Global Missiology

Current Issue

Vol. 19 No. 4 (2022): Pentecostal / Spirit-Empowered Mission

This issue takes up a theme of increasing importance and worldwide relevance, “Pentecostal / Spirit-Empowered Mission.”

Published: 2022-10-19

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Guest Editorial

Jesus Movement in the Making: The Witness of John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, and Nicodemus

Wanjiru M. Gitau

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

The Gospel of John reports how the Jewish leaders sent some priests and Levites to John the Baptist, to inquire if he was the Messiah. John confessed he was not the Messiah but that he had been sent to prepare the way for the Lord (John 1:19-23). John had started a movement that was gaining in popularity, so the leaders sent a delegation to investigate. John's testimony was to point to Jesus: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Now a new teacher was on the scene, and soon he was proving more popular than John. The Gospel of Luke reports that one day when Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law "had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem to see him" (Luke 5:17). Jesus just happened to heal the sick when they were around. The crowds were continually amazed by Jesus's teaching, because he taught them like one who had authority, not like their experts in the law (Matthew 7:28-29). Throughout the Gospels, there are confrontations between Jesus and these religious leaders—attested masters of the law of Moses, leaders who had control over the synagogues.

John's Gospel also records the well-known encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus: "There was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him'" (John 3:1-2). Clearly, Nicodemus respects Jesus and affirms him. As a teacher, Jesus appears to be in the same league as the old Jewish movement of Pharisees committed to restoring the law of Moses in Israel—perhaps like Ezra, who was committed "to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). Jesus is more than that, however, and he tries to tell Nicodemus, "I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3). Jesus is announcing a new kingdom, but Nicodemus does not understand the wind of the spirit. "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:7-8). Nicodemus is confused and asks, "How can this be?" (John 3:9). Jesus chastises him, telling him that as a teacher of the law he should know better. Jesus then points to his own death, explaining how all who look to him lifted on the Cross will be born of the Spirit into new and eternal life (John 3:10ff.).

As I reflect on Pentecostal and Spirit-Empowered mission, the theme of this issue, I see several relevant layers in the conversation coming from the first three chapters of John's Gospel—along with the Synoptic Gospels as well.

The first layer concerns John the Baptist. He has been successfully leading a brand-new movement *within* Judaism, with apparent success. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John, confessed their sins, begged for guidance on how to conduct their business affairs in a colonized state (Mark 1:5). John counseled and rebuked them with his no-holds-barred preaching, then baptized in the Jordan River those who repented. Teachers of the law

began to wonder if John was the promised Messiah, the Christ. John the Baptist is a clearly charismatic leader, so gifted that even King Herod is afraid of him (Mark 6:20). But soon John retreats. He foregrounds Christ, not himself, nor the remarkable achievement of smiting the consciences of notorious tax collectors and soldiers. John knows he is a messenger, a role he interprets out of Isaiah 40, where Isaiah predicts the return of the people of Israel from Exile. We take it for granted that Jesus is barely known at this point, but the Jesus movement is only in the making, with John the Baptist as a witness and a facilitator of it. John the Evangelist demonstrates that nobody yet knew of this Jesus. He has Nathanael rhetorically mocking about Jesus, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). According to the Gospel accounts, if John the Baptist had not prepared the way for Jesus, John's movement very well might have eclipsed Jesus.

What John the Baptist's humble witness conveys about today's conversations about Spirit-empowered movements is the need for a robust Christology. We who are Jesus's followers are first and foremost witnesses on behalf of Christ. Our charisma, gifts, skills, and popularity have one and only one agenda: to point people to Christ. John the Baptist could very well have continued leading his large movement in the manner of the Old Testament prophets. He was remarkably successful, so much so that he transforms the Old Testament symbolic crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 13:1-31), as well as of the Jordan, into in a new Exodus by the ritual of Baptism. The old Exodus event was a literal experience of liberation from slavery in Egypt. The crossing of the Jordan was equally a literal symbol of entrance into the Promised land. The Baptist reenacts both symbols through the ritual of baptism after the people have confessed and repented. Yet when Jesus shows up, John has done his job. He even surrenders the symbolic ritual to the disciples of Jesus (John 4:2). John will go on to diminish to the point of martyrdom, thus completing his identification with Isaiah the prophet. Tradition says that Isaiah was killed, sawn into two as a martyr under the orders of the wicked king Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:1-20). John the Baptist meets an almost identical fate in having his head cut off by King Herod—and for a similar reason as Isaiah, namely that he proclaimed truth. The Baptist's testimony has a Christological focus from the moment Jesus appears, and he makes the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom in his last breath.

Today's Pentecostal, Spirit-empowered mission—just as with any other Christian movement—needs to follow the Christ-centered approach of John the Baptist. To be sure, no subsequent witness can replicate the unique role in redemptive history that Jesus's older cousin John played as the immediate forerunner of the incarnate Son of God. At the same time, all Christian movements are to bear witness to Jesus Christ as the centerpiece of God's world-saving love and grace. John could have drawn further attention to himself and his following—as can any Christian movement. Instead, his pointing to the Lamb of God exemplifies humble Christ-centered witness.

The second layer in the conversation comes from what John the Evangelist (not the Baptist) is doing to ignite a solid understanding of who Jesus is, and of what his movement is. The Evangelist goes to great lengths to link both John the Baptist and Jesus to the Old Testament story, employing concrete images that are impossible for his Jewish background readers to miss. Even with an economy of words, the Evangelist places Jesus in a recognizable corpus of Jewish ideas, symbols, and images, in which he builds up the case for his readers that Jesus is the long-promised Messiah. John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God (1:35), Messiah (the Christ; 1:41), Son of Man (1:51), Rabbi (3:2), the King of Israel (1:49), the New Temple (2:13-21). Throughout the rest of his dense Gospel, John condenses a great deal of material to represent Jesus in this old, old, story. We who read John's Gospel today take the backdrop of that story for granted, but John's contemporary

Jewish readers who are newly discovering the Jesus story don't know that. John imbues Jesus with the authority of the entire Old Testament canon. The question behooves us, are our movements rooted and grounded in an organic grasp of the whole story of God's dealings with humanity through Israel and God's involvement in history through the Church through the ages? Or are we making autonomous claims for ourselves, our regions, or for the benefit of our sending organizations, without a solid grasp of the biblical metanarrative of which we are part?

The third layer involves correlating the Baptist's ceding prominence to Jesus, and the Evangelist's grounding Jesus in the Old Testament story, with Nicodemus's investigative curiosity. Nicodemus is a Pharisee genuinely wondering what to make of Jesus. As an educated teacher of the law in Israel, he has all the logical arguments well lined up. His rational questions translate into serious doubts. In similar fashion, many today who are not directly involved with Pentecostal or Spirit-empowered mission movements have well founded doubts about some of the claims or biblical interpretations in some of this issue's articles. Those *Global Missiology* readers who have trouble working through certain articles in this issue have Nicodemus as a predecessor for asking honest, unresolved questions. Nicodemus wants to believe—yet he is bewildered. There is so much about Jesus that is not known. How can his word be trusted after he has engaged in a huge confrontation with the religious leaders—by clearing the temple courts, no less?

It is John the Evangelist who helps his readers by the way he spells out the rest of the story. The Evangelist does not resolve Nicodemus's dilemma for us—certainly not in Chapter 3 of his Gospel account. That passage ends with Nicodemus still a seeker. We do find out that he came to be a follower of Jesus. He defended Jesus. He also buried Jesus. But in Chapter 3, I think John the Evangelist wants to buy time for the full story to pan out in fuller detail. In a similar fashion, seekers, the movements of which they are part, and those who analyze those movements need time and often need to be protected from hostile forces around them.

To circle back to the Gospel of John's account of Nicodemus and his encounter with Jesus, essentially Jesus remains unknown as he is still establishing his credentials. What he does—the Jesus who in Nicodemus's and other contemporaries' eyes is just like that fresh missionary in the field—is to point out the privilege of Nicodemus's cultural faith. To be born as a Jew (at the time) is to have privileged access to the Kingdom of God, as far as the Jews were concerned. Jesus is upending what it means to belong to the Kingdom. Natural birth as a Jew will not save Nicodemus. He is close, but his cultural faith (as a Jew) must be transformed, by repenting.

Hence when we tell the story of Jesus—and we must—then the humility of the Baptist and the skill of the Evangelist in framing the whole story, through a series of case studies, constitute our model. John the Baptist's humble pointing to Jesus is exemplary witness. Also, I cannot help but appreciate John the Evangelist's acumen in telling the stories of the intertwined movements in his Gospel account. Case studies of people, faces, and places are not given as sensational or pragmatic narratives. Rather, those case studies are Christocentric, they are canon-centric, and they look to the new life that we can expect in the rest of the Gospel of John the Evangelist.

Pentecostal, Spirit-empowered mission has become a worldwide and ever-growing part of the Christian movement. The case studies and analyses in this issue cover a wide range of accounts. Various regions of Africa, Russia, Asia, and elsewhere are the contexts. Different aspects of Spirit-empowered movements are examined, both positively and critically. As you the reader work through these articles, I hope you will give prominence to Jesus, see continuity with God's overall

redemptive story, and trust God to guide you through whatever questions, doubts, and new insights that will arise.

No Longer the Same:
Pentecostal Mission in Cities of Sub-Saharan Africa

Michael Sallu

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

Several studies suggest the rapid spread of Pentecostalism in Africa is largely aided by its shared view of the Spirit-world with the typical traditional African worldview. Consequently, African Pentecostalism is known to provide both continuity and discontinuity with the typical traditional African beliefs, a factor that is believed to facilitate Pentecostal contextualization. However, with a new youth culture in cities of sub-Saharan Africa, this epistemological connection is threatened. Using a case study in Dar es Salaam, this article evaluates missiological implications of the changing culture in cities of sub-Saharan Africa and proposes alternative strategies for contextual engagement in Pentecostal mission.

Key Words: African Pentecostalism, contextualization, Dar es Salaam, the Ocean, urban youth

Introduction

The Pentecostal movement has experienced significant growth in Africa, and its influence has penetrated all forms of Christianity in the continent (Anderson 2018, 26; Sallu 2021, 175–176). Among other factors, this growth is a result of the movement's contextual flexibility and its consequent ability to address the needs of African people (Anderson 2017, 35). In addition, there is a resemblance between Pentecostal spirituality and the typical traditional African experience of the spirit world (Asamoah-Gyadu 2006, 6). This similarity facilitates creation of a contextual theology that is truly African, making Pentecostalism relevant in people's daily life (Nkurunziza 2013, 60–68).

While Pentecostalism still enjoys its status, some recent cultural and demographic changes in Africa threaten its strength. Various studies, for example, show that a new youth culture is growing in Africa, one that diverges from traditional African cultures and is more aligned with Western cultures (Sallu 2021, 136–152). As a result, the contextualized theology in African Pentecostalism does not make sense to some modern youths, causing them to lose connection with churches in their traditional forms. Youth forms most of the African population, their number continues to grow, they lead in a movement towards urban life, and they are generally more exposed to westernization forces (Sallu 2021, 117–120). Consequently, this article argues for the need of alternative strategies to reach youth in African cities. In making this argument, the article reviews factors that facilitate contextualization in African Pentecostalism, analyzes cultural changes in the continent, shows how these changes impact traditional Pentecostal outreach methods, and—as a case study—evaluates strategies used by the Ocean International Community Church (henceforth "the Ocean") in reaching modern youth in Dar es Salaam.

The Gospel in African Pentecostalism

In its traditional form, the typical worldview of sub-Saharan Africa sees no dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual world and is dominated by ancestral worship. Also, this worldview has a strong belief that evil spirits interfere with human life and can cause misfortunes. Consequently, the power of spiritual forces dominates people's thinking and drives most of their behaviors. Additionally, traditional African communities "are, to a large extent, health-orientated communities and in their traditional religions, rituals for healing and protection are prominent" (Nkurunziza 2013, 69). Traditional Africans expect their priests and

charismatic leaders to be mediators of supernatural power and, consequently, administer healing and give prophecy. These two activities are believed to be the most important functions of priests/charismatic leaders in the typical traditional African worldview (Asamoah-Gyadu 2012, 44). For this reason, traditional African communities easily associate with Pentecostal healing practice and prophetic ministries that are common in African Pentecostalism.

With its contextual flexibility, Pentecostalism meets the above needs of traditional Africans as it maintains both continuity and discontinuity with the traditional African sensibilities of the spirit world. In continuity with the typical traditional African sensibilities of the spirit world, Pentecostalism affirms traditional Africans' belief about the reality of the spirit world, including the existence of ancestors' spirits and the work of evil forces. However, unlike traditional African beliefs and religious practices, Pentecostalism offers biblical solutions for spiritual problems (Sallu 2021, 188–91). In the process, a contextualized theology has emerged in African Pentecostalism that has a heightened focus on deliverance ministry characterized by healing and exorcism. In addition, a theology of empowerment has arisen which, among other implications, results in the propagation of the prosperity gospel. In both cases, the power of the gospel is presented to defeat evil forces that bring diseases and hinder material prosperity.

The above contextualized theology has attracted many Africans into the Pentecostal movement. With this theology, healing crusades, street evangelism, and deliverance services became popular strategies for reaching masses with the gospel of Christ. However, cultural and demographic changes described in this article threaten the epistemological connection between Africans and African Pentecostalism.

A Changed Cultural Environment

There is in modern days "a burgeoning recognition among Christians around the globe that in order for the Christian message to be meaningful to people it must come to them in language and categories that make sense within their particular culture and life situation. It must be contextualized" (Flemming 2005, 13). While in Africa such a recognition has resulted in the contextualization of the gospel in African cultures, the problem is that culture in any local context is never static. For this reason, a fresh contextualization is needed because cultural changes in sub-Saharan Africa have given rise to a distinct youth subculture. A related problem is that cultural changes are normally not so obvious when they occur within a geographical boarder. As a result, the new youth culture in sub-Saharan Africa is overlooked by many adults and, in the context of the church, its values that differ from those of traditional cultures are generally viewed by older generations as sinful practices (Sallu 2021, 329).

While some people still view Africa in its traditional cultural stance, several recent studies by anthropologists, historiographers, sociologists, development economists, architects, and music and art artistes indicate significant dominance of Western cultural values in cities of sub-Saharan Africa (Sallu 2021). Cultural changes in these cities, according to most studies, are irreversible and progressive, and they are more evident among youth. With these changes, the gospel as contextualized in African Pentecostalism does not provide all the answers to youth's questions and issues, it does not cope with new social norms, and it does not meet all needs of modern youth in cities of sub-Saharan Africa. This situation reflects the observation that "church leaders who were saved from animistic backgrounds find that the same truths of scripture that changed their worldview have little impact on their grandchildren who are tuning into MTV via satellite TV" (Ott et al. 2013, 268).

A recent region-wide survey in sub-Saharan Africa by the Pew Research Center reveals a significant shift away from traditional African beliefs and religious practices. Among other findings, the survey indicates the region has a low percentage of people who believe in the

protective power of sacrifices to spirits and ancestors. In Rwanda, for instance, the survey shows that only 5% of the general population holds this belief (Pew Research Center 2010, 4). This means 95% of the general population in Rwanda does not believe in the protective power of ancestors and other spirits and, consequently, does not see the necessity of making sacrifices to ancestral spirits. Also, in ten out of the 19 countries surveyed, only 27% or less of the general population believe in the protective power of sacrifices to spirits and ancestors (Pew Research Center 2010, 4). This means 73% or more of these countries' general populations do not believe in the protective power of spirits and ancestors. This situation reflects a substantial shift from one of the key beliefs and religious practices in typical traditional African cultures.

In addition to the above analysis, the Pew Research Center's survey analyzes the current level of adherence to traditional African religions by looking at seven common beliefs in these religions (the protective power of certain spiritual people, the power of juju and other sacred objects, "the evil eye," witchcraft, evil spirits, the protective power of sacrificial offerings to ancestors, and reincarnation), and four religious practices in traditional African religions (visiting traditional healers, owning sacred objects, participating in ceremonies to honor ancestors, and participating in traditional puberty rituals). The survey puts all 11 of these indicators in a single scale to obtain a picture of the level of persistence of the typical traditional African worldview (Pew Research Center 2010, 34).

Like in the case of traditional African beliefs, cultural analysis using the above single scale indicates a substantial shift from the typical traditional African worldview. For example, the analysis shows that only 3% of the Rwanda population is involved in traditional African practices, and the median country in the study, DR Congo, has 25% of its general population involved in these practices (Pew Research Center 2010, 34). This means 97% of the general population in Rwanda and 75% of the general population in the median country do not subscribe to the typical traditional African worldview.

Cultural Environment in Dar es Salaam

Observations of the Pew Research Centre echo the cultural situation in Dar es Salaam. Dar es Salaam represents modern reformulation of the Swahili city (Brennan and Burton 2007, 13). Although the city still has a notable influence of Swahili culture, it is highly westernized and experienced multiculturalism from the early days of its existence (Sallu 2021, 227–233). The city lacks a dominant founding culture and saw an influx of people from different tribes and countries early in its life (Brennan and Burton 2007, 13–35). This situation gave room to a rapid westernization at the expense of African cultural values (Sallu 2021, 233–234). Because of this cultural setting, and due to various developments in the post-colonial Tanganyika, Western cultural values have become dominant in the city, especially among youth and in an area that is predominantly inhabited by expatriates (Sallu 2021, 226–277). In this cultural environment, Tanzania Assemblies of God (TAG) established the Ocean to serve the expatriate community. As a result, the Ocean was designed to accommodate Western cultural values and was allowed to organize itself differently from other TAG churches. As the church developed, this cultural and organizational freedom attracted many Tanzanian youths to the Ocean (Sallu 2021, 242).

The Ocean was established by a U.S.-American missionary, but it is currently under the leadership of young Tanzanian pastors. These pastors and four other leaders form what the church calls an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) which, among other things, is responsible for establishing and executing the church's mission strategy. Before evaluating strategies that the Ocean employs to reach youth in the city, ELT's cultural orientation was measured in two ways. First, ELT's worldview was assessed using the aforementioned religious beliefs and

practices common in the typical traditional African worldview (Pew Research Center 2010, 34). In this regard, none of the seven leaders identified with any of the 11 religious beliefs and practices that characterize the typical traditional African worldview. In addition, none of them has met anyone with a first-hand experience of worshipping ancestors—and one of them even lacks any knowledge of the nature and role of ancestors (Sallu 2021, 249–252).

Second, leaders' values were assessed using 20 values that differentiate between Western and African cultures (O'Donovan 2000, 21). In this assessment, all leaders were noted to have far more Western values than African values (Sallu 2021, 254). Further, only one Western value, little interest in the spirit world, was not associated with any leader and, conversely, only one African value, much interest in the spirit world, was linked to almost all leaders. One should, however, note that this interest may just be a result of leaders' Pentecostal belief rather than their alignment to African cultures. All Pentecostals, whether in Africa or elsewhere, are known for taking the spirit world seriously.

Looking at results of the above two measures, one realizes that the Ocean leaders' Western cultural orientation is not superficial, as it manifests at both the worldview and value levels.

In addition to their Western cultural orientation, leaders suggest most youth in Dar es Salaam are westernized, and they believe that Western cultures dominate at the Ocean and at Oysterbay, an area where the Ocean is located. Leaders further believe that Swahili culture is only visible in the city's outskirts and in a few predominantly Muslim areas. As for the reason for their own Western cultural orientation, all leaders say they were born and raised in cities with some of them having little or no interaction with rural Tanzania. Furthermore, some leaders point to the urban life and education as factors contributing to the westernization of youth in the city, including themselves, and others attribute their own Western worldview to a length stay in Western countries (Sallu 2021, 255–265). These observations resemble findings of other studies elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Sallu 2021, 113–136).

The Ocean's Outreach Strategy

As they observe cultural changes in Dar es Salaam, the Ocean leaders believe the usual felt needs among traditional Africans—for power, healing, protection, and deliverance—are not a priority among youth in the city. Instead, the leaders see the need for acceptance and a sense of belonging to be the most pressing needs among modern youth in Dar es Salaam. Western cultural values also mean youth's social norms are different. For example, all leaders prefer individual identity and lifestyle as opposed to communal identity and lifestyle, they believe time consciousness is now the norm of life for most people in the city, they see youth in general are more likely to use western medicine as opposed to visiting traditional healers, and they believe most people in the city live individualistic lifestyle. All these changes adversely affect effectiveness of some traditional Pentecostal outreach methods. In other words, such methods as healing campaigns, gospel crusades, deliverance camps, and street evangelism are not as effective in reaching youth in the city as they used to be a few decades ago (Sallu 2021, 248–273).

From the beginning, the Ocean employed outreach methods that are not typical in traditional Pentecostal churches, and it holds all services using English. Outreach at the Ocean is geared toward reaching people in their ordinary lives rather than through organized evangelistic campaigns. When the church holds events, they are structured around people's social interests. For example, every December the church presents a theatre production known as "Christmas Spectacular," which is designed to create awareness of the church among city residents and to provide an opportunity for witnessing at the end of the show. Similarly, the church holds several "LoveDar" events, which are designed to spread the love of Christ while

creating awareness of the church and providing an opportunity for one-to-one evangelism. When church members go to the streets they hold social events, such as barbeques in open spaces of famous hotels, and invite onlookers to join the party. These events give church members an opportunity to speak to people who join them, invite them to church, and witness to them as circumstances allow.

In recognition of the youth's need for unconditional acceptance and belonging, the Ocean has purposely created a welcoming environment at church, has put an emphasis on relationship building among its members, and encourages regular fellowship meetings with meals. For example, a program called "3Ps" (Praise, Prayer, and Pilau) is hailed for drawing youth into the church's life. The Lausanne Committee observes similar needs among global youth who, as the Committee reckons, need identity, unconditional acceptance, and unconditional love. As a strategy to address these needs, the Committee suggests "it is important to have time to build close relationships and time flexibility" and to develop "love for young people who are so desperately searching for somebody who really cares for them and accepts them as they are; and lots of food!" (Lausanne Movement 2004). For this reason, the Ocean's strategy is in line with the Committee's proposal.

The Ocean leaders believe that the welcoming environment has a major impact in bringing youth to the church. Among other factors, this environment allows youth freely to express their Western culture and create relationships among themselves. While youth build relationship within the church, they use their outside relationships to bring others into the church's life. This relational approach to outreach plays a major role in bringing youth to the Ocean. Once youth get connected into the church's life, the Ocean runs several discipleship programs to see them through various stages of spiritual growth. The Ocean puts a great deal of emphasis on training and discipleship. Because the welcoming environment draws many to the church, a heightened focus on discipleship ensures even casual visitors do eventually come to know Christ and accept him as their Lord and Savior. Core classical Pentecostal doctrines, such as baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, are emphasized. Thus, some youths who may initially be skeptical of gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing, and speaking in tongues, eventually embrace and practice them (Sallu 2021, 289–316).

Reflection on The Ocean's Strategy

The first important step for an effective contextual engagement with modern youth in Africa is the realization that not all young Africans in Africa are culturally African—at least in a traditional sense. In this circumstance, thorough cultural research in any local context is necessary (Cassey 2020). TAG seems to have realized this necessity and afforded the Ocean freedom to be a church that is culturally relevant in the time and place it is located. With this cultural freedom, the Ocean has been able to organize itself differently, employ different cultural forms in its daily life, and create culturally relevant programs that attract westernized youth in the city. Churches with large networks should emulate this example and realize that not all churches within a network of churches must be culturally the same. This approach, among other traits, requires an understanding that there is no culture that is intrinsically bad or good.

It is widely accepted that languages are closely linked to cultures. Contrary to some missionaries' view that English is not appropriate for the contextualization of the gospel in cities of sub-Saharan Africa, the Ocean's experience shows the use of English in church services is one of the reasons that attract youth to the church (Sallu 2021, 313). The Ocean leaders observe a growing number of youths prefer to use English in both formal and informal settings. This preference is evident at the Ocean and its environs, and, among other realities, it

reflects cultural changes in the city (Sallu 2021, 262). The leaders' observation in this regard resonates with findings of other studies of African youth (Negash 2011; Plonski et al. 2013; Prempeh 2020). Furthermore, one study observes this preference even among youth who lack a good command of English language (Negash 2011). Since youth prefer the use of English, even though some of them lack English proficiency, English church services and targeted English courses can be effectively used to reach youth and engage them in the church life.

With today's emphasis on contextualization, missionaries have been skeptical of planting churches that appear to be clones of Western churches. Given cultural changes noted above, missionaries need to rethink their contextualization strategies. For example, the culture at the Ocean is observably Western, and everything at the church, including its architecture, is Western. While it might have been a mistake to plant clones of Western churches during the colonial period, conditions are no longer the same. Western-looking churches may be the type of church experience that some urban youths are looking for. Also, as has been the case with one Ocean leader who comes from a Muslim background, this cultural experience, together with a relational outreach approach, may prove useful in reaching Muslim youth in African cities. Further, through its LoveDar events, the Ocean conveys the gospel to different groups of people in the city. This particularized approach is an aspect of its mission that the Ocean and other Pentecostal churches may need to employ more.

Conclusion

The cultural context of sub-Saharan Africa has significantly changed from its pre-colonial and pre-Christian milieu. As such, sub-Saharan Africa is no longer uniformly traditional, and Western cultural influence is strong, especially among urban youth. With this cultural transition, not all young Africans in Africa are culturally African. As youth are increasingly becoming culturally Western, the advantage that Pentecostalism has in Africa is threatened because it loses the shared view of the spirit world it had with African cultures. Modern youth, as argued in this article, no longer possess most of the felt needs in traditional Africa that gave Pentecostalism its widespread connection and appeal. As demonstrated by the Ocean, the first important step for an effective contextual engagement with urban youth is an appreciation of their new culture and creation of an environment, church programs, and a leadership style that relate to their culture and address their most felt needs—to belong and experience unconditional acceptance.

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The "House of Life": A Russian-to-International Pentecostal Movement

David Lewis

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

Growth, stagnation, and decline affect churches, denominations, and movements. This article discusses some of the factors that, when combined with one another, may help to overcome socio-cultural barriers to growth. Examples are taken from a Russian Pentecostal movement that has overcome barriers of ethnicity or culture to become what might be the most geographically widespread movement in the world, with churches from Spain to Cambodia.

Key Words: contextualization, House of Life, methods, miracles, movements

Introduction

Churches or movements that seek to keep on growing and to make disciples of all nations need to expand beyond their existing national, ethnic, or linguistic boundaries. However, a structural factor inhibiting this process is the current pattern of growth which tends to occur mainly through existing social networks, especially through groups with shared interests, including relatives, contacts at work, fellow students, and those with whom one has shared leisure activities. As a result, a church, denomination, or larger movement tends to grow among people sharing the same language or who are from a similar class or ethnic background (McGavran 1990, 163). The church or larger grouping then gets stuck within its existing sub-culture and finds difficulty expanding beyond that particular segment of society.

For a church or movement to break beyond the confines of its own broad cultural or linguistic affinity group requires giving greater attention to certain biblical principles or practices that have to some extent been taken for granted, under-valued, or even ignored in the currently prevailing discipleship process of many movements. Even if churches or movements pay lip-service to these principles, in their actual behaviour they do not model to their disciples the application of these biblical practices consistently enough that these biblical practices or principles become engrained within the *modus operandi* of the movement. As a result, the church or movement's growth continues to be restricted by differences of culture, class, or language.

Principles or Practices in Overcoming Socio-cultural Barriers to Movements

Three of the relatively under-emphasized principles for crossing socio-cultural barriers are *expansive intercession, contextualized evangelism*, and *receptivity to the supernatural*. These are three of the distinctive features of a church planting movement in Russia called the "House of Life," which has overcome various social and cultural barriers to become what might be the most geographically widespread movement in the world. Further information about the House of Life is English is available on their YouTube channel (House of Life n.d.) and other publications, such as their founder's testimony (House of Life 2019).

Expansive Intercession

Probably every program for church planting or disciple-making includes prayer in some way or other. An emphasis on prayer may seem to be nothing new: however, what might be called "expansive" intercession is prayer that stretches beyond the boundaries of one's own local area, network, organization, or ethnic-kin group. It is the kind of prayer that Jesus modelled by saying, "My prayer is not just for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me

through their message…" (John 17:20). He taught us to pray, "your Kingdom come… on earth" (Matthew 6:10), not simply in Galilee or even the Middle East. Among many rapidly growing movements there is plenty of intercession by members of the movement, but often their prayers are focussed only on the local or regional situation—their unconverted family members, their ethnic group, or even their country—but it is rare to find those whose intercessions regularly and persistently focus on peoples and nations beyond their own horizons. One of the exceptions is the House of Life movement in Russia, which encourages their members to pray every day for an unreached ethnic group: they have a calendar with 49 such groups so that the cycle repeats every seven weeks. Perhaps it is partly because of such prolonged intercession over several years, accompanied by efforts to reach these peoples, that now this movement includes representatives of 30 of these 49 ethnic groups. Moreover, at their prayer meetings members of this movement also pray for many other parts of the world, including tribes in Amazonia or countries such as Afghanistan where there are relatively few Christians. Often their intercessions are also accompanied by fasting.

Contextualized Evangelism

Most movements claim to use a contextualized approach in some way or other, but what in practice they mean by this differs from case to case. For some, "contextualized church" means simply using some local musical instruments or singing songs in a local style, or sitting in a circle on the floor instead of on chairs (or pews) in rows. Others think of the language that they use in evangelism, for instance those ministering among Muslims using the Arabic name for certain prophets—e.g., *Isa* (Jesus), *Musa* (Moses)—instead of the equivalent in their own language. A few go deeper and use selected quotes from the Qur'an when talking with Muslims. However, it is a wider kind of contextualization that we see in the New Testament, where spiritual concepts were expressed in terms relevant and familiar to the audience. Jesus not only told stories about themes in everyday life but also used popular proverbs (Matthew 16:2-3) or current events (Luke 13:1-5) as "points of contact" to share spiritual truths (Lewis 2018, 9). Likewise, Paul cited local literature (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12) and found other points of contact within a Gentile cultural context that were based on his own research (Acts 17:23). Nowadays this kind of approach to cross-cultural evangelism is rare even among some rapidly growing movements, partly because they are familiar with their own culture and almost intuitively know how to contextualize the gospel for their own people. However, few of them have much training in how to share the message with those of very different cultural backgrounds. Even within their own general culture, they may still have problems in relating to certain groups, such as those in the LGBT+ sub-culture.

Many of those in the Russian movement mentioned above, House of Life, can relate well to drug addicts, criminals, and others on the edges of mainstream society because these Christians had themselves come from such backgrounds. They know how to speak with such people and to contextualize the message within those sub-cultures, but their personal experience does not equip them to relate so easily to indigenous peoples of Siberia or to Muslims in Central Asia, whose cultures are very different. Nevertheless, the movement has managed to bridge such cultural gaps not only among diverse ethnic groups within the former USSR but also with peoples from very different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. One reason they have been able to do this is because many of their training courses since 2006 have included specific teaching on how to relate to people of different cultures and to find relevant points of contact.

For example, in 1993 I was living with reindeer herders in the Russian Arctic, and a local veterinarian commented to me that they were "like shepherds." As I reflected on that statement, it occurred to me that in that Russian Arctic cultural context it would be more

understandable to speak of Jesus as the "Good Reindeer Herder"—even though some might consider that phrase to be an insufficient "paraphrase" rather than a more biblically faithful "literal translation." Later I shared this thought with Christians from the House of Life, who subsequently developed the idea much further. One of their publications states: "A Reindeer is their clothing, protection, it is shelter, food, medicine, it is everything for the indigenous nations, just as Christ is everything for us" (Jedidiah n.d., 14). They not only noticed that the image of the deer is used in the Bible—e.g., "My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag" (Song of Songs 2:9)—but also discovered an early Christian image depicting deer horns within Christ's crown of thorns (Jedidiah n.d., 16). That same publication describes in English how the House of Life has discovered many other points of contact for sharing the gospel in culturally sensitive ways with the indigenous peoples of Siberia. These have been developed through a combination of reflecting on the Scriptures alongside a sensitivity to the local culture—in effect emulating the cultural research modelled by St. Paul in Acts 17:23. For example, they encourage the use of indigenous musical instruments such as the Jew's harp (*khomuz* хомуз or *vargan* варган) or a hand-held drum (called a *bubin* бубин in Russian), which is reminiscent in some ways of the instrument that was used by Miriam, the sister of Moses (Exodus 15: 20) but is normally translated into English as a "tambourine." The House of Life also encourage the use of the indigenous ethnonym for a people group, avoiding the sometimes derogatory exonyms that had sometimes been used in Russian literature (Jedidiah n.d., 10-12). This repertoire of tools has facilitated their effectiveness in reaching peoples of many different ethnicities.

It is noteworthy that the title of Jedidiah's book (just cited), *Keys to Adopting Nations*, contains the plural word "Keys" because the House of Life recognize that there are several different approaches for reaching other cultures. Many missionaries have a distorted view of "contextualization," thinking of it as if it were a process of finding the "magic formula" that will unlock an entire culture. To some extent this impression has been fostered by Don Richardson's book *Eternity in their Hearts*, which seems to imply that for each culture there is a particular "redemptive analogy" that is "the" key to reaching that ethnic group (Richardson 1981). However, each society has some degree of diversity, including age, generation, gender, education, and other traits. An approach that makes sense to older people who know their culture's traditions might not be so appropriate to the younger generation in today's world, or what is relevant to one gender might be almost meaningless to the other. That is why I see contextualization not as a single "magic formula" but more as a "tool box" of different approaches, some of which may be more relevant to some parts of the population than others. Examples of different approaches are given in my book *The Unseen Face of Japan*, with reference to a culture that superficially might appear to be relatively "homogeneous" but like any other society actually contains a spectrum of diverse sub-groups (Lewis 2013).

How to understand other cultures and to find points of contact for sharing the gospel cross-culturally has been a component of House of Life seminars conducted in many cities of Russia—literally from the Baltic to the Pacific. The teaching has been illustrated by examples from personal experience of ministry among Muslims in Central Asia, indigenous peoples of Siberia, and various cultures of East Asia. When the students expect to be ministering more among Muslims, greater focus is given to examples from Central Asia and the Caucasus, including material from Pilgrim David's book *Silk Road Pilgrimage*, which has been translated into Russian, Kazakh, Azeri, and several other languages (Pilgrim David 2012). Within Russia there are not only Muslim "guest workers" from other countries of the former USSR but also substantial populations of Muslims who are indigenous to the North Caucasus and the Volga-Ural region—regions within the Russian Federation—having diaspora

populations in many cities and provinces of the country. Therefore training on relating to Islamic peoples has been given at House of Life seminars throughout Russia and also in the Middle East and elsewhere. Likewise, the presence of a Chinese diaspora (including business people, students, and tourists) in many parts of Russia and Central Asia mean that House of Life seminars have also included some teaching on relating to Chinese people. The training includes discussion about the Chinese script, focussing on certain Chinese characters which in their composition seem to reflect a knowledge of stories found in the early chapters of the book of Genesis (as described, for example, by Kang and Nelson 1979). Those who have received such training have subsequently gone out to plant churches in many different cultural contexts, including Western Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Receptivity to the Supernatural

Many churches and movements recognize that God can sometimes work through "signs and wonders," but they vary considerably in the extent to which they actually expect God to do miracles. Some movements focus so much on healing and deliverance that to some extent they can see this approach as almost like a "magic formula," as if the sign will automatically lead to conversions. However, the New Testament portrays signs as *confirmations* of gospel preaching (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3; Hebrews 2: 3-4). Signs can precipitate a decision one way or the other: some who see the signs may respond like the Pharisees and become more opposed, whereas others see a miraculous healing as a confirmation that God is at work and are helped to put their faith in Jesus (Lewis 2022, 25; 1989, 232).

The presence of miracles today can accelerate the growth of those movements in which there is an active expectation that God will work in miraculous ways in response to believing prayer—as happened in the ministry of Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:11-20) and elsewhere (Romans 15:17-19). For instance, a study of a movement in India found that "all of the interviewees went through some type of crisis in their lives in the form of physical sicknesses or even oppression of evil spirits" (Kolhar 2022, 8).

To many Christians, the phrase "signs and wonders" connotes healing miracles or deliverance from demons, perhaps accompanied by supernatural revelations ("words of knowledge") given to those praying for healing. However, there are various other ways in which God works supernaturally, such as when a House of Life Christian from the Russian Arctic was in southern Siberia and felt led to pray "in tongues" over a local non-Christian. Suddenly that non-Christian's attitude became more positive, and he asked if the woman who prayed was from the Buryat people. When she replied that she wasn't he responded, "How come you are speaking such beautiful words in Buryat?"

House of Life Christians may ask God for specific guidance about where they should go or a person to whom they should speak. Sometimes God shows through a dream or vision a particular house or street where they should go. When they go there, they find someone who is receptive to the gospel. For example, God guided two of them by a vision of water to go to the bank of the Amur River, where they then found a man from another ethnic minority who was lying behind a bush: the next day this man became a Christian through their witness.

There are many instances in which God has spoken to Muslims through dreams and visions (Darg 2006). As for biblical precedents, sometimes the significance is understood by the one who receives the dream (compare Genesis 20:3-7; Matthew 27:19), while at other times the interpretation comes through a man of God (e.g., Genesis 40, 41; Daniel 2, 4). Similarly, Cornelius received an angelic visit, but the fuller revelation about Jesus came through Peter (Acts 10).

Cornelius is sometimes cited as an example of a "man of peace" (Luke 10:6). Watson and Watson introduce their chapter on this topic by a story of a man who for 20 years had been prepared supernaturally by God through dreams (Watson and Watson 2014, 123). However, some of those who claim to use the instructions in Luke 10 as a basis for their disciple-making do not actually pay much attention to the role of "signs and wonders" in evangelism; neither do they pray actively for God to reveal himself to non-Christians through dreams or visions.

Luke 10:1-20 is closely paralleled by the instructions to the Twelve in Luke 9:1-6 and Matthew 10:5-16. In Matthew 10:8 the apostles are explicitly commanded to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, and drive out demons. Although this command is mentioned in a list of Scriptures cited by Watson and Watson (2014, 127), it is not given much emphasis today in some training seminars. Nevertheless, it appears to have been implemented not only by the Twelve but also by the seventy-two, who in their debriefing reported that even the demons submitted to them in the name of Jesus (Luke 10:17). If one really wants to be a "contagious" disciple-maker, one cannot emasculate the instructions given to the disciples by emphasizing some aspects and almost ignoring others.

Epilogue: Interdependency

The three principles described in this article and exemplified by the House of Life movement—*expansive intercession*, *contextualized evangelism*, and *receptivity to the supernatural*—are not an exhaustive list. However, it is important to note that they are more effective when they are combined with one another. For instance, intercession may lead to divine revelations to non-Christians through dreams or visions. Becoming incarnated within a culture requires being teachable and humble, listening to local people; the cultural insights gained can then be combined with spiritual discernment to see not only which methods are most appropriate but also when, where, and how to use such methods. Christians may be more likely to see God at work through miracles when they are walking with God in humility, not relying on their own character traits or skills—since miracles cannot be humanly manufactured. To discern the best approach—and the best person to apply it in a local context—requires a recognition that we cannot effectively minister the gospel by ourselves, but we need to see "what the Father is doing" (John 5:19).

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An Appraisal of Pentecostalism's Impact on Urban Christian Missions in Nigeria

Deborah Bosede Oyelakin

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

The advent of Pentecostalism in church history, both in the Early Church and more recently, has made a distinctive mark on all aspects of the Church's life and missions. This article examines Pentecostalism as a movement, its historical background, and its belief that the gifts of the Holy Spirit should be in operation as it was in the Early Church. The article uses a descriptive research design that assesses the advent of Pentecostalism, its positive impacts on urban Christian mission in evangelism, church planting and growth, contextualization, leadership development, and power encounter, and some negative impacts as well.

Key Words: Holy Spirit, missions, Pentecostalism, urban

Introduction

One of the great movements in Christian history that have shaped the life of the Church and recovered particular biblical experiences is Pentecostalism. The recent wave of Pentecostalism not only brought about spiritual reinvigoration in the Church: it also had significant implications for the Great Commission mandate. The great outpouring of the Holy Spirit precipitated believers' yearning for soul winning, and as souls were won and more churches were planted, the Christian Church continued to expand her missionary emphasis and scope. However, Pentecostalism has not been without some attending challenges to the spiritual vitality of the Church and the gospel missions.

This article's purpose is to evaluate the impact of Pentecostalism on urban missions in particular. The article discusses the origin and movement of Pentecostalism, then examines the impact of Pentecostalism in the context of urban missions in Nigeria. It should be noted that the article is not focused on Pentecostal movements as religious denominations but on all churches or missions organizations that believe in the workings and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in missions.

The Movement of Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is an event in the life of the Church that recognizes visible manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as occurred in the Early Church (Acts 2). It is a revivalist movement that attempts to motivate the Church to return to its previous form of spiritual dynamism through the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the gift of speaking in tongues as the early Church manifested it (Fatokun 2013, 43). Those who hold to this understanding believe that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power and gifts is normative in the Church's life in all ages. Emiola Nihinlola describes Pentecostal belief as a "total doctrine," religious expression, and movement of classical Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal, and Third Wavers based on certain doctrines and experiences of the Holy Spirit (Nihinlola 2008, 134).

Pentecostalism can also be explained as an authentically lived Christian spirituality with a distinct theological view of reality (Archer 2007, 302). Tongue-speaking may be the most

discussed Pentecostal distinctive, but that practice by means is the totality of Pentecostal experience. It is no surprise that many believers deduce from the foregoing that Pentecostalism is a positive movement that revitalizes religious formality and coldness in the Church.

Conversely, other descriptions and views on Pentecostalism highlight some of the challenges associated with its advent. Deji Ayegboyin and Emiola Nihinlola aver that Pentecostalism is a broad term that integrates several fundamentalist Protestant sects that accentuate the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ayegboyin and Nihinlola 2008, 214). This assertion represents the view of many traditional denominations on the emergence of Pentecostalism. Some Evangelical conservatives even view Pentecostalism as a type of heretical movement in the Church (Melton 2022). Such a belief shares similarities with the presupposition of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and the Lutheran and Reformed churches that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were only for the time of the Apostles and have hitherto lost their relevance when they died (Engelsma n.d.). However, Pentecostals retort without equivocation that the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit in diverse ways in the Church is proof that the power of the Holy Spirit was not limited to the Apostles' time.

History of Pentecostal Movements

This article holds the view that the foundation of Pentecostalism is found in the experience of the 120 disciples who tarried at the upper room expecting the gift Jesus had promised them. The gift came on the fiftieth day after Jesus had ascended—a day known as "Pentecost" in the Jewish context—which brought about the birth of the Church (Acts 2). Convinced that what happened in Acts 2 should be a regular occurrence in every generation of church life, Charles Perham taught his students at Bethel College at Topeka, Kansas about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. During one of the classes, a student was baptized and spoke in tongues (*glossolalia*) in 1901 (Bamigboye 2008, 169). Perham later took the message to Houston, Texas, and one of his students, William J. Seymour, a black Holiness preacher, believed that it was possible to experience the workings of the Holy Spirit as in the Bible. Seymour began to preach the same message, and in 1906 he took the message to Los Angeles and founded the Apostolic Gospel Mission on Azuza Street. There was a revival and outpouring of God's power as the Holy Spirit manifested Himself among the people. Many participants spoke in tongues, there was healing and prophecy, and from there a significant number of missionaries took the message and started spreading it around (Miller 2013, 4-5).

The second wave of Pentecostalism broke out in an event in the United States and dated precisely to the year 1960, connected with the ministry of Dennis Bennett in Van Nuys, California (Williams 2001, 220). J.R. Williams notes that its emphasis was on baptism with (or in) the Holy Spirit as a second blessing after conversion and speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of this baptism, and the continuing function of spiritual gifts (*charismata*) mentioned in I Corinthians 12:8-10. The mainline churches did not accept this teaching; therefore, those who believed in Pentecostalism either freely left or were forced out of those churches and founded their own separate ministries (Williams 2001, 220).

In Nigeria, the Pentecostal movement originated in the 1970s, a decade after most African countries obtained independence. Much of the movement sprouted within college and university student ministries, for example the Student Christian Movement (SCM), Scripture Union (SU), and Campus Christian Fellowship (CCF) (Danfulani 2008, 20). The University of Ibadan and Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) became hotbeds of Pentecostalism. As some leaders

graduated, their Spirit-empowered ministries shifted to house prayer cells, ministering to youths and others. Some expanded to full-fledged ministries in urban centers, for example the Deeper Life Ministry of W.F Kumuyi and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) of Pastor E.A. Adeboye (Danfulani 2008, 20). According to Matthews Ojo, by 1974 over ten Charismatic organizations had been established by graduates already persuaded by the revival (Ojo 2008, 114).

Positive Impacts of Pentecostalism on Urban Christian Missions

Pentecostalism has had great impact on Christian missions, and the effects are visible in many urban centers. Below are the highlights of some positive impacts of Pentecostalism on urban Christian missions.

Evangelism and Witnessing

Evangelism and witnessing is a means through which the gospel is communicated to the people. Parham and his students prayed for grace to speak in tongues, so they could engage in missions by speaking *xenolalia*, a form of *glossolalia* where one speaks the language of a tribe the witness has not learned before in order to share the gospel (McGee 1993, 42). Besides in this particular spectacular manner, the Holy Spirit is involved in evangelism and witnessing in various ways. The first is the burning passion for taking the gospel to the heathen as the Holy Spirit inspires believers. While many people in urban areas might not be willing to attend crusades, Christians can reach such people personally in their homes, offices, and the marketplace through personal witnessing (Theology of Work Project 2020).

Additionally, through their own personal testimonies, converts who have experienced the power of God have been able to witness Christ's saving grace to others. This is what happened in John 4 when the Samaritan woman went to the city to call people to come and see Jesus. Also, the Holy Spirit moves unbelievers' hearts toward Christ by giving them a tender conscience to receive the gospel message, thereby convicting them of sin and righteousness (Fuller 2001, 23). These developments result in a great harvest of souls being brought into the kingdom of God, leading to a numerical increase of converts. A recent Nigeria-based example is the Deeper Life Bible Church, which grew from 15 to over a million members in several nations of the world within a short period of time. Falaye opines that one of the reasons for this growth is the church's aggressive life of evangelism, one of her cardinal beliefs and practices (Falaye 2015, 23, 26).

Church Planting

Church planting is another positive impact of Pentecostalism on urban missions. The outcome of aggressive evangelism and personal witnessing is church planting. Peter Wagner avers that church planting must follow evangelism and witnessing because evangelizing people is not enough: converts have to be brought into the Church to be discipled (Wagner 1991, 11-12). In agreement, Rick Ferguson posits that "the only strategy that has any hope of impacting the growing population of non-Christians… is that of a church planting movement" (Ferguson 2005, 103). The growing populations in urban areas support church planting there. More importantly, the rate at which Pentecostal churches participate in church planting proves that there is a power working among them to achieve this remarkable feat. New Life Baptist church, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria is an example of this. This local church planted 19 other churches within five years by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Adeleke 2006, 2, 98). Also, within a year RCCG planted

over 1,144 churches, a development which was made possible by the move of the Holy Spirit (Olusola 2018, 8).

Church Growth

Another positive impact of Pentecostalism in urban areas is church growth. AdedayoOdesola advises that the leader should be full of the Holy Spirit as that will help to bring about growth (Odesola 2021, 237). The growth could be numerical-quantitative or spiritual-qualitative. Writing on the numerical growth of the Early Church, Gene Getz and Joe Wall assert that the Holy Spirit brought about an explosion in the number of disciples on Pentecost Day; the Lord added an initial 3,000 to souls being saved, and later he increased the number to 5,000. The numerical increase continued even when the disciples were scattered to other nations. Getz and Wall are right to maintain that numerical strength brings glory to God(Getz and Wall 2000, 20).

Meanwhile, the place of spiritual growth is also crucial and is made possible by discipleship. Emmanuel Oyemomi describes a disciple as a person who has a relationship with Jesus and is committed to him voluntarily in obedience and perseverance (Oyemomi 2012, 439). Speaking personally as a missionary who served in the mission field for some years, I realize that the place of the Holy Spirit in changing the lives of the converts cannot be trivialized. He helps the missionaries live transparent lives that reflect Christ and then helps the converts to follow their examples by the power of the Holy Spirit. I have seen the Holy Spirit change cult members into soft-hearted persons and immoral persons into people of integrity through sound teaching of the Word of God. Getz and Wall conclude that "no amount of hard work, no creative strategy, no investment of money can produce any true church growth (people coming to Christ and growing spiritually) unless the Spirit of God moves" (Getz and Wall 2000, 20). In agreement, Walter Hollenweger has also asserted that belief in the work of the Holy Spirit has led to the massive growth of denominations and churches (Hollenweger 2004, 127).

Many Pentecostal movements are thriving in various cities across Nigeria. When looking at the exploits of Pentecostal churches like The Living Faith with over 5,000 churches worldwide, The RCCG with over 20,000 parishes worldwide, and several other charismatic churches with their growth rate today, one would be hard pressed to deny that Pentecostalism is divinely blessed. It is little wonder that among Baptists as well it has been observed that churches that accommodate Pentecostalism are growing, stable, and also largely peaceful (Ayegboyin and Nihinlola 2008, 24).

Contextualization

Delphine Wei asserts that Pentecostalism gives room for people to express themselves emotionally, giving new vitality and contextual relevance (Wei 2017, 34). It aids people to experience God in their very context. Matthews Ojo observes that Pentecostals hold sway in African settings because of their penchant for contextualization (Ojo 2008, 117). For example, in their emphasis on deliverance, Pentecostals have often tended to trace all misfortunes to the influence of witches and ancestral curses, a situation that had earlier been denied or ignored by the Protestant churches but is in fact a reality to the people. Emphasis on prayer in the Nigerian context has led to the expansion of Mountain of Fire Bible Church (Aibanebe 2019) and The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Church, among others (Muoka 2019).

Leadership Recruitment

Another vital impact of Pentecostalism on urban missions is on raising indigenous leaders. Akinyemi Alawode and Samson Adebayo submit that raising leaders who will help the ministry of the prominent leader is apt in building a formidable church in urban areas (Alawode and Adebayo 2021, 262).The Holy Spirit is responsible for recruiting personnel for urban missions. He recruited Paul and Barnabas for missions (Act13:1-3) and still does that today. The rate at which people are seeking training in theological education in Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, is highly impressive in this regard. Moreover, almost all the Pentecostal denominations in Nigeria also have schools for training ministers—as the Holy Spirit continues to raise many men and women for the work of ministry in urban centers.

Direction

The Holy Spirit gives direction regarding who, where, and when to do missions. The Spirit's direction is vital as it helps the church and missions organizations in the city to know the places and people groups they need to engage. Akinyemi Alawode asserts that "it is the work of the Holy Spirit to initiate, direct and motivate for world's [sic] evangelization" (Alawode 2018, 3).The Book of Acts highlights how the Apostles engaged people with the gospel under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Philip was moved by the Spirit to minister to the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Paul was forbidden to minister in Asia province but was led to Macedonia by the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:1ff.,16:6-10). The RCCG belief is that it was through the leadership of the Holy Spirit that the current General Overseer of RCCG was chosen by the founder, which has led to great expansion of the denomination ("History and Growth of RCCG" 2014).

Power Evangelism

An urban area is a place where political, economic, cultural, and social powers reside (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 192-193). However, those are not the only powers that reside in the city: the power of darkness also resides there. Pentecostalism is also a demonstration of the ultimate power of God over all other powers. There have been testimonies of missionaries and church leaders who demonstrated God's power over the reign of evil in their communities.

One of the occurrences that made Bishop Idahosa, the father of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, popular was his exertion of God's power over demonic forces in his city and the nation. In the early 1990s (Adaobi 2019), there was an announcement that the first International Conference of Witches and Wizards would be held at Benin City, Nigeria. Bishop Idahosa vowed that the meeting would not take place—and in fact the meeting was not held because the fear of God's power fell on Gen. Babangida, the president of Nigeria at that time. After watching the display of God's power demonstrated by Bishop Idahosa in a telecast with the chief host of the witches' conference (Sampala 2020, 16-18), the president had to call the Nigerian embassies and tell them that a visa should not be given to any prospective conferee, and that was it. God's power was felt not only in the city of Benin but the entire nation at the time. This power of God has been demonstrated over spiritual, political, social, and even economic situations in urban areas, and it is still alive till today.

High Level of Giving

Reaching urban people with the gospel is more expensive compared to doing so in rural areas. The Pentecostals do not only preach prosperity, however: they also give without reservation. The

heavy projects being carried out in different cities of Nigeria prove this. Many Pentecostal members have testified how the Spirit of God led them to donate money for various missions projects in urban areas. Through His Love Foundation of RCCG, a dialysis centre was donated at the OOU Teaching Hospital, Sagamu of Ogun State ("RCCG foundation launches crowdfunding platform" 2021). This is a form of urban social ministry made possible through generous giving.

Negative Impacts of Pentecostalism on Urban Christian Missions

This article's examination of Pentecostalism's contributions to urban missions would be incomplete without inclusion of some of the negative impacts involved.

Excessive Emphasis on Financial and Material Prosperity

Some Pentecostal churches emphasize giving too much, and many people have been short-changed or manipulated through that means in urban centers. The wealth of some prominent Pentecostal pastors like Bishop David Oyedepo and Pastor Enoch Adeboye has enticed some young ministers to focus more on material riches than the ministry. Some venture into gospel commercialization through the sale of handkerchiefs (referred to as "mantles" after they have been prayed upon) and anointing oil to members in order to get quick money (Iheanacho and Ughaerumba 2016). This misplaced emphasis has resulted in a situation where many churches are filled with mere religious people without a genuine conversion experience.

The Challenge of Religious Syncretism

Religious syncretism involves a replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements (Bediako 2008, 109). Such syncretism is incompatible with God's plan for mankind. It is unfortunate that some Pentecostal pastors who desperately desire to demonstrate the power of God have ended up seeking power elsewhere, either through occultic or diabolical methods. Such powers are often used to perform signs and wonders in order to make people troop to their churches. Regrettably, vulnerable members of such churches are sometimes exposed to satanic oppression and grip rather than have a genuine encounter with the gospel's power.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the impacts of Pentecostalism on urban Christian missions in Nigeria. Pentecostalism and its origin have been examined in great detail. Some of the incontrovertible effects of Pentecostalism on urban missions that have been identified include positive impacts on missions contextualization, evangelism and witnessing, church planting, church growth, and availability of financial and human resources, among other benefits. Consequently, one can assert, to a very great extent, that Pentecostalism is a blessing to urban Christian missions and not a curse; the positive impacts enumerated above attest to this. Abuses of Pentecostalism notwithstanding, its positive effects and blessings far outweigh its negative challenges. Therefore, it is pertinent to state that one must not engage in missions activities without depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Christian Church, missionaries, and all mission stakeholders should continue to seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit to be successful in mission engagement in all settings, including in urban areas.

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The Role of Signs and Wonders in Movement Breakthrough

Emanuel Prinz and Alison Goldhor

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

This article focuses on the controversial topic of how signs and wonders contribute to the catalyzing of movements. In doing so it reports the findings from two studies, the first-ever empirical research into effective movement catalysts (Prinz 2016) and the first-ever empirical study of factors that either contribute to or inhibit the catalyzing of movements (Prinz, Lewis, and Goldhor 2021). In addition to two surveys with two samples totaling 338 pioneers across 39 countries, the research also included 45 in-depth interviews.

In this article, signs and wonders are compared with other factors that were found to contribute to the catalyzing of movements. It discusses the differences between the occurrence of signs and wonders in movements and in a control group, as well as the differences in the role of signs and wonders in the ministry of expatriate catalysts compared to near-culture and same-culture catalysts. After analyzing the study's results, this article offers a brief conclusion.

Key Words: catalyst, movement, signs and wonders

Introduction

Movements are extraordinary phenomena! This article defines a movement as a rapid indigenous multiplication of disciples making disciples and churches planting churches in multiple streams within a people group to the fourth generation. Such movements are happening all around the world in our generation, a breakthrough that missionaries just a few decades ago would hardly have believed possible. Even in Muslim contexts, where deeply spiritual, highly gifted pioneers sometimes toiled for a lifetime and witnessed only minimal fruit from their labors, thousands are suddenly turning to Christ. (Trousdale 2012; Miller and Johnstone 2015)

What is more, many of these movements are characterized by signs and wonders. Two recent studies give us ample empirical data on which to draw as we investigate this controversial topic.

The first study examined empirically the traits and competencies of 31 catalysts of movements in the Muslim world (Prinz 2016; 2022). A subsequent study examined a much larger sample of 147 catalysts of movements representative of the largest mega-cultures of the world from across many different religious and geographical contexts in 38 different countries; the study also examined a control group of 160 non-catalysts (Prinz, Goldhor, and Lewis 2021; Prinz and Goldhor 2022). The 2021 study took the form of an online survey that included 95 wide-ranging questions, plus in-depth interviews with 45 of the participants.

Impact of Signs and Wonders on Movement Breakthrough

In the online survey, catalysts were asked, "To what extent have signs and wonders accompanying proclamation contributed to the catalyzing of your movement?" For the non-catalysts the wording was modified slightly: "To what extent have signs and wonders accompanying proclamation contributed to your ministry fruitfulness?" Table 1 gives a summary of answers to this question.

Table 1: The Impact of Signs and Wonders on Movement Breakthrough/Ministry Fruitfulness						
	Not at all significant	Not very significant	Neutral	Somewhat significant	Very significant	Total
Catalysts	1	11	10	46	79	147
	1%	7%	7%	31%	54%	100%
Non-catalysts	5	14	22	56	63	160
	3%	9%	14%	35%	39%	100%

Interestingly, only one of the 147 catalysts who participated in the study responded that the impact of signs and wonders was not at all significant on movement breakthrough. At the other end of the scale, just over half reported the impact of signs and wonders as very significant. On the one hand, then, the element of the miraculous cannot be dismissed; on the other hand, it is not a universal prerequisite. For 15 percent of the catalysts, movements did in fact happen without signs and wonders playing a significant role. These catalysts rated signs and wonders as either "not at all significant," "not very significant," or "neutral," meaning neither significant nor insignificant.

In the case of those who did not catalyze a movement, the percentages of those who rated the impact of signs and wonders as "not at all significant" or "not very significant" was only fractionally higher. Five of the 160 rated signs and wonders as "not at all significant" and 14 as "not very significant."

A comparison of all the ratings given to signs and wonders as a contributing factor to ministry fruitfulness shows a statistically significant difference between effective catalysts (average rating = 4.30), and non-catalysts (= 3.99). This difference shows that, even if signs and wonders are not a prerequisite, they rate higher for catalysts than for non-catalyst as a contributing factor to movement breakthrough.

When comparing the impact of signs and wonders with other factors that contribute to the effective catalyzing of movements, of 11 contributing factors examined, signs and wonders are one of the less significant, with only four rating lower. Stated differently, catalysts assess six factors to be more significant. Conversions without human involvement rank at the very bottom of the list, with a rating as low as 2.65, and a margin of 1.11 compared to the second-least significant contributing factor. For a full discussion of the factors that contribute to movement breakthrough, see a companion article in *Global Missiology* (Prinz and Goldhor 2022).

Examples of Signs and Wonders

Statistical analysis of numerical data can seem dry and impersonal, especially when dealing with a subject which by its very nature is both thrilling and soul-stirring. Therefore, in order to add the qualitative dimension, we want to share the actual experiences of the pioneers. What kind of signs and wonders did they witness? What was the impact on the people they were seeking to reach? How did these advance God's kingdom?

The interviews provided ample scope for detailed accounts of miracles, from both the catalysts and the control group who had seen a variety of signs and wonders in their ministry. Interviewees were asked the following questions:

> In your experience, how often have you seen God do supernatural things in your ministry among your people group, for example Jesus appearing to Muslims in dreams or visions, or divine healings, or Muslims coming to faith by reading the Bible without any human agent involved?
>
> What would you say has been the impact of such supernatural interventions of God?
>
> Could you give a few of the most impactful examples of such supernatural interventions of God?

In response, interviewees shared a wide range of examples. A pioneer from South Asia (quoted verbatim here) described supernatural acts of healing and deliverance as a normal part of his ministry:

> Deliverance ministry and other answered prayers have a big impact in a village. Most villages are filled with evil spirits and in every village there are witch doctors. All families have issues—whether sickness, marital conflict, problems with the children, unemployment, or whatever. They tell us their problems and we pray for them. It's just a simple prayer that can affect these people: "Jesus will heal you." Spiritual warfare is one of our methods. There are hundreds of evil spirits. When we pray with those who have evil spirits, there is deliverance. We pray for the sick and demonized and invite people to gospel meetings. We tell them to bring along their friends and relatives. Because they have seen miracles, they bring along others too. We share the gospel. These are village people, with a simple faith in Jesus. We plant house churches which then develop into bigger churches.

From Southeast Asia came a similar report:

> I think we went from about 200 to 1,500 house churches within a period of three years after we started to preach and teach on healing. Now we have a movement of people who—mostly the women—love to lay hands on the sick and anoint people with coconut oil.
>
> We did a video interview of a lady who raised her husband from the dead. He had died from a snake bite in the rice fields because they had no anti-venom medicine. His wife says, 'I came out and found him dead. I remembered that training I got….' Her husband tells the story from his point of view: 'I was dead. My body died—I felt my spirit leaving my body—but the next thing I know my wife is shouting at me, shouting "Jesus" in my ear and I came back to life. That's how I got raised from the dead.'

The catalyst commented that he had never prayed over dead people himself, but he taught his disciples to do what Jesus wants them to do and they actually go out and do it. "We've had three people raised from the dead."

> A pioneer from Latin America shared a one-time experience that had a huge ripple effect:
>
> I was walking across the village and there was a drunk man who wanted to fight with me, to stop me going further. I prayed for him in the name of Jesus, and in the same moment the drunkenness disappeared. The next day a church started in his home. Today 95% of the

> people of the town go to that church where this former drunk is the pastor. Nobody in that town had been a Christian before that. It is one of the biggest churches in that area. More than 100 people are now in the church, in a village with a population of about 300 people. Most of the villagers are Christian now.

From these and other such stories it is clear that, as in the Acts of the Apostles, miraculous events can lead to tremendous growth of the church when accompanied by a culturally appropriate presentation of the gospel message.

Not all supernatural events have to do with healing, as this South Asia catalyst's story shows:

> I've been in a village where all the dogs from the village just came charging at me. A crowd of people—maybe 50-60 or 100 people—were standing there and they were wondering, 'What's going on here?' All the street dogs were about to bite and about to charge me—and I just took the authority. I looked at the dogs and I said, 'In Jesus' name I command you to go!' The dogs turned and went away, with all those people watching. Inside, of course, you are scared but outside you have to recognize who you represent because you are in Christ. He promised that he is with me.

A pioneer in Latin America had the opposite experience when his horse knew better than he did, and it saved his life!

> I was riding my horse to go a meeting. The miracle was that my horse refused to go on that road I was supposed to go on! I had to take another, roundabout route. After I got to that village, I learned that a group of men with guns had been waiting to kill me and stop me entering the village—but God saved me.

Sometimes the pioneers themselves were taken by surprise when God used them in supernatural ways. A church planter in East Asia, whose denomination was (as he puts it) "not into signs and wonders," told this story:

> A man invited us to his house, and we were talking until about 2:00am. His mother was sick in bed, with an I.V. bottle next to her. She had been sick for a week. My teammate and I both felt a burden for her. I laid hands on her and prayed, and as I did so I felt a heat coming from my hands. That was it. We prayed for five minutes and then went to sleep. At breakfast the next morning this old woman who had been bedridden was there helping to cook the breakfast! She said she was feeling totally great.... That was the only healing I was a part of.

These examples come from interviews with both catalysts and non-catalysts. Again, some catalysts reported that their movements were started without any accompanying signs and wonders. This data needs to caution us against making generalizations.

Impact of Conversions without Human Involvement

So far we have focused on signs and wonders. Survey participants were also asked a related question: "To what extent have you experienced conversions without human involvement contributing to your fruit, for example Jesus appearing to people in dreams or visions, or people coming to faith by reading the Bible without any human agent involved?"

Table 2: The Impact of Conversions without Human Involvement on Ministry Fruitfulness						
	Not at all significant	Not very significant	Neutral	Somewhat significant	Very significant	Total:
Catalysts	40	37	23	28	19	147
	27%	25%	16%	19%	13%	100%
Non-catalysts	37	35	31	41	16	160
	23%	22%	19%	26%	10%	100%

Table 2 shows an interesting contrast to Table 1, with a far greater percentage at the lower end of the scale, indicating that "supernatural" conversions without human involvement are less common than signs and wonders in general. Here the results are more evenly spread between effective catalysts and the control group.

As was the case earlier, the interviews shed more light on these raw statistics. The following graph presents interviewees' answers to the above question in visual form, showing that supernatural interventions occur much more frequently among the catalysts than those in the control group.

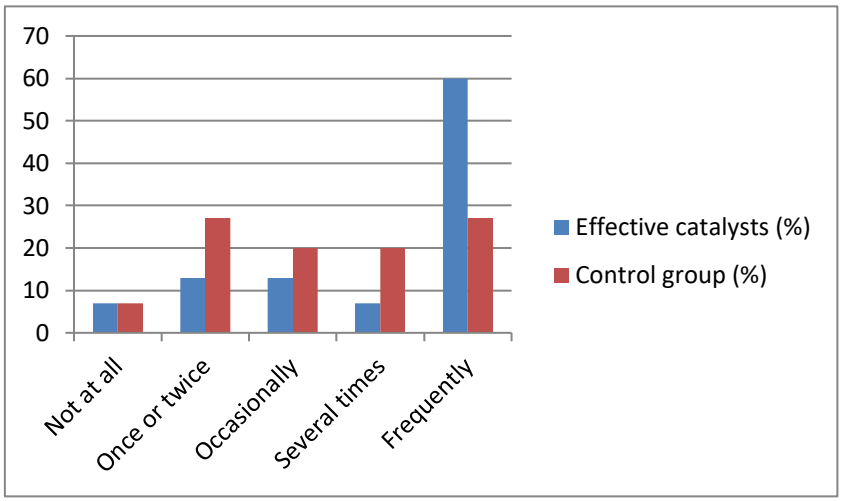

Figure 1: Frequency of Supernatural Interventions

When it comes to healings, the difference between effective catalysts and the control group is even greater, with catalysts reporting healings to occur almost three times more frequently in their ministry.

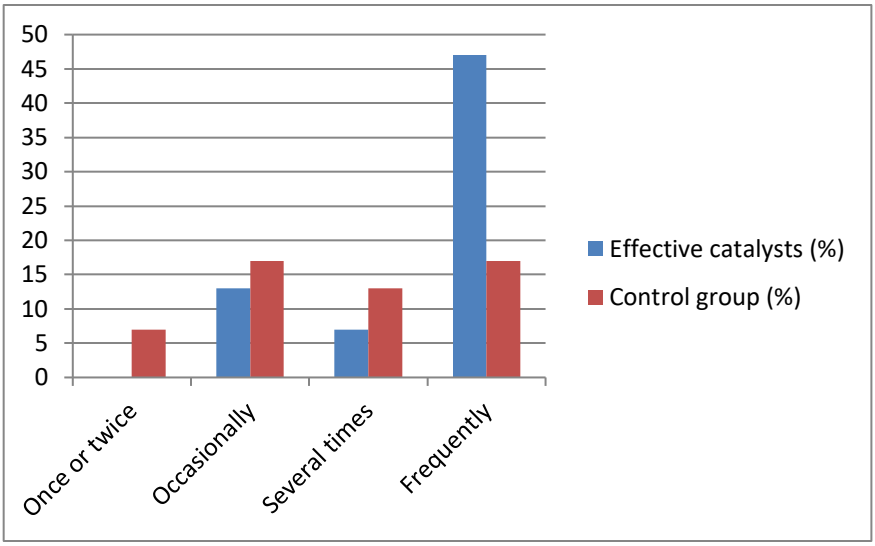

Figure 2: Frequency of Divine Healings

Dreams and visions were reported to occur less frequently than healings, as shown in the next graph.

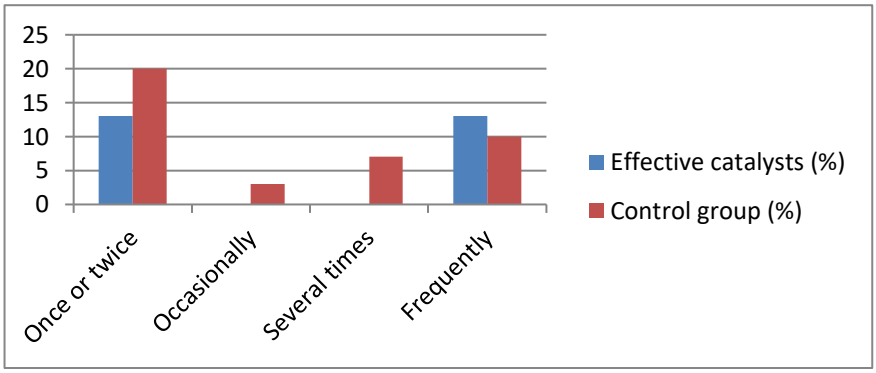

Figure 3: Frequency of dreams and visions

A pioneer in East Africa described the impact of dreams on his ministry:

> Every time someone came to the church it was almost always because of having had a dream. For example, one man was a neighbor who had seen us meeting for three years. He had three dreams. In the first he was climbing a coconut tree and fell off it. In the second dream he was on his bed and his head was being cut off. Then in the third dream he saw a man in white—Jesus—who told him to come to him.
>
> Almost everyone in the church had had a significant dream. An old woman had a dream and then said she needed to go to church. She didn't know where a church was and asked a neighbor who pointed her to our home…. Almost everything God does is outside of us. People would come along to my house and ask me to tell them about Jesus. God was working in his way.

In South Asia, a catalyst had been sharing the gospel with one family for some time and watched them "kind of inching towards faith." One of the sons, however, belonged to a radical

fundamentalist Islamic movement and planned to kill the pioneer. He didn't follow through with his plan, and a year later, disillusioned with Islam, he saw Jesus in a dream:

> Jesus told him, 'I have a gift for you and your family: people are going to explain it and when they arrive you must listen to them.' Meanwhile, we (the pioneer and his team) were actually travelling all that night to go to see him, although he didn't know that. So when he woke up the next day we were already in the house!
>
> The whole family ended up coming to faith because of that dream. They all came together: about 18-19 people including some girls who had married in…. They promised that they would tell other people, and they did. They just started telling people and all we did was to keep studying Scripture with them.

Stories like this are very common: an individual had a dream, which ended up affecting his or her extended family and the wider community. They also greatly strengthened the faith of the pioneers, as they saw God at work to build his church by supernatural means.

The earlier 2016 study also examined the impact of conversions without human involvement. Note this comparison of the results:

Table 3: The Impact of Conversions without Human Involvement on Movement Breakthrough

	Not at all significant	Not very significant	Neutral	Somewhat significant	Very significant
Catalysts surveyed in 2021	27%	25%	16%	19%	13%
Catalysts surveyed in 2016	31%	21%	17%	17%	14%

The percentages are remarkably similar, given that the 2021 survey included 147 catalysts and the 2016 study only 31. In addition, the original survey was limited to Muslims, whereas the later survey covered the six regions or groupings where most movements occur, specifically Francophone Africa, East Africa, India, Indonesia, Latin America, and among Ethnic Chinese.

A minority of 32% (2021) and 31% (2016) rated the impact of conversions without human involvement as either somewhat or very significant, while the majority of catalysts did not see these as having a significant impact on the catalyzing of their movements.

Catalysts' Personal Experience of Miraculous Gifts

The catalysts in the 2016 study provided additional details about their personal experiences of miraculous gifts, which span a broad spectrum. Many said that they exhibit a miraculous gift and practice it frequently, whereas others reported that they don't have such a gift and even that no miracles at all have happened in the entire catalyzing of their movement.

Those who have seen miraculous gifts at work identified them as prophecy/prophetic words, supernatural revelations, miraculous answers to prayer, and dreams and visions. Each one was asked to describe in what way these gifts had contributed to the catalyzing of their movement. Their answers can be summarized as follows (Prinz 2021, 71-72):

- Prophecy reveals ministry strategy to the catalyst. It reveals how to pray specifically, and it reveals ministry problems before they become obvious, so they can be addressed early and effectively.
- Miracles in answer to prayer in the name of Jesus evidence to Muslims the authority of the name of Jesus and demonstrate that spiritual power in Jesus is greater than theirs, which makes them want to join the movement.
- Miracles cause people to pray to God, and even encourage Muslims to gather together to pray, which leads to house churches being formed.
- Seeing prophecies fulfilled stimulates faith and boldness among believers.
- The catalyst's example (even if miracles are only a few) leads to local believers walking in miraculous gifting (often with more miracles).
- Dreams about the Bible, or Jesus, or the exhortation to meet an apostolic leader or local believer lead to Muslims being convinced of the gospel.

The following example illustrates a number of these factors:

> The apostolic leader received a prophetic word from God to pray specifically for a miracle that would bring a particular family to faith in Jesus within twelve hours. The catalyst devoted himself to prophetic intercession. The next night someone in the family received a prophetic dream, which led the entire family to faith the next morning. In this family a house church was started, and from this house church a movement began.

In some of the movements miraculous gifts have played a very significant role, as shown by this example from Southeast Asia:

> In our group of now 11 movements, from seven key nationals and myself, … this phenomenon widely starts new clusters of groups. Last week at our quarterly retreat, we took a two-hour session to hear stories of miracles, and each of about ten people contributed stories, trying to limit themselves to two miracle stories each, while some slipped into three stories. In almost all of the stories, there was the commonality that at least seven believer groups in three generations were spurred from one miracle.

The fact that a single miracle could lead to seven new house churches being established, as a consistent pattern among ten different apostolic leaders, points to the significant role of this variable in the catalyzing of some of the movements.

In the case of the apostolic leaders who did not practice miraculous gifts, or not at all frequently, and yet effectively catalyzed a movement, the following rationale was provided (Prinz 2021, 73):

- Although the apostolic leader did not practice a miraculous gift, local believers did. Two reasons were given: (1) it promotes the health of the churches and demotes the foreigner; (2) it demonstrates to Muslims that following Jesus is not only the religion of the foreigner.
- Catalysts wanted the faith of believers to rest on Scripture, and wanted their focus to be on sin, repentance, and forgiveness, rather than on miracles.
- Miraculous gifts were not a significant part of the apostolic leader's personal tradition and theology.
- Miracles were necessary for the initial breakthrough, but not in the later stages of the movement.

Apostolic leaders other than the primary catalyst reported practicing a miraculous gift among the people group, which contributed to the movement.

The Correlation of Signs and Wonders with the Catalyst's Faith and Prayer Life

One possible explanation for the occurrence of signs and wonders is to seek its origin in the traits of the movement catalyst. We base this conjecture on the theological conviction that God often performs signs and wonders in response to faith and prayer. (See for example Mark 11:22-24; Acts 4:30-31.)

In addition to assessing signs and wonders and other contributing factors, the studies also examined the personal traits and competencies of effective catalysts. Two traits that consistently characterize effective catalysts are *expectant faith* and *fervent intercession*.

The 2016 study identified expectant faith as one of 11 qualities that every single one of the 31 participating catalysts in the Muslim world exhibited strongly and consistently. On a 1-4 Likert scale, catalysts self-assessed their expectant faith with an average rating of 3.65, the second-highest rating of all 33 qualities identified (Prinz 2021, 40). This trait is defined as follows: "Catalysts are expectant that God will grow a movement among their people group and save many soon, and they have great faith that *God will show his power* through their lives." Clearly this trait includes the element of expectancy that God will demonstrate his supernatural power. The same study also identified fervent intercession as a trait exhibited by more than 80% of effective catalysts in the Muslim world. Catalysts self-assessed their fervent intercession with an average rating of 3.45 on the 1-4 scale, still comparatively high.

The 2021 study verified a total of 21 qualities of effective catalysts worldwide, including both expectant faith and fervent intercession. On a 1-5 Likert scale, catalysts self-assessed their expectant faith (same definition as the 2016 study) as one of the highest-rated qualities, with a very high average rating of 4.67. Fervent intercession was also verified as a trait that catalysts exhibit worldwide, both in depth and breadth. This was confirmed in the interviews, with many testimonies to the power of prayer by the catalysts and their disciples. Questions about their prayer life revealed that they prayed with more frequency than non-catalysts, with many catalysts reporting that they devote between six to nine hours weekly to intercession for their people group. Effective catalysts are also almost twice as likely to include fasting with their intercession. This result confirms from a representative sample what has been reported anecdotally.

Conclusion

Overall, the data reveals that effective movement catalysts possess a strong expectant faith that God will show his power through them—and he does! Most effective catalysts are also more fervent intercessors than non-catalysts. The New Testament links faith and prayer with miracles. This may help to explain why miraculous events occur more frequently in the ministries of effective catalysts than those of non-catalysts.

Although signs and wonders have often led to movement breakthrough, in some cases they have played a relatively minor role. Other movements have been catalyzed without any miracle at all. However, when signs and wonders do happen, they point unbelievers to God and cause his church to grow, often dramatically, just as they did in the days of the first Apostles.

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Getting Ahead of the Spirit?
The Techniques of Contemporary Mission Movements

John Span

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

The literature on contemporary mission movements under the umbrella of "Kingdom Movements" makes copious references to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. At first glance, then, movement methodologies appear to follow the Biblical mandate to be "led by the Spirit." However, this article argues that such methodologies, represented here by the CAMEL method of evangelism, for all their zeal for outreach to Muslims are, in effect, getting ahead of the Spirit.

Key Words: CAMEL Method, church planting movements, "God is doing a new thing," "led by the Spirit," Kingdom Movements

Introduction

The last 30 years of mission strategy have seen a veritable explosion of new approaches: insider movements, church planting movements (CPMs), disciple multiplication movements (DMMs), Zúme, New Generations, the Oikos method, and more. Cocanower and Mordomo suggest that all these can be subsumed under the umbrella of "Kingdom Movements" (KMs), which they define as occurring "when followers of Christ are empowered to take ownership of ministry and mission in a way that results in exponential multiplication of disciples and churches" (Cocanower and Mordomo 2020, 1).

In their analysis of KMs, Cocanower and Mordomo note that studies on KM are very much in their infancy. In their wide interaction with the subject, Cocanower and Mordomo describe both strengths and shortcomings. In the latter category, they express concern about potential works-righteousness arising from an emphasis on obedience-based discipleship (in DMMs), underreported attrition in some previously hyped CPMs, and an unwillingness among some KM proponents to take seriously the challenges to their methods raised by other practitioners (Cocanower and Mordomo 2020, 3, 6).

This article, and in keeping with the theme of this journal issue, considers one particular emphasis frequently present in KM activity: the claimed presence of the Holy Spirit in an unprecedented way (Schattner 2013, 96).

This article recognizes that CPM leaders are deeply committed to fulfilling the Great Commission and are willing to take significant risks to see it accomplished. Their zeal, dedication, and single-minded devotion to God's will are admirable. Many of them serve with integrity in difficult situations. However, the exigencies of mission work in challenging contexts can push even the best missionaries toward cutting corners or exaggerating results.

Accordingly, this article probes the question of whether some CPM leaders might have certain blind spots, especially in their appeals to the Holy Spirit when seeking to justify novel, pragmatic approaches to mission. As a case study, this discussion focuses on the development and application of the CAMEL method, designed to reach Muslims for Christ.

What Is CAMEL?

CAMEL is an acronym composed of C (chosen), A (announced by angels), M (miracles), and EL (everlasting life). The program features an evangelistic strategy suggesting that, by utilizing the Qur'anic text of Surah 3:42–55, one can prove that the Muslim Jesus is divine (for more details, see Span 2016, 2019). Kevin Greeson, a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB) and who is based in Bangladesh, claims that this method was derived in the late 1990s from observations of former Muslims using Qur'anic passages to lead their Muslim family members to Christ (Greeson 2010, loc. 320–321). David Garrison, well known for his oft-cited works *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Garrison 2004) and *A Wind in the House of Islam* (Garrison 2014), featured this method in his *Church Planting Manual* (Garrison 2004) and also edited multiple CAMEL documents (Garrison 2003a, 2003b, 2009).

CAMEL has gone through several iterations, always with a stress on finding ways and means to introduce Muslims to Christ and on avoiding a polemical or argumentative approach. This irenic posture has much to commend it, and Greeson and Garrison are certainly innovative and bold mission leaders. However, they seem to be proposing for Muslims around the world a method that appeared to have worked in the religiously syncretistic milieu of Bangladesh. Moreover, their zeal for this work may have exceeded their statistical accuracy.

The currently available CAMEL Training Workshop features a 96-page *CAMEL Rider's Journal* and an accompanying DVD (Garrison 2009). Online promotional material states, "This workshop can be completed in six one-hour sessions, taking a Christian from novice to experienced in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with a Muslim. Born out of the largest modern movement of Muslims to Christ in the world today, the Camel method will teach you how to lovingly share in an intelligent and effective way with Muslims" (WorldChristian 2022).

The *CAMEL Rider's Journal* emphasizes that it is "not endorsing Islam, Muhammad or the Qur'an but rather removing obstacles that might prevent them from seeing Jesus" (Garrison 2009, 14). Its stated purpose is to "help you find a person or peace, a person in whom God's Spirit is already at work, and to share with that person the Good News of Jesus Christ" (Garrison 2009, 87). It provides testimonies from people who felt newly empowered to reach Muslims. Similarly, Greeson quotes a testimony from a "missionary in the Arab world" who declared that, after many years of hard labor and limited fruit, "in just three months of using the CAMEL I have two groups of baptized Muslim background believers that I am meeting with for discipleship" (Greeson 2010, loc. 108–113).

Based largely on the reports of CAMEL's enormous success in Bangladesh (discussed in the next section), the program's developers have had simplified versions of the material translated into multiple languages including Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, German, Kazak, Russian, and Tamil (Greeson 2009). The *CAMEL Tracks* brochure quotes a participant as saying, "I have read Surah Al-Imran 3:42–55 more than 100 times. Each time, I feel the same joy that I received the first time I discovered the Truth in this passage" (Greeson 2009, 3). One implication of this quoted testimony is that truth about the biblical Jesus can be mediated through the Qur'an.

Despite the existence of Arabic and Farsi translations, I am not aware of any significant attempt to implement CAMEL in the Arab Muslim world. My own interviews in Egypt indicate that Arab Christians are very reluctant to use such a method, because Muslims in their area have a deep knowledge of the history of Islamic interpretation of CAMEL prooftexts such as Surah

3:42–55. That history of interpretation would not permit the claim embodied in CAMEL that the "clay bird" miracle of 3:49 proves the divinity of the Muslim Jesus. Former Muslim Al Fadi has expressed similar reservations about using the Qur'an as a bridge to the gospel in this way, especially as he observes that such methods suggest that the Qur'an "supports Christian doctrines, especially in the areas of Salvation and Christology" (Fadi 2018, 164-165).

The History of CAMEL in Bangladesh

The 2002 IMB report "A Historic Turning to Jesus by Muslims in Jedidistan" describes the conversion in the mid-1980s of a man variously named Sharif, Abdullah, or Shahadat (International Mission Board 2002). This man would rise to temporary fame within the IMB, even making an appearance at the 2004 Southern Baptist Convention. Shahadat became, in a sense, the Bangladeshi poster boy whose stories validated the IMB's embrace of the CAMEL method. His statistical claims were contained in the initial (2003) version of the CAMEL training manual: 250,000 people baptized from 1998 to 2003, including 87,200 in a single year from July 2002 to July 2003; 8,000 jamats (churches); and, 6,000 church planters (Garrison 2003, 5). Many took these figures to be truthful and repeated or sometimes even enlarged them (Garrison 2004; Greeson 2004; Rutz 2006; Simson 2005, 2006; Terry 2004).

In 2005, the IMB sent a second research team to Bangladesh in an attempt to verify even more incredible reports emerging from the movement there. This team, in its report called "Survey of Jedidistan," expressed concern that it was receiving scripted answers, that some facts did not seem to line up, and that certain key persons were unavailable to verify just what was happening in the two reported streams of the movement. The report's executive summary explained that the team

> faced difficulties in gauging the depth and breadth of the movement with any degree of certainty. This is due to a perceptible amount of misinformation reported to many of the survey teams. Survey team members proposed a variety of explanations for the misinformation ranging from intentional false reporting to cross-cultural misunderstandings arising from a Western need for assessment in a non-Western context (International Mission Board 2005, 1).

As much as many on the survey team wanted to verify that this was a bona fide movement, and others were willing to see any anomalies as simple misunderstandings, the survey cast some doubt on the veracity of all that had been reported. Garrison dismissed the report as flawed (Garrison 2015). However, a documentary film released later by Bill Nikides, a veteran missionary who had served in Bangladesh for seven years, revealed the extent of the deception. Citing two well-placed witnesses, Nikides described Shahadat's sophisticated plan to hire fictitious staff and tell them what to say at the reporting sessions. Shahadat's fabrication was busted when one of his colleagues revealed the plot, stating, "Last year I lied, I committed sin, but this year by the leading of the Holy Spirit I want to tell the truth" (Nikides 2012).

The 2005 IMB report concluded, "One team was able to conduct on-site follow up visits and discovered that the two strongest testimonies were false reports given by actors who had misrepresented themselves during their interviews." (International Mission Board 2005, 8).

In an attempt to ascertain the reality on the ground in Bangladesh, this author collected statistics from reputable missiologists as well as interviewed a number of both veteran

missionaries and Bangladeshis who have converted from Islam to Christianity. This accumulated information affirms that the mission efforts that received much glowing praise have indeed had some impact—but nowhere near the greatly inflated numbers that appear to have originated with Shahadat. Around 2010, some sources estimated 50,000 ex-Muslims-now-in-Christ (xMnCs) (Morton 2012, 79). However, in 2015 a missionary who had been in Bangladesh for 40 years reported to this author, "To my knowledge, there are not 400 regularly functioning MBB [Muslim-background believer] fellowships in the entire country today—i.e., those meeting on a weekly basis." In the same year, another long-term worker suggested that the total number of xMnCs in Bangladesh was closer to 10,000.

Bangladesh experiences a moderate level of persecution, currently ranking 29th on the Open Doors World Watch List (Open Doors 2022), so we cannot discount the possibility that many Christian believers are meeting underground and not publicly disclosing their conversion. However, it seems clear that the most impressive claims regarding church planting in Bangladesh were based on fabrication.

Is This the Spirit at Work?

Sometimes we trust people who prove not to be trustworthy. In such cases, there is no shame in admitting our mistake in moving on. However, I have observed in KM adherents a tendency to take refuge in what I call "slam-dunk" statements that assert the Spirit's presence in their movement—and in a manner that does not permit refutation.

John Travis, for example, has asserted that "God is doing something new" through insider movements (Travis 2009). Garrison has affirmed, "God is doing something extraordinary in our day" (Garrison 2004, 16). Jerry Trousdale, a proponent of DMMs, has boldly observed, "Over the last 50 years and especially since the turn of the 21st century, the Spirit of God has been birthing a new concept in the earth. Instead of addition, the Spirit of God is calling forth multiplication" (Trousdale and Sunshine 2018, 365).

Missiologist Phil Parshall, in his review of the 2004 CAMEL training manual, stated that the movement of Muslims to Christianity in Bangladesh due to the CAMEL method was "one of the most extraordinary acts of the Holy Spirit among Muslims ever chronicled" (Parshall 2005, 384). One can understand that he, too, may have been initially trusting inflated reports that he could not personally confirm. But in a 2007 endorsement letter, quoted at length in the 2010 version of CAMEL, Parshall continued his affirmation of CAMEL, again appealing to spiritual realities, when he stated, "It would be my heartfelt desire that this controversy over CAMEL not be used by Satan to distract IMB from the new, exciting direction they have taken in Muslim outreach. This is a *kairos* moment in evangelistic opportunity" (Parshall 2007; Greeson 2010, Loc 214-2154).

In effect, all these statements sidestep normal methods of genuine evaluation by making direct appeals to God or the Holy Spirit, implying that if one questions whether this is necessarily the Holy Spirit at work, that skepticism is tantamount to quenching the Holy Spirit. If one doubts whether God is "doing a new thing" or if this is a "kairos" moment, then one is arguing with God.

As a missiologist who is called to "test the spirits" (1 Jn 4:1 KJV), I believe we must ask whether such appeals to "it works" and "this is the finger of God" are actually saying that "my

methods work" and "my finger directing this enterprise is definitely guided by the finger of God."

In the all too familiar practice of "proof-texting," one (consciously or unconsciously) approaches the Bible with a preconceived idea and then shops around in search of biblical data to fit that idea. Those who engage in such interpretive methods are actually placing themselves in front of the Word of God, co-opting select portions of the Bible in support of their agenda. This same dynamic can happen with the Holy Spirit. CAMEL's advocates make copious appeals to the Holy Spirit, and at first glance it might appear that its methodology is carried out in submission to the Holy Spirit. For example, when Kevin Greeson and David Garrison, among CAMEL's strongest proponents, use the Qur'an as an apparently approved source of spiritual revelation, their claims to broad applicability across the widely varying global set of Muslim cultures, their reliance on discredited statistical reports, and their supposedly indisputable assertions of the Holy Spirit's presence raise questions as to whether CAMEL is subtly playing the role that should be reserved uniquely for the Spirit's illuminating, inspiring, convicting, and emboldening power. It is certainly reasonable to expect that the fruit of the Spirit should be present not only in disciple making but also in statistical reporting and in openness to constructive criticism.

In Acts 16, as Paul, Timothy, and Silas embarked on their missionary journey, they presumably had prayed in earnest about their plans and strategized about the best cities to target. Even so, they needed to remain humbly submissive to divine re-direction, lest they doggedly follow their own human-engineered enterprise. In verse 6, they were forbidden from entering the province of Asia; the Greek verb *kōlúō* carries a strong sense of restraining or preventing. Then, in verse 7, the missionary team attempted to enter Bithynia, but again the Holy Spirit blocked their plans and did not allow them to enter. We do not know how the Spirit communicated these messages, but we know that the missionaries perceived that the Master Strategist was in control and submitted to having their own plans overruled.

Might some of CAMEL's zealous adherents, in their passion to launch major church-planting movements, have unwittingly slipped into leading instead of pliably following the Holy Spirit?

Possible Lessons from the CAMEL Experience

In the field of mission forensics, we investigate what went wrong so as not to repeat our mistakes. Doing so requires the spiritual fruit of meekness and humility, as we must be willing to admit honestly that some things were not what they appeared to be at first. I will close by offering lessons regarding how our mission work can best align with a robust theology of the Holy Spirit.

1. Narratives are often employed to demonstrate the effectiveness of mission movements, and at times to disarm the critical faculties of those who might ask difficult questions. However, narratives can be either positive or negative. Shahadat's narrative, intended to confirm the "effectiveness" of the CAMEL method, turned out to be a fabrication, by all accounts. On the other hand, one of Shahadat's assistants came clean and related a different narrative, even though doing so required repenting of his previous behavior. It appears that the Spirit's role of convicting people of sin (cf. John 16:8) was at work—but apparently in only one of these cases.

2. Confident affirmations that God is "doing a new thing" can imply that the person or mission agency in question has inside information on, or at least special insight into, God's designs. I do not wish to discourage eagerness to follow God or hopefulness in what we believe he is communicating to us. But, could such expressions also indicate a subtle form of spiritual pride that stands in direct conflict with the fruit of the Spirit, especially meekness (Gal 5:23)?

3. CAMEL seems to pit "doctrine" against simply giving people the Bible and letting them use inductive discovery methods to figure out its meaning. For example, Garrison has stated:

   > When modern-day practitioners of Church Planting Movements refuse to counsel their converts with words of wisdom or time-honored doctrines, but instead direct them to God's word, they are living out the New Testament model initiated by Jesus and transmitted through the apostles (Garrison 2003, 143-144).

   CPMs and KMs have sometimes been rightly criticized for their tendency to downplay the teaching role of theologically trained servants of God in favor of inductive methods. This reductionistic emphasis assumes that initiates to the faith can teach the "whole counsel of God" and effectively discounts the offices of teaching and preaching that the ascended Christ gave to his Church via the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 4:11).

4. There appears to be an underlying sense that if CAMEL and other CPMs using simplified presentations of the gospel create messes of false conversions, superficial or non-existent repentance, and sub-Christian doctrine, then the Holy Spirit will sort it all out. Georges Houssney, a veteran missionary in the Arabic world and chief translator of the Word of Life Arabic Bible, made these comments concerning the CAMEL "Ruhallah" (Spirit of Allah) tract:

   > There is no recognition of sin and rebellion against God, no plea for repentance, no call to surrender their lives to Jesus as Lord and give up everything for the sake of winning Christ. The entire tract does not speak of being born again by the Spirit of God, or say that Jesus is the Son of God (Houssney 2010).

   We need to take a serious look at the effects of such a methodology on our theology. The CAMEL method's suggestion that the Muslim Jesus—only a created being according to Islamic theologians—can be equated to the divine biblical Jesus due to a so-called miracle recorded in the Qur'an borders on a revival of the Arian heresy. The *CAMEL Tracks* document goes as far as to invite people to become "Pakka Muslims"—which, in the areas where the word "Pakka" is used (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), means calling them to become solid, unadulterated, true-blue, bona fide Muslims! The document states, *"*I pray that your eyes will be opened and you will understand this Truth and join the Pakka Muslim movement" (Greeson 2009, 3–4). This statement is anything but Christian, whereas the work of the Holy Spirit, in opening the eyes of those blind in sin, always points us to the biblical Christ (cf. John 15:26; Acts 26:18) and calls us to join the global body of Christ where people enjoy the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:14; cf. Span 2019, 287–289).

5. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (cf. John 16:13). This includes truth in reporting statistics. To imply—especially after further information emerged—that the Holy Spirit was the motive power behind the statistical claims regarding CAMEL's work in Bangladesh would constitute lying to, or about, the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). Rather, as multiple witnesses

have attested, many of the statistics furnished by Shahadat and propagated by CAMEL proponents were human fabrications. This finding should remind us not to be too gullible about the so-called moves of the Holy Spirit reported by any movement.

6. We must take great precaution not to be guilty of attempting to co-opt the Spirit for our own ends. This was the sin of Simon the magician, who wanted to obtain the power of the Holy Spirit for his own purposes (Acts 8:18–24).

7. Being led by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, and keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 18, 25; cf. Rom 8:14) are all *corporate* commands in the New Testament. If a so-called KM practitioner pays no attention to or belittles other members of the body of Christ who might be asking some thorny questions, that person is disobeying the "one another" corporate commands of the New Testament. More specifically, would KM practitioners from the West be willing to listen to a critique of their methodologies by Indian or Bangladeshi brothers who are weary of being exploited to meet success-driven quotas? After all, there is one, holy, universal and apostolic Church, led by the Spirit of the risen Jesus, and these indigenous believers are part of it.

8. In multiple passages in Acts, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit resulted in speaking the Word boldly (*parrēsiázomai* or *parrēsía*).[1] That biblical emphasis is underrepresented in CAMEL, amidst the effort to make the message acceptable to Muslim audiences. When Peter addressed the crowd in Acts 2, they were "cut to the heart" (2:37) or, as Eckhard Schnabel renders it, "stunned, pierced in their conscience" (Schnabel 2016, 161). That kind of bold, heart-piercing speaking is true apostolic preaching—in a form that may be overly de-emphasized in CAMEL.

9. Could there be an unholy spirit at work in how CAMEL and other movement methodologies become overly celebrated and universalized? In 1 John 2:16, the aging beloved disciple warns his audience against "the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life." Could the glowing statistics, commendations, and honors granted to the originators and propagators of these movements be inducing an unhealthy desire for the pleasure of adulation, the "wow" factor, and the right, as commentator I. Howard Marshall put it, to engage in "the braggadocio which exaggerates what it possesses in order to impress other people" (Marshall 1978, 145)? This is perhaps the hardest question of this article, and insofar as it could be interpreted to impugn bad motives or throw a wholesale aspersion on the men, message, and methods of such programs as CAMEL, that is not the point. The point is that, with one of North America's idols being success, even in mission circles—particularly those based or financed in North America—one is constrained to talk, walk, and write as if a particular enterprise is a glowing success. Perhaps it is time instead to soberly ask about what spirit/Spirit is at work, and even to have the idols of a mission organization's cultural base addressed by the Spirit.

Conclusion

Proverbs 18:17 states, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him." Missionaries and mission agencies must increasingly allow themselves to be examined by the Spirit of Truth and to engage graciously with fellow Christians who also want to advance the Kingdom but may have tough questions about the methods being used to that end.

May the Holy Spirit guide our examinations, engagements, and mission strategizing, all to God's glory.

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[1] See Acts 4:29, 31; 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31.

Missiological Implications of Pietism for Protestant African Christianity

Samson O. Adebayo and Akinyemi O. Alawode

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Abstract

Africa has been called the most religious place on earth. Such religiosity is manifested in several expressions of Christianity. However, the dominance of Christianity in the population has not resulted in the expected societal transformation. There is a significant disconnect between faith and daily living. This article argues that the reason for disconnection is similar to that of Frankfurt and many parts of Post-Reformation Germany. The tide of events began to change when Jakob Spenner pioneered what became Pietism. As Pietism led to a moral-ethical revival in Germany, the same should be replicated in Africa. This article suggests that, as part of the missiological demands of the gospel, African Christians must prioritize biblical preaching and teaching in homes, emphasize the ethical demands of the gospel on Africans, invest deliberately in transformative missions, and disciple local believers for public places.

Key Words: Africa, African Christianity, missiological demands, Pietism, societal transformation

Introduction

In many parts of Africa, Christianity has become a popular religion. A large part of the population professes allegiance to the Church. However, Africa's underdevelopment and ongoing bizarre events on the continent call into question the claims of Christianity being the light and salt of the earth. In recent times, religion on the continent has increasingly become utilitarian. The positive transforming element of Christianity seems to have been replaced with the power to overcome imaginary malevolent forces that plague the average African person. Many Christians on the continent have lost touch with the missiological implications of biblical Christianity.

One may argue that the just painted scenario is not unknown in Christian history. A similar situation provided the background for the emergence of Pietism in Germany. The decadent and lethargic inward-focused Christianity of that era necessitated the birth of a movement that instilled ethical-moral revival with missiological results in the late seventeenth century. Pietism proved to be a significant catalyzing agent for the transformation of society and the emergence of Protestant Christian missions in the eighteenth century.

The task of this study is to present Pietism as a model movement for spiritual revivals. The article shall examine the impact of Pietism on Moravian missions, then call African Christians to respond to the missiological demands of new life.

Pietism

Bruce Shelley wrote that any religion that becomes a popular religion slowly turns into a social and cultural element bound to lose its enthusiasm (Shelley 2008, 325). Seventeenth-century Lutheranism in Germany demonstrated that it had lost its glow by the turn of the century. Scholasticism and confessionalism had supplanted the creativity and the force of the Reformation. The followers of Luther had fallen under the bewitching spell of intellectualism

and had unwittingly turned the Protestant faith into a mental exercise (Shelley 2008, 325). For Luther, faith was an act of surrender to the mercy of God. It was also a matter of personal relationship with Jesus Christ. However, just a few generations later faith had become a mere mental assent to a set of doctrinal truths set forth by academic theologians. It had ceased to be a personal thing. Attendance in public worship and receiving sacraments administered by the minister of a state church were the hallmarks of being Christian in Lutheran Germany. Hence, partly due to the effects of the post-Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), there was general apathy toward religion, and morality sank miserably low (Latourette 1937, 896). Christianity was devoid of its transforming element. It became an academic religion that had no bearing on the daily lives of those who professed it.

Pietism, therefore, was a late-seventeenth-century renewal movement that began within the Lutheran churches in Germany. It was reacting to the unhealthy ossification of the Lutheran Reformation and everything it represented. It was to challenge nominalism, which had become normative in the church. Mulholland described Pietism as an international, interdenominational evangelical movement that sought to revitalize the existing church through small groups devoted to Bible study, prayer, mutual accountability, and outreach (Mulholland 1999, 221). It developed as a reaction against the dry formalism and intellectualism into which Protestant theology had fallen. Protestant theology had become concerned about doctrinal and theological correctness instead of daily Christian living. Lutheranism was concerned with having a theological system that could adequately contend against Romanism and their Reformed opponents (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014). Hence, by the middle of the seventeenth century, Protestants churches (Reformed and Lutheran) had developed a formal and arid kind of theology that could rival the Roman Catholic's scholasticism. Strangely, it was the system of thinking that the Reformers had reacted against (Tiplady 2000, 503). Religion had become divorced from daily living.

The Pietist movement's origin can be linked to the English Puritanism of the seventeenth century (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014). Puritanism had expanded into the Netherlands, then it spread into Germany as Reformed Orthodoxy among the Lutherans. The various streams of thought about Pietism coalesced in the life and writings of Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705). Spener was a Lutheran Pastor in Frankfurt. Seeing the level of moral bankruptcy characteristic of the city where he ministered, he began the *collegia pietatis* (assembly of piety). It was a sort of Bible Club in which members met regularly for devotional reading of the Bible and spiritual exercises. In contrast to the arid scholasticism of the day, Pietism focused on a relationship with Jesus Christ, not on correct but dry orthodoxy (Tiplady 2000, 503). For them, a disciplined life was far more critical than sound doctrine, the fear of God was prized above empty intellectualism, and personal conversion was of greater importance than nominal allegiance to a state religion. Having assessed the weakness of the orthodoxy of his days, Spener proposed private and public reading of the Bible and greater involvement of the laity within the church's priesthood of believers. He emphasized the practical fruit of Christian living, ministerial training focused on piety and learning above intellectual religion, and spiritually edifying preaching (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014).

When Spener died in 1705, the leadership of Pietism passed to Hermann Francke (1655-1727). Francke taught and founded Pietist groups at the University of Halle. Nikolaus Zinzendorf, destined to become a dominant force in the history of world mission, received much of his childhood education in Halle under Francke's influence. Zinzendorf wrote of his

experience in Halle that "daily meeting in Prof Francke's house; the edifying account concerning kingdom of Christ; the conversation with witnesses of the truth in distant regions, acquaintance with several preachers… increased my zeal for the cause of the Lord, in a powerful manner" (Mulholland 1999, 222). Under Francke's strong leadership, the University of Halle became the institutional center for Pietism. Furthermore, the university at Halle provided missionaries for what became known as the Danish-Halle Mission. That mission was to become a significant catalyst for Moravian missions.

From the foregoing, one may deduce that Pietism was more than a religious movement. It was a movement destined to significantly impact the history of Christian missions. Pietism had two main aims. First, it set out to stress a personal, functional faith with Jesus Christ. Some have gone so far as to claim that, for the first time in Christian history after the days of the Apostles, the emphasis on personal faith that gave birth to salvation through Jesus Christ as the basis for baptism became prominent (Shelley 2008, 326). Second, Pietists wanted to shift from a state-church Christianity to an intimate fellowship of those who had faith in the Son of God. While they reluctantly accepted state Lutheranism, they were not content with it. To achieve the fellowship of the redeemed, they began to stress the need to spread the word of God through all classes of people (Shelley 2008, 326). These emphases inevitably gave birth to significant lay involvement in church ministries.

Gonzalez has observed that the most significant contribution of Pietism to the story of Christianity was the birth of Protestant missions (Gonzalez 1985, 208). Reference has been made to the Danish-Halle Mission. However, it should be be added that the Pietists did not plan to be heavily involved in international missions. They were content to meet the needs of others around them. For instance, Francke had a school for poor children, an orphanage, and a home for widows. The story changed when the Danish king requested missionaries to his colonies in India. The letters written by Ziegenberg and Plutschau from Tranquebar reached Pietists meetings and generated missionary interest. One result was that the University of Halle received more support for training protestant missionaries. Clearly the outbreak of Pietism became a subversive force that catalyzed the rise of the modern missionary movement.

Challenges Facing African Christianity

The earliest expressions of Christianity in Africa were through the Coptic Church in Egypt, then through what became the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Coptic tradition claimed that Mark, one of the disciples of Jesus, played a significant role in the planting of Christianity in Alexandria, Egypt, in the first century. From that first Christian century until the seventh-century invasion of North Africa by Islamists, Christianity thrived and became a potent force for societal behavioral modifications (Cairns 1996, 522). Together with Portuguese explorations and traders the Roman Catholics made limited attempts at evangelization in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but their efforts did not at all result in the Christianization of the continent. The rest of Africa remained largely unreached until the nineteenth century when Protestant missions, along with additional Catholic initiatives entered the continent from several points in great numbers.

More recently Evangelicals and the so-called Pentecostal-Charismatic Third Wave have experienced more growth on the continent than other denominations. In 1990, about 275 million Christians were in Africa (Cairns 1996, 522), and by 2020 Christianity had grown to "more than 667 million" (Zurlo 2022, 6). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the

phenomenal African Indigenous Church movement emerged (Falk 1997, 452). Often founded by the initiative of a charismatic African, such churches exerted tremendous influence on the African people (Falk 1997, 454). The movement has brought people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ in many cases. However, some analysts assert that unchristian syncretic elements have characterized much of the movement (Falk 1997, 522; Ayegboayin and Ishola 2013, 17-18).

Many observers note that Africa is the most religious place on earth (Bonk 2013, vii; Ajani 2014, 182; Fatokun 2013, 12). This assertion is not without basis. Christianity's stupendous growth to over 667 million, or 49% of the overall population, has already been noted. For their parts, Muslims have grown to 562 million (42%), with Ethnic religionists (practitioners of African Traditional Religion) making up the remainder (Zurlo 2022, 6). An atheistic or non-religious African is practically an oxymoron.

As for Christianity, its numerical growth has not been matched by adequate leadership training. Some are concerned that the deficiency has led to growing syncretism and schism (Cairns 1996, 522). Nihinlola illustrates Cairn's claims by reporting that teaching on the kingdom of God, which is supposed to be the epicenter of the gospel, has been largely compromised in many places in Africa. He explains that African preachers are deviating from the true gospel. Instead of focusing on the life-transforming gospel of redemption, those preachers are preoccupied with other gospels that celebrate physical and material achievement, money, and pleasure. Nihinlola concludes that many African religious activities are primarily utilitarian (Nihinlola 2020, 3).

Such an assessment amplifies Dairo's assessment that, in many parts of Africa, "marketing" God has become a top bracket business. Religion has become the "food basket of the nation" in which market value is attached to everything being done. Dairo has lamented, "One would have thought that religion and the invisible Almighty God would have been an exception to the bargain, but a greater percentage of churches are no more than business centers where sellers and buyers of the special services make a bargain" (Dairo 2010, 195). Indeed, the level of gospel commercialization in Africa is disturbing. This article shares the sentiment of Philip Barnes that gospel preaching in Africa is like rat poison that damages the spiritual health of individuals and churches, slanderous to the purity of Christ's bride, and dishonors to God and Jesus Christ (Barnes 2021, 2).

Yaw Adu-Gwamfi has observed that, like ancient Israel, Africa is in theological crisis. Adu-Gwamfi claims that African Christianity's theological problems manifest in doctrinal and doctrinal aberrations built on deficient prophetic movements characterized by ministers with questionable lifestyles. He adds that there are unbalanced emphases on signs and wonder in many parts of Africa, Christian doctrine based on personal experience of the preacher rather than the Bible, seeking deliverance from spiritual bondage through exorcism instead of repentance, and fixation on prosperity theology. He laments that, paradoxically, there are so many churchgoers without disciples of Jesus in Africa (Adu-Gwamfi 2020, 11). Several other authors have expressed similar concerns about the state of Christianity in Africa (Ango 2020, 37-50; Familuyi 2019, 384; Iheanacho 2009, 104-117; Olaniyan and Okunlola 2020, 159-161). They note that doctrinal differences, liberalism, globalism, and postmodernism are some of the challenges African Christianity faces. The above picture places significant missiological demands on the church in Africa.

Missiological Implications of Pietism for African Christianity

African Christianity must prioritize biblical preaching and teaching in churches and homes. A growing phenomenon in Africa is the emergence of motivational speaking. In many parts of Africa, people who pretend to be sophists create blends of popular psychology with light or heavy doses of biblical quotations to create motivational speeches. Many such speakers claim to be Christians and have been erroneously ordained into pastorates. While one is not averse to what is touted as wisdom, a cursory look at many of such speeches reveals that they focus on immediate material benefits such as making money and living comfortable lives. They shift the believer's focus from eternity with God. That was one of the reasons Germany became religiously arid before Pietism. Many have wondered why Christianity spreads so much with relatively little impact on Africa. Part of the reason is that biblical preaching has been replaced with motivational speeches. Upholding the authority of the Bible and adhering to its teachings is one major need of African Christians (Adu-Gwanfi 2020, 23). Doing so demands proper interpretation, the correct connection between application and context, and being able to distinguish between what the Bible describes and what it prescribes. The Bible must be returned to its central place, where it is taught as the final authority for life and daily decisions.

African Christians must also emphasize the ethical demands of Christianity on believers. This emphasis should be a significant corollary to the above. When the Bible is taught as the final authority for daily living, it must place ethical demands on the believers. That was what Spener espoused in Germany. The gospel is not just what God has accomplished in Christ; it also includes God's expectations on every aspect of a believer's daily life. A gospel that places no ethical demand on the believer cannot transform society. The rot in public spaces and civil services is not perpetuated by unbelievers alone. Many aiders and abettors of corruption are people who are either "Christian" in name, speak in tongues for public display, or hold Christian religious titles. Those Christiains who will transform society must be made to conform to Christ by renewing their minds. Such renewal must manifest in ethical changes. The church must teach society the value of living the good life for the benefit of everyone. Believers are to model for society the principles of ethical living. Those who teach in educational institutions must participate in building acceptable behaviors and speak against the ills in society. Religious rites must translate into positive community living. There must be no dichotomy between church morality and daily living.

African Christians must take their Christian faith as salt and light into public spaces. Bediako has observed that missionary education in most African countries led to the emergence of African nationalists (Bediako 2000, 97). Such men brought their influence to bear on public service and administration. The present generation of African believers must also take their beliefs and ethical values into the public arena and apply them to critical social issues (Reken 1999, 200). These assertions show that, while Christianity is also a private and personal faith, Jesus taught that believers are to serve as the light of the world. Moreover, Jesus expects that, as a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, believers should not hide their light from the public arena. Jesus expressly indicated that, when a light shines, it is placed where it gives light to everyone. By these teachings, Jesus demands that the life changes in private homes must go into public spaces.

Ajayi has argued that one of the reasons for the failure of Christianity in making the desired impact on society was that, while early missionaries in West Africa concentrated on teaching

people catechism and saying the mass, their Muslim counterparts were regular men in the market, conducting businesses and becoming deeply involved in daily social engagements (Ayaji 1965, 2-4). Hence, the Muslim scholar substantially impacted society more than the Christian missionary. Unfortunately, one observes with concern that Christians are increasingly uninvolved in their societies in many parts of Africa. Many Christians want to become vocational pastors, leaving the market and civil service in the hands of non-Christians. If the trend will be reversed, African Christians should live out their convictions in offices, schools, markets, and everywhere. That kind of societal involvement was what the Moravians demonstrated. They transformed their faith into a missionary force. They took their faith into their daily engagements and won their world for the Lord. Similarly, African Christians should be able to bring their transforming Christian influences to bear on the entire society. That was what Pietists did in Europe. Specifically, Christians must be involved in the political processes, as demonstrated by leaders like Desmond Tutu in South Africa and church leaders in Kenya in the struggle for political pluralism (Bediako 2000, 106-107). The goal is not to create a Christendom but to bring Christian conviction from a distinctively African perspective into nationhood.

African Christians must invest in deliberate missionary enterprises focused on both soul-winning and societal transformation. There is no reason to assume that Africa will break loose from the cycles of poverty, backwardness, and insecurity in her own strength. It requires the missional intervention of African Christians. The church must face the geopolitical realities through the gospel of renewal (Ojo 2011, 87). Mana advocated for the kind of evangelization that creates innovative societies and personalities (Mana 2002, 84). Thus, African Christians must invest in an evangelistic intervention that addresses socio-economic and political challenges as well as promotes meaningful connection between spirituality and every aspect of human life. Society is transformed as individuals are transformed and are incorporated into new churches (Vajko 2011).

As can be deduced from the story of the Pietists, the missiological implication of a transformed life demands that those who have experienced the gospel's transforming power must show it to others. Hence, they became involved in what coalesced into the Protestant missionary movement of the nineteenth century. Looking back, African believers have had a significant impact on African nationalism. Christianity led to the emergence of new elites, who led toward social and political transformation in many African countries (Ayaji 1965). In the 1990s, Christians were involved in active political processes in several parts of Africa. However, much of that activity ended in charade (Ojo 2011, 80-81). At the moment, African Christians must focus on the prophetic mandate of confronting evil in society through evangelistic preaching and teaching. They must also widen their scopes of activities to include witnessing to the economic and social arena. Interestingly, the Church has the answer in the Bible to most of the challenges bedeviling the continent (Ojo 2011, 83). Furthermore, by their number, Africa's many churches, through their witness, can significantly impact public morality and promote values such as accountability, discipline, diligence, and transparency.

African Christians must invest in leadership development for public places. One of the blistering challenges facing African Christianity is the dearth of authentic leadership in public places. African nations are deficient in exemplary, honest, purposeful, and sacrificial leadership. He argued that leaders who model Christian faith, biblical obedience, and true discipleship are in great need for the transformation of African society (Nihinlola 2020, 4).

Furthermore, the Church must promote values such as accountability, transparency, and diligence, which will impact individual lives and governance (Ojo 2011, 84). The challenges of lack of unity, prosperity, and lack of development should not be seen as needing to be handled by only a select few (Ayankeye and Odeleye 2017, 1). These are collective concerns of all Africans, including Christians. Sadly, many African Christians erroneously believe that politics is a dirty game. They adopt the keep-free-from-politics attitude. Hence, they huddle in churches, scrambling for church positions. Some will even resign their jobs in public spaces to become full-time church workers or vocational pastors. This approach is at variance with the declaration of the Second Vatican Council, which noted that a breach between faith and socio-political involvement is one of the most significant errors of this generation (Pope Paul VI 1965). It is a mistake for believers to think that they should shirk their responsibilities because they do not have a lasting city on earth. Such an attitude is a betrayal of their commitment to the One who created heaven and the earth. Even so, because of a lack of leadership training many African Christians do not know what to do in high offices. They have not been prepared for it. Christian discipleship has not been integrative enough. Hence many African Christians do not understand the Siamese relationship between daily Christian living and political involvement. Nihinlola suggests that Africa needs good leadership in both church and society. He postulates that one way to develop such leadership is for theological educators to embody and exemplify principled, godly, Christ-centered, and servant leadership, serving as role models to learners who will, in turn, offer Christian service and leadership with transformative impact on African society (Nihonlola 2020, 4). Bediako believes that, while Africa is not likely to produce a new Christendom, it must witness to the gospel, live in joy, and strive for peace, justice, and democratic freedom for all. He adds that Christian evangelization and nurture are essential elements in the process whereby a society's outlook, value system, thought patterns, and socio-political arrangement are permeated by the mind of Christ (Bediako 2000, 106). In other words, Christian discipleship in Africa must include leadership development and competence building for public service. Christians must be intentionally trained to combine their academic training with Christian values that can transform the workplace. African Christians must be helped to see involvement in politics and other policy formulation positions as a missionary task.

Conclusion

One of Africa Christianity's many challenges is the disconnect between religious experience and daily living. Many Christians in Africa are Christians only when they are in a religious gathering. Skeptical observers from virtually every part of the continent call into question Christians' claim of calling themselves light and salt of the earth. The kind of Christianity popular on the continent seems to be grossly utilitarian. It either aids or abets the rot in society.

This article has sought to show that the disconnect between religion and daily living in Africa is not without precedence. A similar situation in Lutheran Germany provided the background for the emergence of Pietism. African Christians must emphasize biblical preaching and ethical demands of the gospel, take the gospel to public spaces, invest in missionary ventures, and develop leaders for the public places.

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Call for Papers:

"Christian Persecution and Suffering"

For Publication in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2023

The October 2023 issue of *Global Missiology* - *English* will take up a theme of increasing importance and worldwide relevance, "Christian Persecution and Suffering." The following topics are examples of requested articles:

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- Missiological Analysis

Proposed titles with approximately 100-word abstracts are due January 31, 2023. Full manuscripts of approved paper proposals will be due June 30, 2023. Manuscript guidelines, including a template for formatting, can be found on the *Global Missiology* website at http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/about/submissions#authorGuidelines.

Please address all submissions and questions to globalmissiologyenglish@gmail.com.

Book Review

Warrick Farah, ed., *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*

Reviewed by Dasan Jeyaraj

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Farah, Warrick, ed. (2021). *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*. William Carey Publishing, 376 pp., $26.99 paperback, $9.99 e-book, ISBN: 9781645083481, 1645083489.

Introduction

Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations was edited by Warrick Farah and published by William Carey Publishing. David Coles, James Lucas, and Jonathan Andrews were the Associate Editors. This compiled volume has five parts and 22 chapters. It is a compendium that investigates and documents how God is using movements to advance Christ's kingdom across the world. The writers acknowledge being part of a "learning community" (22) and that there continue to exist some "tensions and contradictions" (25) in their perspectives.

This useful volume presents research findings on several movements of God in the last 30 years. It covers 1,400 movements that have led to the formation of 80 million disciples, primarily among unreached people groups (UPGs) in Asia, Africa, and the African diaspora in Europe. These disciples constitute one percent of the global population of 7.8 billion.

Motus Dei, meaning the movement of God, can take on many names: Disciple Making Movement, Kingdom Movement, People Movement, and Church planting Movement, to name a few. The missional term of colonial days—Mass Movement (as termed by Waskom Pickett)—is not used. The conversation around "movements" is ongoing and is in the process of maturing, even as its definition continues to evolve. When we examine movements, no single person or theory sufficiently answers all the questions around it. It is the collective work of God's people, with God. This volume, in a way, embodies the characteristics of the movement itself—of learning together, and moving together with God. Several of the researched movements place importance on the "household" (*oikos)* unit, four-generational church planting (where one church plant leads to the other), and a "person of peace" in the initiation process.

Summary

Warrick Farah speaks of Motus Dei against the context of the world, pointing out that the world's unevangelized population grows by around 70,000 people every day, contributing to the massive expansion of the global unreached population year on year. He traces the early church's history and finds that Motus Dei has not always flourished—in some instances it declined over time, and in some cases completely died out. Early movements were not characterized by organized evangelism and church multiplication strategies but a Christ-like, counter-cultural lifestyle against the context of suffering and persecution. These movements are known for transcending boundaries and unifying the diverse. The author advocates for the unlearning of unbiblical doctrines, traditions, and practices, that many have been picked up along the way. To facilitate a movement, new believers should be able to remain within their pre-conversion social context, and the emergence of the church must reflect its location within a particular cultural framework. However, discipleship is necessary in these movements and it consists of "Orthodoxy (correct belief), Orthopraxy (correct behavior) and Orthopathy (correct

feeling)" (51). In this process, context and traditional ecclesiology must remain in creative tension. Farah's research is quite extensive and well done.

Samuel Kebreab presents the Motus Dei in Africa among the Yoma people. By learning the principles of Motus Dei, Kebreab bounced from a discouraging situation to seeing 5,672 Christ-followers from 364 villages, reaching people previously "unreached" by and "unengaged" with the gospel. According to Kebreab: i) miraculous signs are important, ii) ordinary people need to be used, iii) one's approach must be holistic—love, compassion, healing, and deliverance must also be complemented with clean water, providing seeds, better health, better education, and skill development, and iv) compassion ministry allows access into communities. He states these practices are not only effective but also inexpensive.

David Coles discusses eight theological and missiological objections among the general populace to the Motus Dei. He addresses these objections in the light of scripture, mission history, and contemporary missiological trends. God's kingdom is advancing among the least reached groups, and those who profess the faith are also beginning to proclaim the gospel. Only time will tell how these movements will reflect God's kingdom.

Gene Daniels speaks of Kingdom Movements among Muslims, which pose a challenge to researchers in terms of verifiability. Daniels employs the example of early church movements and the growth of Christianity in China—both of which remain unverifiable—to inspire trust in the movement among Muslims.

Justin D. Long addresses the question of how we can count movements by analyzing the United States. He counters accusations of an overcount of the number of movements in the U.S. and argues instead that the opposite may be true.

Part II provides the theological grounding for movements. David S. Lim claims that God's plan is "kingdomization" and not "Christianization" (121). It can be achieved by ordinary people without significant financial investment. This is a response against traditional, investment-oriented methods that employ highly-trained missionaries. He identifies six characteristics of such kingdomization movements.

Craig Ott traces theological foundations from movements in the book of Acts. Pointing out that the gospel spread rapidly, churches were planted and grew, and whole regions were reached, Ott suggests learning from these dynamics to facilitate movements. Miracles are necessary even today, and the message and messenger remain unchanged. He presents four case studies: Jerusalem; Judea, Samaria, and Syria; Pisidian Antioch; and Ephesus. There will be opposition and we have to face it.

Trevor Larsen identifies the patterns of Ekklesia Movements on the basis of the New Testament. Larsen examines their birth and development through three lenses: Jesus Band, Disciples' communities of the spirit, and social dynamics. The underlying principle is the "imitation" of Jesus and Paul (162). Ekklesia Movements are living, growing and expanding. They are not static—Jesus is building the Ekklesia.

Michael T. Copper discusses the basis for the first-century movements from the Johannine gospel. Accordingly, to see movements happen today workers are to pray, fast, use missiological exegesis (culture, history, and ethnic particularities), and connect Jesus to the culture. This process will lead to indigenous church planting movements. James Lucas studies the Luke-Acts narratives and discovers the stories of the "people of peace" (199), where the house (*oikos*) plays a major role in reaching people and building momentum for movements.

Part III examines the dynamics of movements. Steve Addison studies the rationale for the rise and fall of movements, tracing seven characteristics. A movement's rise or fall hinges on our faithfulness to the core missionary task assigned to us. Movements cannot stand still—we must not be complacent in the face of warning signs. Paul Arlund and Regina Foard contend that women play an equal role in the multiplication of movements. Their cultural intelligence must be recognized, and they need to be involved in key decision-making processes. Women are igniting multiplication movements and leading in those movements all over the world. Paul Kuivinen argues that "ethnodoxology"—"the expression of " as well as "the study of " ethnic Scripture-based songs and other art forms (251)—plays an important role in the multiplication of movements. It helps along movements among oral learners and engages the culture, language, and history of people. Ethondoxology (261) does not alienate anybody. It may not initiate a movement, but it will help existing movements. Frank Preston emphasizes the media as a valuable asset to church planting. John Wesley's Methodist movement was built on the seventeenth-century usage of media. Media has also been put to great use during the Covid pandemic. The key here is to use media personnel, who constitute a form of lay leadership, to build momentum. Bradley Cocanower and Joao Mordomo' s work on North African migrants and asylum seekers to Europe employs the term "Terra Nova" (meaning "new land") in referring to the nearly two million-strong diaspora. They reiterate that we can see movements of God when we recognize that we are "blessed to be a blessing" (285).

Part IV lists case studies of movements from Kenya, India, and Thailand. The case study of Kenya is particularly interesting. Aila Tasse and L Michael Corley discovered that in East Africa 12,555 churches have been planted, and 271,695 disciples have been reached, within a short span of 15 years. Victor John and Dave Coles studied the Bhojpuri people in India. Signs, wonders, and miracles are key, although the focus must remain on gospel preaching. John and Coles suggest that the normative "payment and titles of ministry" can hinder movements (326). The study of movements among Thai Buddhists—where we might least expect a movement to take place—is quite fascinating. Stephen Bailey, Dwight Martin, and Pastor Somsak have facilitated the movement with ordinary believers and simple methods. They did not find traditional western Christian practices to be an obstacle; however, they do not force people to come to church. The indigenous believers are given freedom to decide on their cultural practices, including ancestral rituals and religious practices. In Algeria and Iran, 80 movements were identified by Rania Mostofi and Patrick Brittenden. However, they also recognize that second generation Christians are struggling and face difficulty in taking this momentum forward.

Part V spans two areas: leadership and the paradigm shift of Christian growth from an organizational orientation to one of movements. Right leadership is a key, believes Emamuel Prinz. People are indispensable, not methods and curriculum. Eric and Laura Adams outline nine practices for "Movement Thinking": pray, learn, partner, evaluate, display faith publicly, widen contacts, listen to God, obey God, and empower leaders (397).

Reflection

Motus Dei is an excellently researched book for evangelists, missionaries, pastors, missiologists, and anyone interested in mission principles and praxis. It offers biblical, historical, and theological grounding and presents case studies from around the world. This volume is a must-read for serious mission practioners. It points to excellent missiological references, and students of missiology will benefit from it.

The writers recognize context, history, social dynamics, biblical narratives, theology, and missiology when they study a movement. Hence these studies have not been conducted in silos.

The writers also reflect their awareness of the perspectives and viewpoints of other writers. The chapters are thus not simply the opinions of some 25-plus authors without connection to one another. They are interwoven and interlinked. However, the editor Farah recognizes the studies' limitations. The movements examined have not reached the maturing stage, and conflicts and contradictions exist.

Part II of the book, addressing biblical and theological foundations, are superb studies that advocate for a return to scripture. However, the authors appear to be fixated on calculations and statistics. Such an emphasis begs the question: did Jesus place importance on numbers? Jesus and Paul wanted everyone to hear the gospel. The preoccupation with numbers has not been welcomed even among many Evangelicals and fundamentalists, let alone Ecumenicals. Some go to the extent of positing the statistical focus as a North American phenomenon.

A quantitative orientation also comes with distinct challenges. Chapter 3 presents the findings from a Likert Scale survey through mean values. This choice effaces the specificity of the respondents' categorical agreement and disagreement. These findings would have better been reported as proportions in order appropriately to convey the relative degree of agreement, or lack thereof, on the objections studied.

The case studies are well-documented and point to what God is doing around the world. They offer good models to emulate, but the question remains: if the models have worked among the Africans and Asians, why have they failed among secularized Europeans and Australians? God is the same, and if we claim to use universal biblical principles then it is worth examining why corresponding models have worked in some places and not others.

In the history of Christianity, we see both successes and challenges. While the faith was rejected in the land of its birth, it triumphed in the North African and European contexts. Barring the countries where the Greek philosophical tradition was strong, most European countries had what we call animistic or primitive faiths. This is also true of South American countries, the Philippines, the islands of Oceania, and pockets of Indonesia and East Timor. For example, we read about the movement in India among Bhojpuri people. Even today, 70-80 per cent of Indian Christians are from so-called primitive faiths, or belong to socially marginalized sects. Aloysius Pieris, a Roman Catholic theologian, claims that Christianity has not made inroads where there is a presence of "Meta-cosmic Soteriology" (Pieris 1988, 8-16). God's ways and works are mysterious, a reality that must affect any missiological perspective.

The aim of missional movements must be to achieve "true discipleship," and Coles' chapter claims that this is taking place. However, one must exercise caution in defining "true discipleship." In the Thai context, believers continue their religious rituals until they choose not to. If this same model of believers continuing to observe religious rituals were applied to India, several millions of Indians could be considered Christians. Hindus have no problem with this ideology of both following Jesus and observing their respective religious/social rituals, and insider movements would grow among both Muslims and Hindus. Such a process would eventually lead to both syncretism and pluralism. Can we encourage such movements? There are no easy answers.

The house churches "oikos" movement is a model we can directly adopt from Jesus Christ. Gathering in homes is a good starting point. However, Asian countries are filled with temples, pagodas, gurudwaras, mosques, and many other religious structures. Coming to Christ from these religious milieu, followers of Jesus find it extremely difficult to worship in houses. They do not necessarily need cathedrals, but they desire a neutral space where they can come together irrespective of caste, creed, and color. Oikos is a good beginning, but it cannot always be maintained in the long run.

Funding for movements is a contentious issue, and many authors have discussed it. We need to identify the relative strengths and shortcomings of different practices and workshop ways to overcome challenges. The suggestion from some authors that movements should be purely locally funded appears reductive and needs discussion.

The great merit of this research is that it is contemporary, practical, and easily relatable. However, the bulk of researchers appear to be from the West, or have been trained in the Western tradition. The majority of the books and articles cited were produced in the West. Is there a way to empower the locals who initiated movements to reflect and produce their own narratives? We don't have much research on the movement in China, emerging without external influence, but movement of God in China exists nonetheless. This Chinese example presents an interesting opportunity: how does a movement begin, seemingly unprompted? Another question to explore concerns those movements initiated by someone from the Global South without any Western influence, for example the West African Harris Movement in the early twentieth century.

Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations is a great read. I find this book extremely useful both for my teaching and missional practices. It is an instructive tool for anyone interested in knowing the way God works, and it is a great tool and resource for churches, foundations, and missiologists who want to know about "Motus Dei."

References

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Book Review

Devdutt Pattanaik, *Eden: An Indian Exploration of Jewish, Christian and Islamic Lore*

Reviewed by J. N. Manokaran

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, October 2022

Pattanaik, Devdutt (2021). *Eden: An Indian Exploration of Jewish, Christian and Islamic Lore*. Indian Penguin, 312 pp., ₹599.00 / $24.88 paperback, ISBN: 9780670095407.

Devdutt Pattanaik is a writer, author, lecturer, and illustrator who focuses on the relevance of mythology in modern times. He has authored over 50 books, is a leadership trainer, and works as a TV anchor on numerous programs.

According to Pattanaik, the world of religions can be divided into two: the Abrahamic faiths and others—or monotheism and polytheism. In this book Pattanaik explores the former category, consisting of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths. The book has a dozen chapters. Pattanaik also brings into focus the commonalities between religions; however, he does not explain the distinctiveness or uniqueness of each religious tradition.

For a person who is not aware of the Bible's contents, the book's first nine chapters give a helpful introductory overview. Pattanaik summarizes Eden, the Fall, Abraham's migration from Mesopotamia, the Egyptian slavery, the Exodus, settlement in the Promised Land, the Exile in Babylon, and the Gospels. The book also has a chapter on Islam. Later developments of Christianity and Islam have their own separate chapters as well.

The author gives engaging narratives derived from the Bible, Jewish writings and oral traditions, and Christian writings and oral traditions. Human beings love stories, and the narratives of various religions have shaped the worldview of millions throughout history. Accordingly, Pattanaik's style of writing would appeal to young readers. The illustrations are also interesting and helpful, having been done by the author himself.

The Introduction is about the monotheistic traditions. The author connects the immigration that happened in ancient India: "The immigrants eventually became landowners (Kshatriyas), landless labourers (Shudra) or craftsmen and traders (Vaishya). None became Brahmins, though many Abrahamic communities of India claim to have descended from Brahmins" (xv). Furthermore, "Exposure to Abrahamic mythology via trade routes explains why the concept of a future messiah also manifests as Maitreya, the future teacher in Buddhist lore, and Kalki, Vishnu's future avatar in Hindu lore" (xv). Fast-forwarding to modern times, Pattanaik explains how the worldviews of the West and East were diametrically opposite, despite ancient interaction through immigration: "The rise of the British Empire about 300 years ago introduced Indians to ideas of liberty, equality and justice. This was at odds with Hindu ideas of karmic bondage, caste and wheel of rebirths, and made the educated class defensive of Hindu customs and beliefs" (xv).

The author clearly has a postmodernist worldview: "It is now clear that myth is somebody's truth, distinct from everyone's truth, i.e., measurable truth (fact) and nobody's truth (fiction). Some myths like rebirth and God are traditional, inherited over generations. Others like the nation and human rights are contemporary and ideological" (xvii). This pluralistic understanding leads to the mistaken conclusion that myths or history do not matter. Postmodernism seems to overlook the fact that values are merely subjective and not objective. The author reinforces that notion of

religion's subjective usefulness by noting, "Science, secularism and postmodern thinking have overpowered religion in many areas but have not been able to provide the comfort religion does to the meek and the suffering" (xiv).

Also according to Pattanaik, God can never be historical; belief in God remains a matter of faith. The following comments may rattle believers of the Abrahamic faiths: "Religions are based on faith. Science is based on doubt. Religions often claim that they are perfect and cannot improve. Science keeps improving over time, with better measuring and analytical tools, and more evidence" (xvii).

Commenting about truth: "Indian religions like Buddhism seek to end suffering. Chinese philosophies focus on order and harmony. In other words, the quest for 'the' truth is not a universal one" (xvii). The search for finding God or the meaning and purpose of life are not included. Indeed, Pattanaik fails to see how the religious search that begins with man as the centre, and not God, is a central flaw in non-Abrahamic religions.

The author claims that "For centuries Christians hated the Jewish people and saw them as Christ-killers" (xx). He also claims that "Islamophobia, the structural and systemic hatred of Muslims, began with Crusades" (xxi). Pattanaik further asserts that, prior to the Crusades, there was no anti-Semitism in India: "In India, while there was no anti-Semitism, there was little curiosity about the Jewish tales. Synagogues were often confused with the Parsi fire temples and mosques" (xxi).

Pattanaik notes how Christian missionaries have translated their Bible into almost all languages. "Abrahamic lore clearly values the textual over the oral. So, it constantly refers to 'People of the Book'" (xxv). Related is how literacy began about 5000 years ago in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization.

The book explains the Hindu idea that God contains the world, and the world contains God. In the Abrahamic worldview, "All things were created from God's word. But Adam was created from God's hand" (12). In Islamic lore: Adam was the first of 124,000 prophets. "In Jewish lore, Eve gave the fruit to all animals and birds. Only the phoenix refused to eat it and so was blessed with eternal life" (17). According to Hindu lore: the first man is Manu and so all humans are called Manavas, the children of Manu.

Regarding the Tower of Babel, "God saw it and realized that people need to look at each other more than they look at the sky" (31). Ziggurat was an excuse to unite the kingdom around the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in a single tongue. The confusion of languages brought 72 languages into the world, though the number is not mentioned in the Bible.

"The gods, the people of these cities believed, created humans out of clay just as humans created idols out of clay" (33). Terah was an idol maker and idol worshipper—but as he carried idols on a cart, they fell to the ground and could not fix themselves. Terah's son Abram wondered who God is by wondering, "A star cannot be a god, because it disappears; so does sun." Hence, God spoke with him. Abram a city dweller became a nomad with no land to his name,n inspired by his faith. Some think Abraham comes from Brahma and Sara comes from Saraswathi.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed due to homosexuality. The author writes that Shiva also destroyed three magical flying cities (Tripura) with a single arrow. Pattanaik also notes, "Ismael would taunt Isaac that he was a lesser man as his covenant was involuntary, forced upon him when

he was just a baby" (45). Also, "Abraham helped Ishmael rebuild Kabah, the first mosque built by Adam, which was now in ruins" (47). According to Pattanaik's narrative, Abraham placed a black stone there, originally transparent when it came from Eden, but now black due to the sins of man.

Jacob was born circumcised, while Esau was born in filth. The idea of brothers fighting for inheritance is found in Hindu mythology, for example in such epics as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Abraham died and the funeral meal was being prepared by Jacob. Esau sold his birth right for the meal without regards for the sacred ritual. Jacob's ladder had seven rungs according to legends, which mirrors the tantric concept. In Buddhism, heaven is the abode of 330 million gods and a ladder connects paradise to the earth.

Again by Pattanaik's reporting, Potiphar's wife name was Zulekha. Joseph's garment on his back was torn, not his front hence, so Potiphar knew Joseph was innocent. Actually, however, Potiphar's wife's name is not mentioned in the Bible.

"All Pharaohs spent their lives preparing to enter the afterlife, a world without flood, without the desert, without hunger, without fear" (78). Pharoah's wife Asiya did not have a child, so she adopted Moses. Because he was circumcised, she knew he was a Hebrew child. The Bible, however, mentions the one who adopted Moses as Pharaoh's daughter.

Pattanaik goes on by describing how the Israelites were liberated from Egypt but wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. "People assumed it was because of the short route had garrisons of Egyptians soldiers who could arrest them if the pharaoh changed his mind" (87). A mindset change needs a generation, hence the extended period of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

The author makes many other striking claims. "Monotheistic religions demand submission to the word and so its counter, dissent, and rebellion, remains a consistent theme in Abrahamic lore. The obedient sheep is venerated, not the disobedient goat" (96).

"It is similar to the concept of arajakta (mayhem) that follows when a land has no raja (king)" (121). The nation of Israel also needed a king. Saul was the first king. David defeated Goliath, which has become a universal story of a fight between unequals. David was made an outlaw by the envious King Saul, then he became of leader of outlaws. Later, David emerges as a powerful king.

The Babylonian exile, building of second temple, and teachings of the prophets are also covered well.

The life, ministry, miracles, and teaching of the Lord Jesus are presented in a comprehensive and concise manner. "A parable is instructive. Unlike the myth, it does not create a world view but assumes a world view" (185).

The author writes, "The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem mirrors the triumphant entry of Krishna into Mathura" (187). The trial, death, resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ is explained.

The author is a great storyteller. He has conducted comprehensive research on all three religions and presented that research in an engaging style of writing. Should not Christian writers present the Bible is such an exciting way for all readers? Pattanaik has indicated that the book is exploration, which he has done well. This is a good book worth reading. However, the prerogative of knowing the truth and conducting further research rests on the readers.