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THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

*Evangelism and Social Action
in Pentecostal Missiology*

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Introduction

The global explosion of Pentecostalism owes much of its success to an urgent evangelism that has defined the movement since its birth in the early twentieth century.¹ However, as many have noted, Pentecostals were slow to develop the theological foundations for their missionary work because this was always secondary to missionary praxis. In reality, Pentecostal mission history tells a slightly more complex story. Pentecostal mission theology from early on centered on the twin themes of an urgency for world evangelism and a Spirit-led indigeneity. That is, its early missiology was not without theological grounding but from the beginning was interwoven with practical concerns related to evangelism and church planting. Today, Pentecostal missiology has largely moved away from this narrower view of mission in order to adopt a broader perspective.

Alice E. Luce's series of essays in *The Pentecostal Evangel* in 1921 represented an important early step in defining the essence of Pentecostal missiology.² Luce herself had been influenced by Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods*, first published in 1912 (though

¹ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 3.

² Luce, a pioneer in correspondence education, had first been a British missionary to India before becoming a missionary to Spanish-speaking Americans. Alice Luce, "Paul's Missionary Methods," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (January 8, 22, and February 5, 1921); Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 245; Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, vol. 1 (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 316.

she admits to recalling the book but not the name of its author). The writings of both Luce and Allen would prove influential in the work of Melvin Hodges—an Assemblies of God missionary to Latin America and one of the most important early missiologists to come from within Pentecostalism. His work *The Indigenous Church*, first published in 1953, would lay the theoretical foundation for Assemblies of God World Missions, in which he served for decades to come.³ Hodges's work emphasized church planting and evangelism as the heart of missionary enterprise. For Hodges, the goal of missions was "to establish a strong church patterned after the New Testament example."⁴ And, in accord with Roland Allen, Hodges declared that "in order to have a New Testament church, we must follow New Testament methods."⁵ At the center of that method was a profound trust in the Holy Spirit's ability to form local, indigenous expressions of the church, but only if missionaries would increasingly step into the background and eventually remove themselves from the process once local leadership was in place.⁶

It would not be until the 1991 publication of the highly influential work *Called and Empowered*, edited by Murray Dempster, Douglas Peterson, and Byron Klaus (all of whom had close ties to Pentecostal missionary efforts in Latin America), that the groundwork laid by Hodges would begin to shift.⁷ The impact that *Called and Empowered* made on Pentecostal missiology cannot be overstated. This text has given rise to a plethora of Pentecostal missiologies seeking to move beyond what some consider the naivete

³ Gary B. McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 1 (1998): 20–24; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission," in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, ed. Wansuk Ma et al. (Oxford, UK: Regnum, 2014), 29–30.

⁴ Melvin Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (1953; repr. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2009), 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth, 2006), 149–50.

⁷ Kärkkäinen, "The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission," 30.

of the early movement and to do so by advocating variously for liberationist motifs, holistic paradigms, and greater appreciation for religious plurality.⁸ These important works that have followed and built on *Called and Empowered* include those by Amos Yong, Julie Ma and Wansuk Ma, and Andy Lord especially.⁹ Not only have these shifts taken place in academia, but the fundamentals of these various holistic perspectives have filtered their way into many expressions of Pentecostal missiology. For example, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, a cooperative of Pentecostal denominations from thirty-three countries, as of January 2020 has adopted a broadly holistic approach to mission that appears to embody many of the concerns expressed in these new Pentecostal missiologies.¹⁰ In other words, these developments have moved beyond theory and now can be considered central to the practice of Pentecostal missions in a number of places around the globe.

My central thesis in this book is that these shifts represent a turning away from the inherent genius intuited by early Pentecostal missionaries who held tightly to the priority of proclamation even as they engaged in social action in a multiplicity of ways. They did so neither because early Pentecostals were oblivious to the need and importance of social justice nor blind to the liberating work of Christ or the holistic nature of salvation; neither were they ignorant of the need for genuine dialogue with those of other faiths. Instead, they held these things in tension with an abiding

⁸ Murray Dempster et al., *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1991).

⁹ See especially Amos Yong, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology in the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014); Amos Yong, *Mission after Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019); Andrew Lord, *Network Church: A Pentecostal Ecclesiology Shaped by Mission* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012); Andrew Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Theology* (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2005); Julie C. Ma and Wansuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010); Ma et al., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*.

¹⁰ Pentecostal World Fellowship, "Pentecostal Development Partner's Summit," January 2020.

commitment to the fact that evangelism was the first-order work of the church because it alone constituted the church's unique role in the world. And so even as early Pentecostals engaged in compassionate missions in places like West Africa, Latin America, and India through clinics, orphanages, and education programs, they did so always with one eye fixed firmly on the eschatological horizon of scripture, longing for a world made right and whole through the advent of Christ at which time would also come the judgment of the world. Their concern to see lost humanity escape the coming eschatological judgment provided the urgency that characterized the movement. Beyond that, early Pentecostals began to realize that the best version of any local church would emerge only if missionaries focused on training and equipping by stepping increasingly into the background, so that the Spirit would lead local believers to develop local expressions of the church. This belief, as already indicated, was deeply rooted in the notions of indigeneity promoted by Allen, Luce, and Hodges. In other words, a truly Pentecostal approach to missionary activity was embodied in these early theologies of missions emphasizing evangelism and church planting because they also emphasized that both of these efforts were ultimately the work of the Spirit.

My argument here centers on a key misstep among those who seek to move beyond this early and effective paradigm, a misstep that assumes, along with much of contemporary missiology, that missions must be broad or narrow but cannot be both. In the current literature the narrow sense of missions is often relegated (at least implicitly) to the narrow-minded.¹¹ This is evident in the constant calls (with which I will engage throughout this book) for newer, better, more mature paradigms of Pentecostal mission and in the general assessment that missionaries have only recently awakened to the holistic implications of the gospel. This is of course absurd, for the very notion of the Pentecostal "Full Gospel"

¹¹ Throughout this text I use the term *mission* primarily to refer to all that God is doing in the world, or to the broad sense of mission; and I use the term *missions* to refer specifically to cross-cultural evangelism and church planting.

that emphasized physical healing alongside spiritual renewal was deeply rooted in a holistic understanding of salvation. The practical wisdom that caused Pentecostal missionary outreach to flourish was precisely that it knew that each paradigm—the broad and the narrow senses of missions—had its place, and that eternal matters always outweighed temporal ones.

A NUANCED APPROACH

It seems fitting to me that I should preface my discussion of Pentecostal missions with a testimony of the sort that once was a sustaining force of Pentecostalism. I came to Christ in my early thirties through the ministry of Teen Challenge—a discipleship ministry that has been historically loosely associated with the Assemblies of God and that aims to help those struggling with addictions. It was not until a decade or so later, when I had become a missionary with the Assemblies of God, that I discovered that within Pentecostalism there existed a rift between advocates of social concern and those who prioritized evangelistic and church planting efforts. My initial reaction was one of dismay. Of course we should preach the gospel *and* we should help those who are suffering. Why would anyone question either of these notions?

But as I began to study the issue academically, my position began to shift, and I came to value and appreciate the need for theological precision in articulating how evangelism and social concern should relate to one another. Early on in my career as a missionary, I stood firmly in the holism camp. In fact, I began my doctoral dissertation with the goal of defending that position and showing inconsistencies in the theology of Carl F. H. Henry on the subject of precisely how evangelism and social concern relate.¹² Henry, known especially for his treatise *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, chastised fundamentalism (a movement

¹² Jerry M. Ireland, *Evangelism and Social Concern in the Theology of Carl F. H. Henry* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

to which he had close ties) for its knee-jerk reaction to liberal theology and abandonment of social action.¹³

In that study I discovered insights that I had not previously considered, and my efforts to denounce Henry soon morphed into a defense of his positions because I found his arguments exegetically compelling. Granted, Carl Henry is not usually the first person who comes to mind when one thinks of Pentecostal theology, for obvious reasons. Nonetheless, what I discovered in Henry was a robust challenge to the broad sense of mission that denied any notion of priority. Henry, unlike nearly everyone else writing on the subject, was able to hold on to the priority of proclamation even as he advocated for the *necessity* of evangelical social action. Specifically, Henry's argument for the priority of evangelism rested on his revelational epistemology, which centered on the dual axiom's of God's existence (the ontological axiom) and divine revelation (the epistemological axiom). One might sum up Henry's approach with a bit of a Socratic exercise, by first asking, "Why do we know anything at all about God?" and answering, "We know because God has revealed Godself through grace for the salvation of lost humanity everywhere." That is, divine revelation has at its core not the betterment of society but the salvation of those separated from Christ. But in our efforts to proclaim that salvation, the way we live and treat others matters, especially when it comes to the neediest among us. Henry thus laid the groundwork for my search for other theological resources that aided in holding together the broad and narrow sense of missions.¹⁴ But I sensed something else was missing.

As I have shifted my study of evangelism and social action to explore Pentecostal approaches to mission, I have discovered a

¹³ Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

¹⁴ For a summary article on my research, see Jerry M. Ireland, "Carl F. H. Henry's Regenerational Model of Evangelism and Social Concern and the Promise of an Evangelical Consensus," in *Controversies in Mission: Theology, People, and Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*, ed. Rochelle Cathcart Scheuermann and Edward L. Smither (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2016).

pervasive tendency toward oversimplification when it comes to the task of defining mission(s). By that I mean that the question of whether the church's mission should be holistic or if it should prioritize proclamation and evangelism has often been reduced to a series of either/or scenarios that fail to take into account the complexities of mission according to scripture. Mission, we are told, is either holistic, or it is governed by false dichotomies based on Enlightenment paradigms. We either care about people's present lives, or we care only about their eternal lives. Mission is either transformational and liberating in terms of addressing social injustice, or it is truncated and neocolonial. Salvation either includes the social sphere, or it gives too much credence to Western individualism. I find all of these claims to be far too simplistic and lacking attention to the key concepts described above.

In this book I address those problematic claims and attempt to articulate a more nuanced position that takes into account the fullness of the biblical witness; manages to uphold the importance of social justice even while prioritizing evangelism, especially among the nations; and cares simultaneously about the present and the future. Specifically, in Chapter 1 I examine the historic priority of proclamation in early Pentecostalism in light of the current drift to holism. I observe that holistic paradigms often leave cross-cultural witness unarticulated and ambiguous—a perspective I find problematic given the way in which God's people in both the Old and New Testaments are defined according to their role among the nations. I explore in Chapter 2 the way that *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues) in the book of Acts relates to God's concern for the nations and the cross-cultural trajectory inherent in Pentecostal ecclesiology and missiology. I do this by building on Michael Goheen's important work emphasizing proclamation to the nations as the "ultimate horizon of missions" and arguing that this strengthens the need for maintaining the narrow sense of missions concerning the church's cross-cultural work.¹⁵

¹⁵ Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 199.

In Chapter 3 I turn to Greek and Latin fathers of the church to explore whether or not they connected *glossolalia* to the church's missionary mandate. If indeed early Pentecostals were correct in seeing a connection between tongues and the church's cross-cultural mission, then one would hope that such a perspective had some historic roots in the church, given that theological novelties should always be looked upon with suspicion. To search out this question, I build on an important study by Yuliya Minets regarding linguistic otherness in the Greco-Roman world and find surprising evidence among these church fathers connecting tongues to mission that lends credibility to the notion of tongues as evidence of the Spirit's work through the church concerning the nations. Furthermore, this missional link to tongues may also offer an alternative to the demise of tongues speech, often attributed to the rise of Montanism.

In Chapter 4 I explore the notions of mission and missions in light of Ralph Winter's modality-sodality paradigm and argue that there is a place for both the narrow and broad senses of missions. In Chapter 5 I develop this further as I look to how Pentecostals have emphasized discipling for compassion in a cross-cultural context, how this fits best within a priority perspective, and how it offers the greatest hope for long-term impact. Chapter 6 focuses on compassionate discipleship in Africa by exploring well-documented ways that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) can subvert indigenous expressions of compassion and how Pentecostal churches have succeeded in this arena where others have failed. I assess both the African concept of *ubuntu* and Western individualism in light of the biblical concept of *koinonia*. This chapter concludes with a story of indigenous compassion from Togo, West Africa, that demonstrates the unique potential of Spirit-led, local expressions of compassion and why these are to be preferred over missionary-led forms.

Chapter 7 examines two strands of Pentecostalism that lie at opposite ends of the spectrum, namely, what I describe as *prosperity Pentecostalism* and *missional Pentecostalism* and how these

each have the potential to either foster or refute secularization, respectively. I conclude in the Epilogue with a brief summary of main ideas and some thoughts on their application.

POTENTIAL OBJECTIONS TO PENTECOSTAL PRIORITISM

I anticipate several objections to this project. First, the idea of holism has become so embedded in contemporary thought regarding the church's mission that it is rarely questioned anymore. Therefore, one often has to go back a decade or two to find significant academic works that continue to wrestle with the issue in any substantive way. In fact, most writers nowadays feel content to simply assume a holistic model without defending it in more than a passing manner. My priority perspective will surely cause some to accuse me of looking too far into the past or worse, of being hopelessly stuck there. Steven Studebaker, for example, has said that "despite their recent appearance in the history of Christianity, Pentecostals are particularly prone to romanticizing the past."¹⁶

But looking to the past in order to recover that which drove the success of Pentecostalism early on lies at the very center of this effort. It constitutes a quite intentional and necessary part of my methodology. New does not always mean better, and I contend that the strand of Pentecostal missions that was embedded in its early praxis and that still continues at the pragmatic level among many (most?) classical traditions represents an enduring paradigm for Pentecostal missiology in that it is grounded in the nature of God as a sending God and in the church whose identity is determined by the actions of God, first and foremost. In other words, despite their unsophisticated beginnings, early Pentecostals "stumbled by the Spirit" on something important. Plus, as I will show, I think the holistic models have some major theological and practical flaws that are remedied by a return to Pentecostalism's

¹⁶ Steven M. Studebaker, *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism: Classical and Emergent* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2008), 5.

roots. I see my efforts therefore as in no way romanticizing the past but rather as more fully appreciating the historical grounding of Christian theology. Christianity is after all a faith deeply rooted in historical events, the interpretation of which by the early church established the bedrock of all future doctrine (Eph 2:20). My goal is to reground Pentecostal missiology in the enduring principles that governed the apostolic church and that gained widespread acceptance in twentieth-century Pentecostal missions.

Another objection I anticipate is that I have not engaged significantly with the work of Amos Yong, arguably one of Pentecostalism's most prominent missiologists. But Yong's work focuses largely on theologies of religion, interreligious dialogue, and postmodern critiques of colonial and neocolonial missionary approaches, especially those that embody some form of exclusivism.¹⁷ While these relate somewhat tangentially to the issue of how evangelism and compassion fit within a Pentecostal missiology, to my knowledge Yong has not written extensively on the issue of whether Pentecostal missions should be holistic or if it should embody certain priorities. That said, I am fairly certain he would fall within the former camp. And this likely owes to reasons I have just stated—that for many within this space such a discussion is passé and a settled issue. In fact, Yong nearly says as much when in his proposal for “a way forward” he likens Christian mission to a modernist project that has failed to embrace the many “posts” of the contemporary world (postcolonial, post-Enlightenment, and post-Christendom).¹⁸

That said, I have found helpful Yong's analysis of the history of classical Pentecostal missiology from Charles Parham's *xenolalic* understanding of tongues as speaking in known languages one had not learned and the lasting influence of both Parham and William Seymour on the evangelistic and missional thrust of Pentecostalism. I especially appreciate his concluding analysis that classical Pentecostalism “was motivated first and foremost

¹⁷ See especially Yong, *The Missiological Spirit and Mission after Pentecost*.

¹⁸ Yong, *Mission after Pentecost*, 5.

by the practical exigencies of fulfilling the Great Commission.”¹⁹ I agree. What I fail to grasp is why Pentecostal missiologists seem in such a hurry to jettison a past that, though not without occasional problems related to neocolonialism, paternalism, and the like, has effectively planted thriving, indigenous, Pentecostal churches around the world, often at great cost to the missionaries who went.²⁰ I am indeed all for some of the things that Yong champions, especially more dialogue on the listening end for us Westerners as it concerns religious otherness. I am just not as convinced as he appears to be of the failure of missionaries in the classical tradition on this front and am fairly certain that the success of Pentecostal missions up until now has partially rested on the ability and willingness of practitioners to engage in dialogue and learn the language and culture of those to whom they went to share the gospel. I must confess, then, to being at a loss to know what Yong means when he refers to classical missions as a “moribund enterprise.”²¹ For example, when Yong talks about the need for and reality of post-Enlightenment and post-mission missions, he seems to assume that the primary reason mission sending from Western nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was one directional (or as is sometimes said, “from the West to the rest”), was because of a perceived cultural superiority embodied explicitly or implicitly by those who went and by those who sent them. I would argue in contrast, though, that the one-directional nature of missions in its early years flowed from the often accurate assumption that the unregenerate in the West at least *could* access the gospel if they so desired, whereas those in foreign lands often could not.²² Pentecostal missionaries were keenly aware of this. Thus the notion of missions *to* the West rightly seemed absurd, not because the West was perceived as a bastion of all things good and holy, but because in the West one could practically walk one hundred yards in any direction in any

¹⁹ Yong, *The Missiological Spirit*, 98–99.

²⁰ Cf. Kärkkäinen, “The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission,” 26.

²¹ Yong, *Mission after Pentecost*, 20.

²² *Ibid.*, 2–5.

large city and find a Bible-believing church. Knowing that this was patently not the case in many places around the globe, and that those in foreign lands could not walk one hundred miles in any direction and find a church, missionaries of the early Pentecostal movement spanned out across the globe with great fervor and commitment to take the gospel to where it was not yet known. It was thus a known lack of access to Christ, not cultural superiority, that drove early Pentecostal missionaries.

Yet another objection that will likely be leveled against this text is that I have not taken fully into account Luke's teaching in his Gospel regarding social justice. Much has been made of Luke's Gospel as it relates to the church's compassionate mandate, and Luke 4:18–19 especially has been a favorite passage for liberation theologies and their holistic offspring.²³ But central to my project here is that while I concur with the scholarly consensus that views Luke-Acts as consecutive volumes of the same work, this should not lead us to conclude that they are essentially homogenous and deal with the same material or only ever make the same points.²⁴ Instead, I propose that the very existence of Luke's two volumes, his Gospel and Acts, supports my central argument for the distinction between the modality of the local church and the sodality of the mission band. In other words, whereas the Gospel

²³ For a brief overview of various approaches to Luke 4:16ff., see Ron Sider, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993; Kindle edition), 50–51.

²⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson argues for the unity of the two volumes and rejects attempts to “re-segment” them from one another. I agree and suggest that the two be held together, but that key differences be recognized in content, theme, and emphases; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church: The Challenge of Luke-Acts to Contemporary Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 2–4. Paul Borgman argues that the canonical separation of Acts from the Gospel of Luke has contributed to the problematic tendency to read them apart, and I think he is right. My goal, though, is not to contribute to reading them apart, but rather reading them together in their own right. See Paul Borgman, *The Way According to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), ix–xi.

of Luke deals with the formation of disciples and by extension especially deals with what will become the prerogative of the local church (modalities), Acts is concerned with local churches only as it relates to their missionary function (sodalities).²⁵ Otherwise, one is left with an inexorable dilemma. If Luke and Acts are so tightly connected that we should expect nothing new theologically in volume two, then we must ask, where precisely do these social justice themes for which volume one is so famed ever appear in volume two? The mysterious answer is they do not. Nowhere in Acts is the church shown engaging in any kind of social justice work outside the church, and when the subject comes up internally, it is expeditiously dealt with in order to avoid any hindrances to the church's evangelistic mandate under way.²⁶ This is precisely the story of Acts 6 and the choosing of the seven to the diaconate in response to the needs of widows in the church (Acts 6:1–7). As Roland Allen observes of this passage, the way Luke deals with this incident is quite bizarre “unless his concern were not almost wholly with evangelization.”²⁷ And the result of this speedy and decisive action? “The Word of God kept on spreading” (v. 7). Again, as Allen observes, we are told nothing of almost any of the main characters in Acts except as it relates to their missionary calling. This holds true for Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Paul, John Mark, Silas, Timothy, and Apollos. “Thus

²⁵ Hans Conzelmann observes of Lukan theology that “the period of Jesus and the period of the church are represented as two distinct, but systematically interrelated epochs.” Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), 14.

²⁶ Richard B. Hays, who argues for a liberation motif in Luke-Acts, also notes that “the book of Acts gives no evidence of the apostles seeking to reform political structures outside the church, either through protest or by seizing power. Instead, Luke tells the story of the formation of a new human community—the church—in which goods are shared and wrongs are put right.” Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 135.

²⁷ Roland Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen* (London, UK: World Dominion, 1960), 16.

it is plain that, if we consider Acts as a book of Christian biography, we must consider it as a work of *missionary* biography” (emphasis added).²⁸ And so in the same way that Pentecostals have produced successful arguments to let Luke be Luke and Paul be Paul in relation to the Spirit’s work, so too must we let Luke’s Gospel be his Gospel and Acts be Acts as they relate to different aspects of the church’s mandate—namely, her local and global mandates—even as we uphold the continuity between the two. In doing this we discover a Lukan basis for both compassionate outreach, especially for those most disenfranchised, like the shepherds present in the birth narrative, and for cross-cultural missions in the narrow sense of evangelism and church planting that refuses to get side tracked even by such a dominant biblical theme as the care of widows, because such a task belongs to the modality, not the sodality. That is, this is the task of the local church, not the missionary.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT

A central issue I see in contemporary Pentecostal missiologies relates to the question of what the church should expect of the Spirit in each new age. Should we expect a complete revisioning of what missions is and means (as most suggest), or should we expect (as I contend) mainly that the Spirit helps us reapply the ancient paradigm of missions as cross-cultural witness through new Spirit-inspired strategies and practices? Most of this book can be considered an elaboration of this central theme.

Central to the argument in this text is that the Holy Spirit is *the* missionary Spirit.²⁹ That is, missions—defined as reconciling all nations to Christ—constitutes an ontological aspect of the Spirit’s very nature and being. Missions exists as a function of the church because it first exists ontologically in God’s own nature. Again, Roland Allen proves instructive when he argues that

²⁸ Ibid., 14–15.

²⁹ Ibid., 21.

the Spirit which inspires and directs a certain action must necessarily be a Spirit whose nature is such that this action is agreeable to Him and expresses His mind. The history of the spread of the gospel must, then, be a revelation of the mind of the Spirit; the zeal of the apostles must be a revelation of the nature of the Spirit which inspired them to such action.³⁰

Furthermore, the Spirit in Acts is everywhere portrayed in relation to the certainty of those whom the Spirit fills. No one “has the Spirit” unknowingly or unwittingly in the book of Acts, contrary to popular tendencies to speculate about the Spirit’s presence and work within non-Christian religions. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2) must always be understood to mean the cognitive awareness of the Spirit as well as the Spirit’s relationship to Christ and consequently the concern for the nations demanded of the believer as a direct product of the indwelling Spirit. As John V. Taylor writes, “There can be no mission until eyes have been opened to see the living Christ.”³¹ It is the Spirit that opens eyes and the Spirit that closes them (Rom 11:8). By this I do not mean to limit the freedom of the Spirit, for indeed, the wind of the Spirit blows where the Spirit wishes. Rather, I am suggesting that God has ordained the church as the primary agent of the kingdom and the main realm of the Spirit’s activity.

DEFINITIONS: *MISSIO DEI*, MISSION, AND MISSIONS

Normally this would be a good place to define key terms related to this volume, especially what is meant by the word *Pentecostal* and equally what is meant by *mission(s)*. But the meaning of these terms cannot be established by mere assertion either in isolation of the vast bodies of literature related to both issues or from the practical realities that have governed these expressions. Therefore,

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

³¹ John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 20.

fuller definitions of both will emerge as a result of the study. That is, I hope to show that the intertwined nature of Pentecostalism and missions as understood within the early classical tradition has certain characteristics related to the ontology of God and the church that can be defended as enduring elements. That said, it may be helpful to set this all in the broader evangelical discussion of the *missio Dei* from which has flowed the mission/missions distinction that constitutes so central a piece to my thesis.

As already indicated, much of the confusion in contemporary missiologies can be traced to a lack of clarity over the manifold terms that are now commonplace in discussions about the church's role in society and the world. Key terms such as *mission* (singular), *missions* (plural), *missional*, and *missio Dei* are variously employed with reference to that which the church is called to be and do, often in relation to cultural linguistic otherness as well as to various forms of social activism. A brief overview of the history of these terms will prove helpful.

In many ways the term *missio Dei* (the mission of God) constitutes the most apt starting place for a conversation on Pentecostal missiology because the concept has been widely used of contemporary missionary endeavor with conflicting definitions. David Bosch helpfully delineates the relationship between *missio Dei* terminology and the *mission/missions* distinction in the introduction to his magnum opus, *Transforming Mission*:

We have to distinguish between mission (singular) and missions (plural). The first refers primarily to the *missio Dei* (God's mission), that is, God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people.³²

The modern proliferation of talk about the *missio Dei* can be traced to the 1952 International Missionary Conference of the

³² David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 10.

World Council of Churches (WCC) in Willingen, Amsterdam. Willingen was the fifth such conference of the WCC following the first in Edinburgh in 1910. Though some have claimed that a trinitarian understanding of mission preceded that conference in a series of lectures Karl Barth gave in 1932, John Flett has shown this to be fallacious. “In reality, Barth never once used the term *missio Dei*, never wrote the phrase ‘God is a missionary God,’ and never articulated a Trinitarian position of the kind expressed at Willingen.”³³ Though speakers such as Karl Hartenstein, undoubtedly influenced by Barth’s broader theology of the Trinity, helped advance an understanding of *missio Dei* that located missions primarily in the actions of God, the conference itself and its legacy most directly bequeathed to the church a theology of *missio Dei*.³⁴ Barth had undoubtedly been an influence on Hartenstein, but perhaps not as directly influencing his theology of missions as is often asserted.

The Willingen conference played a pivotal role in the emergence of contemporary *missio Dei* lexicography. As Johannes Verkuyl observes, “At Willingen, a Copernican revolution happened, at least as regards terminology.”³⁵ It is true that the history of this idea often has been traced to Augustine of Hippo, who in his refutation of the Arians emphasized the sending of the eternal Son as *missio*.³⁶

³³ John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 18. Even Bosch, though, makes the claim that Barth “became one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God himself.” Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389.

³⁴ See Karl Hartenstein, “The Theology of the Word and Missions,” *International Review of Mission* 20, no. 2 (1931): 210–17.

³⁵ Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 3.

³⁶ Edward W. Poitras, “St Augustine and the *Missio Dei*: A Reflection on Mission at the Close of the Twentieth Century,” *Mission Studies* 16, no. 2 (1999): 28–46. See John Flett’s excellent discussion of the theological issues associated with Augustine’s work in *De Trinitate* in Flett, *The Witness of God*, 18.

Even so, the use of these terms has diverged widely, and they carry different and important implications within various ecclesiological traditions.³⁷ Overall though, the goal and result of *missio Dei* thinking was to center mission, however defined, as originating in the activity of God rather than in the activities of the church. But even from Willingen there emerged not a single understanding of *missio Dei* but at least three distinct proposals, none of which was ultimately agreed upon.³⁸ The consequences of this within the ecumenical movement was twofold in that it, first, led to understanding mission as being broader than that which the church was called to be and do, and second, moved away from any understanding of mission in geographic terms. Instead, mission came to be seen as all that God was doing in the world, both within the church and without, and could not therefore be confined to cross-cultural church planting without limiting the sovereignty of God.³⁹

In reflecting on these historical developments, Bishop Stephen Neill writes, “The age of missions ended. The age of mission began.”⁴⁰ To this David Bosch adds, “It follows that we have to distinguish between mission and missions. We cannot without ado claim that what we do is identical to the *missio Dei*; our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God.”⁴¹ It is not hard to see then how these kinds of missiologies emerged as disconnected from the local church and moved away from a primary focus on evangelism and church planting. This was particularly embodied in the theology of Johannes C. Hoekendijk, who helped define mission “more and more comprehensively.”⁴² Writing in the 1950s and 1960s during the

³⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 392.

³⁸ Henning Wrogemann, *Theologies of Mission, Intercultural Theology*, vol. 2 (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 69.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

⁴⁰ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (1964; repr. New York: Penguin, 1990), 477.

⁴¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 391.

⁴² Wrogemann, *Theologies of Mission*, 72.

era of “decolonization” and national independence in places like Africa along with rising secularism in Europe, Hoekendijk talked about mission as the “shalomization of the world” and set forth the tripartite features of the *missio hominum* (the human aspect of the *missio Dei*) as *kerygma*, *koinonia*, and *diakonia*. These later proved foundational to the missions theology advocated by Murray Dempster and others in *Called and Empowered* (though without any specific reference to Hoekendijk).

It is worth reiterating that much of this was rooted not in the search for more solid theological foundations for missions but rather in a growing antipathy in the middle of the twentieth century toward the church itself. In this, problems such as paternalism and colonialism that indeed sometimes went hand-in-hand with missionary endeavor led to the search for a missionary paradigm that was at home among the anti-ecclesiological and anti-universal claims that were then emerging and in contrast to a firm commitment to the church and to the unique claims of Christ that had been a central feature of Christian missions since apostolic times. Thus, while some continue to see this broadened definition of mission as contextualized to the needs and realities of the twentieth century, on closer inspection it turns out instead to be merely an odd mix of Enlightenment-based plurality and postmodern uncertainty dressed up as progress.

In the chapters that follow I unfold a proposal for a distinctly Pentecostal missiology, defined in the narrow sense, that therefore speaks primarily to the work of cross-cultural evangelism and church planting. As such, I consider this project to be in no way comprehensive. Rather, it should be seen as merely the contours and skeleton of a narrowly defined Pentecostal missiology that attempts to ground itself in the nature of God and in the church God begets and that attempts to contextualize the apostolic model of missions intuited by early Pentecostals in the context of the twenty-first century by demonstrating its ongoing relevance and fruitfulness. Furthermore, I aim to reclaim the mission/missions distinction not as the old form no longer tenable and the new made vague and nonthreatening, but as paradigms for the local

church in its own context and the missionary band engaged in cross-cultural evangelism and church planting. In short, I hope to show that the missionary Spirit that bore along the apostolic witness and early Pentecostal movement remains the guiding Power that propels God's people to the nations with the good news of Christ.