanding and practice of these Pentecostal churches as expressing transformational development, and show that they are taking on a sense of the social without undermining their personal experience. In fact, their experience of the personal enables them to deal with a challenging and fast-changing world because of the inner resources they have. The research also shows that the extent to which the Catholics can cope is the extent to which they share the concerns of the Pentecostals for prayer and the spiritual life—not their social analysis or base communities or work of the institutions which are themselves fragmenting under the pressure of modernity.

Therefore to read Pentecostals as those who do not work institutionally with social programs as their primary expression and thus conclude that they have no social focus or concern is to read them through the spectacles of the institutional church. This reading has its validity, inasmuch as for social empowerment to take place, the empowered individual needs to work through a community expression.

6. Concluding Reflections: The Impact of Pentecostalism in Asia

While this paper has primarily focused on the Philippines, it must be noted that the “movement of the Spirit” is widespread in Asian churches today. Various sources demonstrate this fact through survey and other ways of scientific research. (See for example Barrett and Johnson, 2001 and Burgess and Van Der Mass, 2002). Additionally, It has been argued recently by Luke Wesley (2004:105) in his book, *The Church in China* that the house church movement in China is “persecuted, Pentecostal, and powerful.” He also cited one possible reason for the strength of the Chinese house church movement in the face of persecution and opposition: its Pentecostal nature. David Martin (2002:154) in his book *Pentecostalism: The World their Parish* cited R. Frykenberg who suggested that the “single most sweeping movement of conversion in India is Pentecostal.” Barrett and Johnson (2001:13) are helpful in providing us with a snapshot of the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Asia:

Pentecostal/Charismatic (in millions)	
Han Chinese	49.7
Indian	16.6
Indonesian	6.8
Filipino	6.8
Korean	3.3

Furthermore, Burgess and Van der Mass, editors of *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (2002:301) illustrate the growth of membership among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Asia:

Asia	
AD 1900	4,300
AD 1970	10,144,120
AD 2000	134,889,530
Current growth 1.9% p.a.	

Jungja Ma (1999:201), a Korean Pentecostal missionary serving in the Philippines, outlined at least three distinctive levels of maturity in the region:

- 1) Pentecostal churches in an infant stage in countries such as Mongolia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Tibet, Nepal, China, and hopefully North Korea.
- 2) Pentecostal churches in struggling areas which need a fresh breakthrough, such as Japan, Thailand and Taiwan; and
- 3) Pentecostal churches in countries that have enjoyed significant success in the past and face new challenges. This group may include nations like Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia.

In this paper several implications emerged that the Pentecostal movement in Asia is a globalized one. My research has clearly shown that a connection with an international framework benefits the local Pentecostals. And this is true of many Pentecostals around the region. However, there is a level of international Pentecostal understanding available that has been framed in different contexts. In order to interpret the results of the research appropriately, it is necessary to examine wider Pentecostal developments and relate the findings of the research in relation to those. The Pentecostal churches will need to negotiate between the reality of their spiritual experience and the wider reflection that is represented by Pentecostal intellectuals.

References

- Belshaw, D. *Development Studies in OCMS: Annual Report April 2002- March 2003*. Oxford: OCMS, 2003.
- Chiong-Javier, M. E. (1991). "Religion as Entry Point to Change and Development: The Case of the Hanunuo Mangyan." In *And God Said: Hala!* Ed. J. A. Belita. Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1991. Pp. 19-37.
- Cox, H. "Pentecostalism and Global Market Culture: A Response to Issues Facing Pentecostalism in a Postmodern World." In *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*: Eds. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus and Doug Petersen. Oxford: Regnum, 1999. Pp. 386-95.
- Dayton, D. *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury, 1987.
- Gifford, P. *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa (Paul Gifford)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995.
- Gowing, P. G. *Islands under the Cross: The Story of the Church in the Philippines*. Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967.
- Grenfell, J. "The Participation of Protestants in Politics in Guatemala." M.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1995.
- Hollenweger, W. J. "The Critical Tradition of Pentecostalism." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (October 1992): 1-17.
- Johns, C. B. *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Kuzmič, Peter. "Pentecostals Respond to Marxism." In *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*. Eds. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus and Doug Petersen. . Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991. Pp. 143-164.
- Langerak, A. "The Witness and Influence of Pentecostal Christians in Latin America." *International Review of Mission* LXXXVII (April 1998): 175-87.
- Ma, W. (1999). "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." In *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*. Eds. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus and Doug Petersen. Oxford: Regnum, 1999. Pp. 52-69.
- Macchia, F. D. "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology." In *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion made to Travel*. Eds. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus and Doug Petersen. Oxford: Regnum, 1999. Pp. 8-29.
- Martin, D. *Tongues of Fire: the Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Mariz, C. *Coping with Poverty*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

- Petersen, D. *Not By Might Nor By Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America*. Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996.
- Shaul, R. W. Cesar. *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Wessels, G. F. "Charismatic Christian Congregations and Social Justice—A South African Perspective." *Missionalia* 25:3 (November 1997): 360-74.
- Villafañe, Eldin (1993). *The Liberating Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Visca, Abraham, pastor of International Charismatic Service. Interview by the Author. Manila, Philippines, June 8, 2000.
- Wilson, D. J. "Pentecostal Movement." In *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Eds. S. Burgess and G. McGee. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. P. 267.