

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION

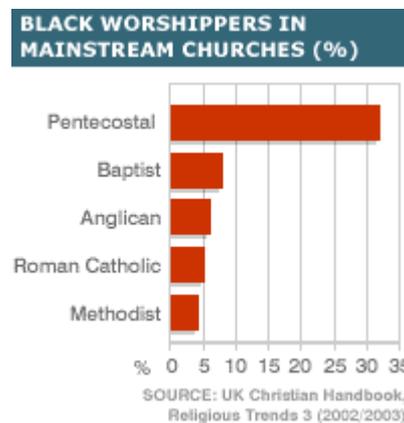
with special reference to Black Pentecostalism

INTRODUCTION

The year 2006 marks the centenary of the Azusa Street Revival, the impact of which continues to spread across the world, making Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism the fastest growing sector of contemporary Christianity. This paper focuses upon the understanding of the Holy Spirit within the Pentecostal tradition and does so with three key features of contemporary British Christianity in mind, namely: i) the growth of Black Pentecostalism, ii) the increased presence of Black Pentecostal churches in membership of the Churches Together ecumenical instruments, and iii) the problematic relationship between Black and White Pentecostals in Britain; all of which seem to call for a response. I argue that a better understanding of the pneumatology that is at the centre of Pentecostalism coupled with a willingness to dialogue with those of a different pneumatological persuasion can act as a catalyst for better inter-Christian relationships in this country. This then is a call for deeper understanding leading to informed regard between Pentecostals and between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. Achieving this is not necessarily easy, but it is essential to our Christian witness and mission.

The growth of Black Pentecostalism in England coincides with what appears to be an inexorable decline in White-majority mainstream churches. Attendance in Black Pentecostal churches as a percentage of the overall

church-going population exceeds five-fold the Black presence as a percentage of the general population. According to Christian Research, between 1975 and 1989 African Caribbean church attendance remained a steady 5% of combined Free Church attendance.¹ By 1998, combined Black church attendance was put at 7.2% of the overall church attendance in England at a time when Black people represented 1.9% of the overall population of the country.² By this time also, Black Pentecostals in the country accounted for a third of all of Pentecostal church going.



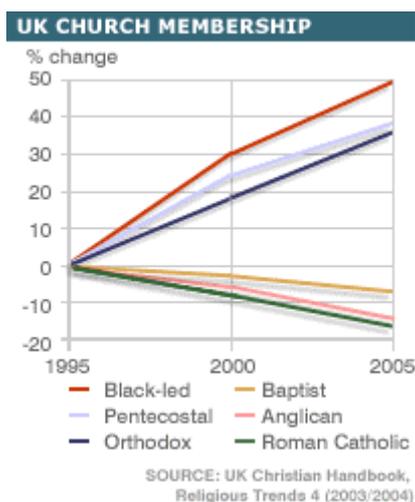
Between 1995 and 2005, Black-led churches had increased by half, and now represented 10% of the overall church-going population whilst being just 2% of the overall population in England.³ By any measurement this is stupendous growth, and the reasons that occasion it may be manifold. This much can be said with some confidence, that anyone who attends Black Pentecostal worship will testify there is at the heart of the Black worship expression an impulse that is driven by dependence upon something other than human reality. There is an interaction with the Holy Spirit that connects the worshipper with a transcendent and immanent God. This understanding

¹ Peter Brierley, *Christian England*, Marc Europe, 1991, p.37

² Peter Brierley, *The Tide Is Running Out*, Christian Research, 2000, p.134

³ Peter Brierley, *Pulling Out Of The Nosedive*, Christian Research, 2006

of God's immanence is emphasised by such choral refrains as, 'He is here, Holy Spirit, He is here right now'. That Black Pentecostal worship is highly experiential and emotionally charged is indicative of the understanding that the reliance on the Holy Spirit is not just a matter for 'within these walls', but is something that affects the entire life of the person and community.



Accompanying this numerical growth has been a corresponding increase in the number of Pentecostal churches coming into membership of the Churches Together ecumenical instruments. This represents an improvement and further development on a critique offered by Mark Sturge, that ecumenical organisations had failed to engage in a meaningful way the larger Black Majority Churches.⁴ According to Sturge, a key reason for this non-engagement has been the presence in the ecumenical instruments of 'ultra-liberal historic denominations'. Given that the historic churches Sturge refers to remain in membership of Churches Together, what are we to make of this interest in the national ecumenical instruments by these Black Pentecostal

⁴ Mark Sturge, *Look what the Lord has done: An exploration of Black Christian faith*, Scripture Union, Bletchley, 2005, p. 150

churches? Will the Pentecostals tone down their Pentecostalism, or will the historic denominations become less 'ultra-liberal' and more Pentecostal?

Whatever the answers to these questions, how unlike the late 1980s when Philip Mohabir observed that there were few Black member churches within the ranks of the (then) British Council of Churches and even fewer Black people within its council of management?⁵ The ecumenical landscape has changed significantly, especially in recent years, so that of the twenty-eight churches and agencies in membership of Churches Together in England, ten can be described as Black-led, of which nine are Pentecostal.⁶ And there are other membership applications pending. Black Pentecostals would undoubtedly suggest that as in the case of numerical growth this too is 'a move of God'. But it could also be argued that the Black churches are coming of age, growing in confidence and are now ready to engage and share fellowship with others with whom they do not necessarily agree doctrinally and theologically. Whatever the reasons, this development certainly offers and provides the opportunity for Black Pentecostals and the historic churches to engage in dialogue about various issues, including the Holy Spirit.

Another feature of the English church context that comes within our purview is the problematic relationship between Black and White Pentecostals in Britain. Given their common theological root in Azusa Street and the Pentecostalism that has emerged, one might expect there to be a common Pentecostal bonding between these Black and White spiritual siblings, indeed children

⁵ Philip Mohabir, *Building Bridges*, Hodder and Stoughton, London p.190

⁶ <http://www.cte.org.uk>

born of the same Holy Spirit. Philip Mohabir once described the relationship between these 'two most dynamic groups of God's people in this country' as one where preferences had become prejudices, which had hardened over the years. This had led, he argued, to them hardly mixing, largely unaware of the other's existence, and to 'a subtle system of apartheid operating in Great Britain's churches'.⁷ Mohabir's statement was made at the end of the 1980s, and it can be argued that the current situation is only marginally different, and may even be one in which White preferences and prejudices are fast becoming the preferences and prejudices of many Blacks also.

A few things have changed in the relationship between Black and White Pentecostals. For example, in recent years there has been an attempt to initiate a Pentecostal Congress in the United Kingdom, led by Wynn Lewis of the Elim Pentecostal Church, and including some Black Pentecostal denominations. This has not taken root however, and little is observable of a continuing relationship between Black and White Pentecostals at the organisational level. But at the level of the individual and local congregation, there is a noticeable development in recent years. A significant migration of Black Christians from the traditional Black-led Pentecostal churches to White-led Pentecostal churches has been occurring, leading to some of those becoming Black-majority churches.⁸ The reasons for this have not been properly researched as yet, but from conversations between this writer and some individuals who have made the switch it is clear that many of these are

⁷ Philip Mohabir, *Building Bridges*, Hodder and Stoughton, London p.190

⁸ Note for example various White-led former House Churches, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Evangelical and churches such as Kensington Temple in London and Birmingham Christian Centre, to name but two.

Black professionals and socio-economic climbers who whilst embracing the Pentecostal impulse, desire a more structured church and worship life than is the case in some Black-led Pentecostal churches. Indeed, there is now a sharp divide between sophisticated and professionally run, as against working class and orally inclined, Black Pentecostal churches in Britain.

Such migrations do not easily lend themselves to good relationships between Pentecostal members, leaders, and organisations. Particularly as it can easily be argued that the class difference that may have, at least in part, occasioned the divide between Black and White Pentecostals in the past, is now at work dividing Black Pentecostals between themselves and siphoning off the Black professional who now feel more at home in a White Pentecostal environment. Interestingly, these Black professionals are rarely given in White Pentecostal churches the leadership prominence they would generally receive in Black Pentecostal ones, yet they appear willing to migrate in growing numbers and pay the price of simply being followers. The need for Black and White Pentecostal leaders to engage is greater than ever, before followership overwhelms leadership with migration patterns that do not foster the unity of the spirit. Jesus' prayer that his church be 'one, that the world may believe' (John 17) requires that the Church in all its diversity actively plays its part in bringing about a true *oikoumene* i.e. reconciling the whole inhabited earth in becoming the living household (*oikos*) of God.⁹ In this task the church, excluded and beaten down by the world, finds its rightful place as the world's salt and light. This working together of those called out by God, yet rejected

⁹ Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1997, p.1

by the world, is for the good of the inhabitants of the earth and the glory of God. However, it cannot be done without the reconciliation of the body of Christ to itself in love and respect. Sharing an understanding of the Holy Spirit that powers and empowers the church is a good starting point.

In my recent book, 'Respect – Understanding Caribbean British Christianity' I proffer a meaning of 'respect' as 'to get to know, to understand' self and the other.¹⁰ I also advance eight means by which respect may be engendered within the church and in society. These are; the provision of quality information, a commitment to relationship, taking people's ethnicity seriously, taking people's faith seriously, understanding one self, understanding the other, basing one's regard or disregard on knowledge, and having a prophetic presence. When these factors are brought to bear upon our present situation, they engender 'respect', i.e. deeper understanding of our context. However, it is important to note that the respect process goes beyond observation and understanding. Respect requires investigation and critique of our context in order to shed light on the matter that is at the heart of Pentecostalism, the Holy Spirit. With this understanding of the Holy Spirit comes much of what is necessary to act as a united church in a divided world. I contend that as we exchange ignorance for knowledge and pay attention to Pentecostal pneumatology, we observe there a key aspect of the unity we already share, but do not yet fully realise, and the dynamism behind our mission together to the world.

¹⁰ Joe Aldred, *Respect – Understanding Caribbean British Christianity*, Epworth, 2005

PENTECOSTALISM – THE HISTORICAL ROOT

As Walter J. Hollenweger points out, the historicity of Pentecostalism can be located in two key ancestries; one Black and African, the other White and European.¹¹ The Black and African roots of modern Pentecostalism comes to us through the medium of the hideous Atlantic Slave Trade, by which Africans rooted in their traditional religions, themselves highly spirit-orientated, were transported to the Americas, leading to an identifiable African-American Slave Religion that in turn resulted in the Black Oral Root of Pentecostalism, led by Seymour. James Cone, the African American theologian disputes the extent of African religious retention, but makes the salutary point that the Black church was born in slavery.¹² Under slavery, the Black person soon learned that s/he could not look to their fellow-human for help, only to the unseen God, the Spirit. When, post slavery, the Pentecostal phenomenon emerged in the United States, the descendants of slaves were first in line for their blessings!

Significantly, after a long period of denial, it is now generally accepted that the modern Pentecostal movement has its roots in the revival that occurred at the Apostolic Faith Mission, Azusa Street, Los Angeles between 1906 and 1909. It is also now generally accepted that, as journalist Frank Bartleman an eye-witness and participant wrote, 'Brother Seymour was recognised as the national leader in charge'; and again, 'but he (God) chose Brother Seymour, for our Joshua, to lead us over.'¹³ What is most remarkable about this is that

¹¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins, Developments Worldwide*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1997

¹² James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1989, p.91

¹³ Frank Bartleman, *Roots of Modern-day Pentecost*, Bridge Publishing, 1980, pp.47&57

at a time of racial segregation in the United States during which Blacks were viewed by Whites as inferior human beings, if human at all, a one-eyed, semi-illiterate Black man, a descendant of slaves, emerged as the recognised leader of a racially/ethnically mixed local, national and international Pentecostal work. Undoubtedly, the oral tradition of Seymour, rooted in the slave experience, enabled him to function within this new religious setting.

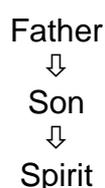
According to Holenweger, the White and European ancestral line of modern Pentecostalism emerged from the Wesleyan tradition, itself the result of the influences from Catholicism and the Reformation. The editors of the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements highlight five distinct historical theological development of the modern Pentecostal movement.¹⁴ First, there was the Wesleyan understanding that conversion/justification is followed by a definable (definite) second work of grace, sanctification, in which the 'stranglehold of sin is decisively broken' in the life of the believer, thereby perfecting them. Second, there were the Charles G Finney et al, 'higher-life' teachers, who also emphasised the second experience after conversion, which they understood as the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the endowment of the believer with power for witness and service. A third development was the particularly dispensational brand of nineteenth century pre-millennialism that emerged from the Plymouth Brethren; including John Nelson Darby and Reuben A. Torrey. A fourth development was the rise of the evangelical faith healing movement, pioneered by Charles Cullis, A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson, John Alexander Dowie, and Maria B. Woodworth-

¹⁴ Burgess et al (eds), Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, p.2

Etter, with its emphasis on miraculous physical healing. The fifth key development were the 'experiential primitivists' and their restorationist longings for dynamic, spirit-filled, and spirit-led first-century church.

Burgess et al¹⁵ point out that since the third century in the West, the concept of a life in the spirit with an exercise of spiritual gifts has been something either loftily ascribed to 'saints' or despairingly ascribed to fringe groups; in both cases it is something outside the normal life of the institutionalised church. In contrast, in the East, emphasis on pneumatology including the life of the Spirit in the believer, resulting in a Charismatic character and expectation, has never ceased. They suggest further that it is the lack of the pneumatic emphasis in the West that rendered the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s unique since the first century.

Hollenweger argues that this lack of emphasis upon the life and work of the Holy Spirit in the West has resulted in the emergence of a Pentecostalism that is highly Calvinistic, adhering to a pneumatology that is strictly Christological and which draws its strength from the early church's controversy over the *filioque*.¹⁶ Here, the Holy Spirit is understood as a third person, behind a second, the Son, behind a first, the Father:¹⁷

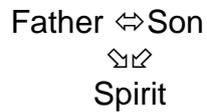


¹⁵ Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee and Patrick H. Alexander (eds), *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988

¹⁶ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, p.222

¹⁷ Raymond M. Pruitt, *Fundamentals of the Faith*, White Wing Publishing House and Press, 1981, p.283

This, however, he argues is a corruption of the intended western model resulting from the *filioque* controversy that understands the Spirit as emanating from the eternally existing Father and Son:



In both cases, the Spirit has little self-identity. In the first model the Spirit is an expression of the Son while in the second model the Spirit is the expression of Father and Son. Hollenweger argues that the Eastern Church operates with a different pneumatological model in which the Son and the Spirit emanate from the Father:



In this Eastern model, the Godhead remains Trinitarian and pyramidal, but Son and Spirit are viewed equally in relation to the Father, and as a consequence equal priority is given to Christology as to pneumatology. Hollenweger therefore posits the argument that it is probable that Pentecostalism's emergence in the West is a direct result of the relegation of the Spirit to an expression of Son alone, or Father and Son. In either case divine authority remains with the Father and Son and the work and worth of the Spirit is understood as consequential. In this pneumatology the Spirit is located at the bottom of a heavenly pyramid.

Whatever the historical/theological reasonings, Pentecostalism's emergence in the late 1800s and early 1900s amongst White Westerners had its locus in the concern of some over the spiritless and therefore powerless nature of

church, and a craving for a church that behaved more like the one they read about in the book of Acts. They no longer believed that the Reformation had delivered this. There were ecclesiastical structures, and intellectual theologising, but as Hollenweger says what was being sought was not a new argument for heads but a new experience for hearts.¹⁸ Frank Bartleman epitomises the early anti-intellectual nature of Pentecostalism when he contends that human organisation and human programmes leave very little room for the free spirit of God.¹⁹ Against this background of disengaging the intellect, it is not surprising that Pentecostalism has not developed a pneumatology which fits its experience'.²⁰ Academic theology has not been its concern. As a consequence modern Pentecostalism has become strong on experience of the spirit, *pneumapraxis*, but weak on interpretation of these experiences. This is not to imply the total absence of Pentecostal theologising. A crucial area in which this underdevelopment in theological interpretation is evident is that of 'speaking in tongues' and its place among the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Glossolalia

The explicit teaching that Glossolalia is the 'initial evidence' of the baptism in the Holy Spirit can be traced to the ministry of Charles F. Parham. It was at Parham's Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas in (circa) 1901 that eighteen-year-old Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues after receiving Parham's teaching on the Holy Spirit. From this Parham is said to have constructed his thesis that Glossolalia was the biblical evidence of being baptized in the Holy

¹⁸ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, pp.190-191

¹⁹ Bartleman, *Roots of Modern-day Pentecost*, p.31

²⁰ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, p.218

Spirit.²¹ Later, in Houston, William J. Seymour, a former Baptist turned Holiness preacher, came under the influence of Parham's teachings on the Holy Spirit, having listened to him from outside the classroom, not being allowed inside due to segregationist US laws. Although Seymour did not receive the experience of tongues in Houston, he accepted Parham's teachings. Invited to preach in Los Angeles, Seymour accepted and became the iconic central figure in the ensuing Pentecostal revival that not only impacted Los Angeles, but the world.

Parham's Apostolic Faith held to five cardinal teachings; justification, sanctification, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and pre-millennial second coming of Christ. These had already been established Holiness teachings; Parham's main contribution was and is the addition of 'initial evidence' of speaking in tongues to the Holiness teaching on Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Although he fell out with Parham, these remained the central tenets of Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street as is evident in a collection of Seymour's sermons.²² It is clear however, that Seymour did not share Parham's emphasis on tongues, eventually rejecting 'initial evidence' as a dogma in favour of a loftier evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, as will be shown later.

In line with Parham's philosophy, most US-initiated Pentecostals, including Black Pentecostals in Britain such as the New Testament Church of God and

²¹ Vinson Synan in Frank Bartleman, *Roots of Modern-day Pentecost*, Bridge Publishing, 1980, p.ix

²² Larry Martin (ed), *Azusa Street Sermons: William Seymour*, Christian Life Books, Missouri, 1999

the Church of God of Prophecy, accept the 'initial evidence' of tongues as 'the' evidence that one has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. However, a review of the 'Statement of Faith' of the two main White-led Pentecostal churches in England is instructive. The US initiated Assemblies of God is explicit in its teaching that tongues accompany the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as its 'initial evidence'. But the British initiated Elim Pentecostal Church, whilst embracing the endowment of power of the Holy Spirit upon the believer, does not include the 'initial evidence' clause. Whilst Black British Pentecostals with their mainly US roots tend towards Parhamism in embracing 'initial evidence', it is observable that some newer churches are moving towards the Elim position of non-emphasis on 'initial evidence'. There is therefore Pentecostal sortoriological consensus of a sort in that across Pentecostalism there is either a two-stage (regeneration and Spirit baptism) or three-stage (regeneration, sanctification, and Spirit baptism) process.

A New Pneumatology?

From its origins in the twin ancestry of Black and African, and White and European roots, Pentecostalism has developed into three distinct traditions, namely Non-White Indigenous Churches, Classical Pentecostal Churches, and the Charismatic Movement, sometimes referred to as Neo-Pentecostal Churches. All of these emphasise the prominence of the Holy Spirit as central to the life of the church and to the Christian life. We find that as was the case in Acts 2 when there were 'staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven' (v5); so today there is a world-wide co-mingling of all God's children in the new Pentecostal experience. In the sign of a multi-

racial/ethnic Azusa Street, God appears to be inviting us to experience again, and permanently, what was excitedly proclaimed at Azusa Street; that the “colour line’ has been washed away in the blood”.²³ Indeed this was what caught the imagination of Seymour at Azusa Street: that the baptism in the Holy Spirit empowered human beings to demolish the walls of racial and class segregation and in its place build a united multi-racial church. The historical and contemporary context cited above tells us that there is a long way to go and much to do to realise this. But it is clear to this writer that a subtle shift in pneumatological emphasis away from Parham’s emphasis on ‘initial evidence’ to the Seymour’s emphasis on the power to love one another may lead us to a real pneumatological breakthrough.

How then might, or should, Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike set about developing an understanding of the Holy Spirit that is inclusive, can be appropriated by the whole church, and provide the building block for a dynamic and united church? Like other Trinitarian believing Christians, Pentecostals understand their deity as God expressed in three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this understanding, God expressed as Holy Spirit is said to be at work in the creation of the cosmos, including humanity. Various referred to in Scripture as breath, wind, power, oil, fire, water and dove, it is the Holy Spirit that is understood to be at work accomplishing the will of God now as in creation/beginning (Genesis 1.2). Alister McGrath reminds us that it is from the Hebrew ‘*ruach*’ that we derive our theological

²³ Bartleman, *Roots of Modern-day Pentecost*, p.54

understanding of wind, breath and spirit.²⁴ This is the spirit as wind that blows redemptively and parts the Red Sea (Exodus 14.21); this is the spirit as breath that results in man becoming a living soul (Genesis 2.7); and this is the spirit as *charism* that fills and credentialises the person and their ministry (Isaiah 61.1). It is probably worth bearing in mind too that as *Ruach* this is the Spirit rendered in scripture as female, not male, which raises the spectre of viewing the Godhead as Father, Mother and Son! I'm not sure where that takes us, however. It may lead to an understanding that male and female, parent and children are made equally in the image of God.

We cannot consider the British Pentecostal landscape without reference to the presence of a sizable number of Black Oneness Pentecostals and Black Christians who belong to non-Pentecostal churches. This calls all the more for a pneumatology that can apply to Trinitarians, Non-Trinitarians, Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. This could emerge from a longing for a renewed and revitalised church similar to the mindset of some at the turn of the nineteenth century. A precedent can be applied from an even earlier time than the beginnings of modern Pentecostalism, namely the circumstances of the Old Testament prophet Joel.

With God's judgement against Judah, and under the threat of being overrun by their neighbours, not dissimilar to the church being overrun by scientific secularism, Joel held out a fig leaf of hope. Part of the restoration of Jerusalem and the nation, if Judah repented and turned back to God, was the

²⁴ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1994, p.241

outpouring of the Spirit upon all people: sons, daughters, young men, servants; indeed, everyone who called on the name of the Lord would be saved (ch2). The universality of this divine provision is striking – everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. Striking too are the manifestations of this outpouring, evidenced by prophesy, dreams, visions, wonders in the heavens and on earth; blood, fire and billows of smoke; the sun would turn dark and the moon the colour of blood. The outpouring of the spirit brought with it spiritual, social and political liberation (v32). We see here that the coming of the Spirit is universalistic, liberationist, equalising, and empowering. And it is evidenced by the supernatural and unnatural.

Another well-known Old Testament text that calls to our situation is Isaiah 61 where the Spirit upon the prophet was for his anointing to preach the Good News of salvation to the poor, bind up the broken hearted, free the captives, release the prisoners, comfort the mourners, provide for the grieving, replace the misery of ashes with the crown of glory, gladness for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of despair. The Spirit's anointing upon the prophet was also unction to bravely pronounce the Day of God's vengeance, the flipside of the Day of God's favour. The outpouring of the Spirit then is about the ability to preach and act out a message of deliverance and of righteousness judgement upon wrong-doing, especially structural oppression by the powerful upon the weak. In the local, national and international contexts there is much that calls for the attention and action of the church to undo heavy burden, set captives free and hold oppressors to account.

When we look at the seminal text for Pentecostals, Acts 2, we find that Peter aligns this occurrence with that prophesied by Joel. This is that which was prophesied by Joel, he said. However, the reader soon notices a phenomenon that does not appear in Joel, or Isaiah, or in the passages of Scripture where Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit (cf Matt 28 and John 16), or indeed at the time Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, 'receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20.22). A difference with Acts 2.4 as is evidenced also in Acts 8.17-18; 10.44-46; 9.17; and 19.6 is the accompaniment of the outpouring or baptism of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues, or languages not known to the speaker. This has become a point of departure for many Christians, as Parhamism and its US Pentecostal offspring have turned experience into dogma.

A question some Pentecostals might ask, in view of the historicity of pneumatology, concerns the appropriateness of insisting that tongues accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when there is no biblical text that mandates this, only examples of it occurring. Indeed, there are more examples of the Holy Spirit being poured out without than with tongues. According to Matthew Ashimowolo, 98% of African Pentecostals speak in tongues,²⁵ but according to some, only as little as 35% of Pentecostals worldwide do so. It is recognised also that the exercise of the gift of tongues is not synonymous with a belief in 'initial evidence'. And in this writer's own experience there has always been a sizeable proportion of every congregation known to me, including in one famous instance the leader of a

²⁵ Matthew Asimowolo, *Tongues of Fire*, Mattyson Media Publication, 1993

Pentecostal church, that did not have the experience of tongues. This for a time was the experience of the father of modern Pentecostalism William Seymour, who accepted Parham's teaching on initial evidence, preached and taught it before eventually experiencing it. Was he without the Spirit as he ministered before speaking in tongues? Then, having experienced the character of some who had initially evidenced with speaking in tongues, but who clearly lacked the grace of God, Seymour forbade his members to seek after tongues, and eventually included in the articles of faith of the Apostolic Faith Mission that, 'no one shall be known as having been baptised in the Holy Spirit simply because they speak in tongues'.²⁶ Seymour became convinced that the real evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was love and unity between those who were so baptised, as on the Day of Pentecost. For Seymour, it was impossible to be baptised in the Holy Spirit and believe, as Parham purportedly continued to do, in the superiority of one race over another.

A new pneumatological understanding has also to come to terms with the knowledge that the Scriptures make clear that the Holy Spirit has several manifestations. There is the fruit of the Spirit manifested as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5.22), and gifts of the Spirit; among them apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4.11). A further list of Spirit gifts is provided in 1 Corinthians 12.8-10; the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, the

²⁶ The William Seymour Story, a Documentary: From Tragedy to triumph to obscurity

ability to distinguish between spirits, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. Whilst it cannot be assumed that this is an exhaustive list, it could be argued that these among others are as surely evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as tongues. There is general consensus across denominations, certainly Evangelical and Pentecostal ones, that all the gifts and fruit of the Spirit have legitimacy. This is largely true too of non-Evangelicals and non-Pentecostals. It is my experience too that there is a general climate of acceptance and expectation that Christian life and worship needs the infusion the dynamic dimension that is epitomised by the Pentecostal impulse. Though not a recipe for loudness, cold formalism is desired by very few nowadays.

The challenge seems to be to universalise Pentecostalism as empowerment for the whole church, not just for Pentecostals. The process has began already, but it may be hampered by an insistence, unnecessarily in this writer's view, on initial evidence of tongues instead of an expectation that the Holy Spirit has been given to all along with a series of gifts and fruit, all of which will find expression within the church. Some may be more or less in evidence dependent upon where one is and the emphases or needs of given situations. As Liberation theologians tend to ask, 'what is the Holy Spirit for?' And they end up emphasising the liberative dimension of the Holy Spirit. As Jose Comblin puts it, Latin American Christians recognize the God of liberation and feel the presence of such a God in their very midst, acting in their own actions and commitments. The *Dios liberator* is the Holy Spirit –

whether known by name or not.²⁷ Indeed, according to Comblin, the church was born in the Holy Spirit as an instrument of a pragmatic God whose *modus operandi* was and must continue to be the emancipation of human beings from all that oppress. A study of the Holy Spirit therefore has to deal as Paul had to deal with the enthusiasm of a community that had received the Holy Spirit, but proceeded to commute the gifts to an exhibition of the gift of tongues which produces little if any outward fruit whilst affording inward satisfaction. Like Paul we today must determinedly point people back to the church's charter: 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore, he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, release to captives and to announce a year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4.8-19). The anointing of the Holy Spirit is to break the yoke of bondage and oppression, not merely for the exercise of gifts for their own sake.

CONCLUSION

I argue therefore that were we to gather around the understanding of a need for engagement with a dynamic Holy Spirit in the entire life of the individual Christian, the church and the world, and if Pentecostals can make a needed shift towards a recognition that all of the gifts and fruit of the spirit are evidence of the Spirit's presence and work, then we have a basis for broad-based Christian fellowship. Tongues-speaking Christians would need to accept that there are millions of Christians who are operating in the dynamism of the Holy Spirit, experiencing some gifts and fruit of the spirit, yet have not

²⁷ Jose Comblin in Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria (eds), *Systematic Theology: perspectives from Liberation Theology*, pp.146-164

experienced tongues; in the same way that many who have experienced tongues may not have experienced some other gifts. Here, those who reject tongues would need to move towards recognising the experience of millions who have. All this can be achieved without the dogma that Glossolalia is 'the' initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit, or an experience all Christians must have. Such repositioning would bring reconciliation and greater understanding between Christians – so-called Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals.

It surely is the emphasis upon the immanence of God in the dynamism of life in the spirit that is at the root of the growth of Pentecostalism world-wide and amongst Black Pentecostals in this country. Maybe God is now moving that dynamism into mainstream through membership of these churches in the Churches Together ecumenical instruments. Maybe too, a more reasoned Pentecostal pneumatology will bring about a greater understanding between British Black and White Pentecostals. I end with some words with which Walter Hollenweger begins his book, *Pentecostalism*: 'It is my hope and prayer that this (volume) will perhaps help Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals to a more genuine understanding of what it means to be a Pentecostal'²⁸

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²⁸ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, pp.1-2.