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Historical and Theological Development of Christian Mission among various Traditions: Investigating the Interface between Doctrines and Practices

Abstract

This paper investigates the brief historical development of the Christian mission among the five denominations/confessions - Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestants (Evangelicals and Fundamentalists), Pentecostals, and the Ecumenical/Conciliar. In briefly tracing the historical and theological development of mission within the different confessional bodies, this paper intends to show both the unifying strand and diversifying assumption within each body. This paper argues that the emphasis or de-emphasis on doctrine to a large



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degree shapes and determines the way mission is conceived and executed.

Keywords

Missio Dei, Orthodox mission, Catholic mission, Protestant mission, Pentecostal mission, theology and mission

1 Introduction

Today, all Christian denominational or confessional bodies, whether Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant or Pentecostal, believe in *Missio Dei*. *Missio Dei* affirms that the church exists to participate in and fulfill God's mission. However, has this affirmation always been the case? Are all the confessional bodies unified in their understanding of the mission? This paper investigates the brief historical development of the Christian mission among the five denominations/confessions—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestants (Evangelicals and Fundamentalists), Pentecostals, and the Ecumenical/Conciliar. In briefly tracing the historical and theological development of mission within the different confessional bodies, this paper intends to show both the unifying strand and diversifying assumption within each body. This paper argues that the emphasis or de-emphasis on doctrine to a large degree shapes and determines the way mission is conceived and executed.

The focus of this section is to briefly delineate how different denominations arrived at their respective stands on missions today. While the historical development is investigated, particular attention is given to the theological impulse that stirs the movements. We began by investigating the Orthodox tradition.

2 Mission in the Orthodox Tradition

A brief survey on the Orthodox concept of the mission¹ will dismantle the claim that the Orthodox Church lacks a robust theology of missions. Of course, an argument could be made that she has not actively engaged in evangelizing and witnessing to others during particular historical periods. Some examples of these periods are the Islamic persecution in the fifteenth century under the Ottoman Empire or the Marxist-Leninism suppression in Russia in the twentieth century. However such lapse in vibrant outreach is the case with all Christian traditions. The rebuke to William Carey ‘to sit down and be quiet for God will save those whom He predestined’ reflects the ethos of the period in Protestant history. What Bishop Anastasios says of Byzantine Orthodox is also not untrue of the Oriental Orthodox, “throughout the millennium of its existence, Orthodox Byzantium concerned itself with the broadening of the Christian faith, either to the heathen within its boundaries, or the pagan tribes pouring into the Empire, as well as to neighbouring countries.”²

¹ Two books in particular need mentioning here: Ion Bria, *Martyria/mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Church today* (Geneva: Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, 1980); Georges Lemopoulos, *Your Will Be Done, Orthodoxy in Mission: CWME Consultation of Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, Neapolis, Greece, April 16-24, 1988* (Geneva: Published for the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism by WCC Publications, 1989). These two books are a collection of articles from various Orthodox Christians (and some non-Orthodox), reflecting on the nature of missions from the Orthodox perspective.

² Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania, “Orthodox Mission: Past, Present, Future,” in *Your Will be Done: Orthodoxy in Mission*, ed. Georges Lemopoulos (Geneva: Published for the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism by WCC Publications, 1989), p. 65.

The aggressive evangelistic effort of the church, particularly during the fourth and fifth century and ninth and eleventh century must not be overlooked.

It would be fair, however, to admit that the commitment to *evangelize and reach the world for Christ*, which Bishop Anastasios proclaims and the Orthodox Church in America unapologetically states,³ is not always reflective of the majority of past Orthodox Christians. In the past, higher attention was given to attending to the needs of the intra-communal (mission/service within the church). According to Orthodox tradition, intra-communal is as important as extra-communal missions (missions outside the church), because the latter can be successful only to the extent that the church can live as an authentic Eucharistic community. For Orthodox, “liturgical worship as a whole is an obvious form of witness and mission.”⁴ In fact, there is and should be no dichotomy between the two, they argue. Ion Bria rightly puts it, “The witnessing community is the worshipping community.”⁵ However, it appears to outsiders that such claim is true only in the reverse order. For Orthodox proclamation comes through the liturgical representation of the gospel both in corporate worship and in private life.⁶ For them, the mission is more than “proclaiming some ethical truths or principles but calling people to union

³ “Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America,” (accessed September 13, 2017). <https://oca.org/about/mission-vision>. The statement reads: The Mission of the Orthodox Church in America, the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, is to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to “Go into all the world and make disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all [things that He has] commanded” so that all people may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

⁴ Ion Bria (ed.), *Go Forth in Peace: Orthodox Perspectives on Mission* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Mission Series, 1986), p. 17

⁵ Ion Bria, *Martyria/mission*, p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*

with God," i.e., participating in the divine energies, not essence (*theosis*).⁷ Humans can have a mystical or direct union with God because every visible or invisible creature is an appearance of God.⁸ This strong sense of the possibility of mankind to encounter God from where they are, not through the medium of another humans or ideas,⁹ seems to have pushed them for more serious contemplation of self rather than in the evangelism of others. This preoccupation with internal spirituality may explain the lack of evangelistic outreach in the past. Also, the desire for the Orthodox church to maintain geographical unity is to be evaluated in the light of their betrayal by the Western Church leading to the Fall of Constantinople, their experience of the "Great Schism" in 1054, and their survival of vicious persecution from the Muslims and other dominant rulers.¹⁰ During these various periods, the Orthodox Church was compelled to muster their resources and concentrate on the intra-communal aspect of the mission.

The orthodox understanding of missions, however, has also evolved in that today there seems to be more intentionality in emphasizing the inter-communal aspect. Their view of God, which compelled them to more introspective lives, also became an impetus for reaching out to others. *Theosis*, unlike the Protestant doctrine of justification - the repenting sinner is declared sinless - is a continuing state of worship, adoration, and *intercession for others*.¹¹ They believe that the Son who was invited to participate in the communion of the triune God also

⁷ Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), pp. 22-23, pp. 124-126.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹ Douglas G. Jacobsen, *The World's Christians : Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There* (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 16.

¹⁰ Ion Bria, *Martyria/mission*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹ *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1: Basic Statements, 1974-1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 208.

has invited the Church to continue God's mission of inviting others to the same fellowship.¹² Their involvement in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Commission on Mission and Evangelism (WCME) also forced them to articulate their view on missions more clearly. Thus, the Orthodox Church now has a more refined and succinct view of missions. Since 1973 they have gathered on a regular basis to map out their stand.¹³ Of particular importance among these gatherings was the Neapolis Consultation in 1998. Out of this consultation came several articles, which were published in a book, *Your Will be Done: Orthodoxy in Mission*¹⁴ that recast Orthodox missions afresh. This gathering also proved to be an essential landmark in the Orthodox Church in that the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Eastern Orthodox were able to come together.¹⁵ The contemporary Orthodox Church has now by and large accepted the reality of *Missio Dei* as Bishop Anastasios proudly proclaimed in the Neapolis Consultation, "Mission is the extension of the love of the Trinitarian God, for the transformation of the whole world."¹⁶ The journey of the Orthodox Church—a gradual orientation from intra-communal missions to extra-communal missions—is somewhat similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church, to which we shall now turn.

¹² Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania, "Orthodox Mission: Past, Present, Future," p. 80.

¹³ *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1*, p. 203.

¹⁴ G. Lemopoulos, *Your Will Be Done, Orthodoxy in Mission*. The report of this consultation is incorporated as a chapter in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1*, pp. 232–241.

¹⁵ Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, American Society of Missiology series: no. 30 (Maryknoll, N.Y. : Orbis Books, 2004), p. 265.

¹⁶ G. Lemopoulos, *Your Will Be Done, Orthodoxy in Mission*, p. 89.

3 Mission in the Catholic Tradition

While the Orthodox view of God shapes their understanding of missions to a certain degree, the Roman Catholic understanding of the Church drives their theology of missions to a large degree. This is not to say that their mission is not tied to their view of God. Greg Allison, from the *Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church*,¹⁷ rightly points out that the Roman Catholic view of the Church is inseparable from their view of the triune God.¹⁸ However, whether from a more radical perspective of Karl Rahner, who entertained the idea of an anonymous Christian,¹⁹ to that of the more conservative contemporary theologian Gavin Costa, who argues for salvation only through the acceptance of Christ,²⁰ their understanding of Church has dominantly shaped their view of mission.

Even though beginning in the sixteenth century some Catholics have begun to recognize the infeasibility of the maxim of Cyprian "Outside the Church, there is no salvation" infeasibility, until the Vatican II (1962-1965) it was taken more or less in its literalistic sense. This understanding, along with their emphasis on the interdependence of grace and nature-grace is imparted through nature - prompted the Church to enforce the idea that the visible Catholic Church is the only instrument by which salvation can be mediated. After all, the Sacraments - baptism, confirmation, penance, the Eucharist, the anointing of the sick, marriage, and the holy orders - are the visible signs of God's

¹⁷ A *Catechism* is the systematic presentation of the Roman Catholic beliefs and practices that the Church published in 1994.

¹⁸ Gregg R Allison, *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment*, 2014, p. 159.

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, trans. Karl-H and Boniface Kruger, vol. vol. 6 (London: Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 391-392.

²⁰ Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 20.

grace and only the church can mediate and fulfill. Therefore mission was understood to be winning of converts and establishing of the Roman Catholic Church.²¹ Seeing the Roman Catholic Church as the only true institution prevented them from seeing other churches as legitimate manifestations of God's work here on earth.

Vatican II, however, brought a new era of missions in Roman Catholic history. According to the words of a Roman Catholic theologian, Robert Schreiter, Vatican changed the perspective of missions from that of 'extending the parameters of the church' to 'something that must motivate the very heart of the church'.²² Of course, the old concept of the exclusive mentality of the Church did not go away (or has gone away) overnight, but we began to see theologians rewording their understanding of church and missions as the two are intricately related. A case in point is that of Rahner's innovative, yet mistaken, articulation of the concept of the anonymous Christian based on one's 'desire for baptism', or more accurately the ancient doctrine of *catechumens*.²³ Since Vatican II, the Catholic Church has gathered many times and produced numerous statements emphasizing the necessity, intentionality, and urgency of the Church engaging in missions. They also have begun to view other Christians as co-laborers in Christ, even though they are still reluctant to surrender their conviction that they occupy the innermost place within the concentric circle.

²¹ Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, p. 244.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

²³ Catechumens refer to those who have manifested their desire to follow Christ but were in a liminal period of observation. They were professed Christians but not completely incorporated in the local body of Christ. For more discussion, see Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), pp. 152–184.

Some of the crucial documents regarding missions produced after Vatican II include *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975),²⁴ *Redemptoris Missio* (1990),²⁵ and Dialogue and Proclamation (1991).²⁶ Even though these documents came about as a result of addressing their specific contemporary issues and not a systematic presentation on missions per se, they touched on key issues of missions that eventually brought a new understanding of missions in the Catholic Church.²⁷

The encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* (2013),²⁸ and *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013)²⁹ are both straightforward mission statements of the Church. Even *Laudato Si'*³⁰, which in itself is not a direct

²⁴ “Evangelii Nuntiandi (December 8, 1975) | Paul VI,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

²⁵ “Redemptoris Missio (7 December 1990) | John Paul II,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.

²⁶ “DIALOGUE AND PROCLAMATION:,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

²⁷ Stephen B. Bevans, *A Century of Catholic Mission: Roman Catholic Missiology 1910 to Present*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series ; v. 15 (Oxford : Regnum Books International, 2013), 119.

²⁸ “Lumen Fidei (29 June 2013) | Francis,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_encyclica-lumen-fidei.html.

²⁹ “Evangelii Gaudium : Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World (24 November 2013) | Francis,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

³⁰ “Laudato Si’ (24 May 2015) | Francis,” accessed September 14, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html.

missionary document, calls for humanity to look for ways and measures to live in harmony with the rest of humans and God's creation by being faithful stewards. If one understands missions not only as a proclamation of the gospel but also as the Church's engaging in the world to bring about the kingdom of God, then even those encyclicals that were not mainly focused on evangelism have strong missional implications. Today, in the words of Roger Schroeder, a professor of Mission and culture in the Catholic Theological Union, "[the] official Catholic teaching on mission is founded upon three theologies of mission: participation in the mission of the Triune God (*missio Dei*), liberating service of the reign of God, and proclamation of Jesus as universal savior."³¹

We have briefly discussed how the shifting concept of the Church transformed the understanding of missions in the Roman Catholic theology. Once they forfeited their mistaken, if not parochial, the assumption of being only the true institution, their concept of missions took a healthier trajectory. Now we shall consider what deeply held conviction motivated the Protestant view of missions and how it evolved.

4 Mission in the Protestant Tradition

While the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology) plays a vital role in understanding missions in the Roman Catholic tradition, bibliology, specifically how the Bible is conceived, plays an indispensable role in the Protestant tradition, be it evangelical, fundamentalist, Pentecostal or those lenient to the Conciliar-Ecumenical movement. One need not invoke the Reformation movement based on the *Solas*, the one most heavily emphasized being the *Sola Scriptura*. It is true that Roman Catholic theologians, like Lamin Sanneh, recognize the role Scripture

³¹ Bevens, *A Century of Catholic Mission*, 120.

plays in shaping and reorienting one's worldview,³² but in the words of the British historian David Bebbington, it is the Evangelicals' (a subset of Protestantism) emphasis on the authority of the Scripture that distinguishes them from others.³³ Scott Sanquist agrees with Bebbington that the Scripture played such a prominent role in defining Protestantism that the first goal of the missionaries was not to build a church but to translate the Bible.³⁴ Ironically though, it is also their different interpretations of the Scripture that has, in the words of Jacobsen, "allowed Protestantism to become such a complex global movement with its thousands of different denominations."³⁵

Living up to their name *Protest-ants*, those who *protested* against the Catholic Church tradition began formulating their concept of missions based on the Bible (*Sola Scriptura*). Even though the outside world and even some Protestants use the term to refer to those who are neither Catholic nor Orthodox, and necessarily, therefore, include Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and some cults, I will discuss only two groups, Evangelicals, and Fundamentalists, under this section.

³² Sanneh considers translating the Scripture to the mother tongue so important that he argues "without translation there would be no Christianity or Christians." Lamin O. Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., c2003., 2003), 97. But in this regard, Sanneh is a dissenting, not a representational, voice of the Roman Catholic Church. The document can be accessed here: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P27.HTM (Accessed Sept. 14, 2017).

³³ Donald M. Lewis and Richard V. Pierard, *Global Evangelicalism: Theology, History & Culture in Regional Perspective* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, [2014], 2014), 20,

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

³⁵ Douglas G. Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, 38.

4.1 Evangelicalism

Evangelicalism is a broad term that holds together Christians with varying degree of beliefs within a spectrum of very conservative on the one end and more liberal on the other. The latter group is more accommodative and tends to favor such undertaking as ecumenical-conciliar (see below), whereas the former is more isolationist. Each group is compelled to its particular mode of expression by reading of the Scripture. For instance, at the risk of erring, I want to generalize that those who place more weight on the plain reading of the text tend to prioritize verbal evangelism over good works and those on the opposite spectrum tend to emphasize the good works over verbal evangelism. Putting it differently, those who uphold that the authority of the text lies only in the author's intended meaning, whether through the propositional text or the events, prioritize evangelism over social work. Therefore, people like David Hesselgrave, who believe that "Paul's teaching admits no special meaning beneath, above, or beyond the actual words of the Bible,"³⁶ would place a greater emphasis on such texts as Matt 28:18-19 and prioritize the verbal proclamation of the gospel.³⁷

In contrast to Hesselgrave's position, though not on the extreme another end, would be people like Bryan Myers and his like, who do not see any dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical.³⁸ Christopher Wright's position clarifies the point

³⁶ David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), p. 247.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³⁸ On the spectrum that emphasizes verbal proclamation are people Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2011), p. 62. On the other spectrum are people like Brian Woolnough and Ronald Sider: Brian Woolnough, *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, Regnum Edinburgh 2010 series (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2010), pp. 4-7; pp. 17-30. In

here. Wright believes that the authority of the text cannot be limited to just the meaning *in* the text but must also come from the larger authority to which the text points, namely the reality of God, the reality of the biblical story, and the reality of God's people.³⁹ What Wright has done is expand the notion of text to include not just the clear command of the text, but also the whole drama of redemption, including the existential reality of the life of God's people, Israel. Hence, the traditionally understood 'Great Commission' passage, Matthew 28, has relevance for the church as much as the Abrahamic mission.⁴⁰ Of course, Wright is not one of those who stretch such implications and equates salvation with socio-political deliverance and completely neglect evangelism. On a similar trajectory, but with a twist of ambiguity, John Stackhouse argues that we must not prioritize the Great Commission over the other Commandments, such as the Great Commandment of Matthew 22: 34-40, the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:26-28, and the New Commandment of John 13:34-35.⁴¹ He even goes on to argue, "[C]aring for the earth and making the best of it is our primary duty under God."⁴²

Evangelicals, especially those who are more accommodative, have had no problem involving in the global partnership for missions. In fact, such modern movements as the Edinburgh conference, WCC, and other national conferences owe their origin to Evangelicals. For all the accusations against Evangelicals for their divisive nature, Evangelicalism has been a

between are a host of others including John Stott, Christopher Wright, and Lalsangkima Pachuau.

³⁹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), pp. 53–54, accessed on December 5th, 2016.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁴¹ John G. Stackhouse, *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 209–220.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

champion in its endeavor for Christian unity in this modern period. Beginning from the famous World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910, through the formation of WCC in 1948, up until 2010 Edinburgh, Evangelicals have played important roles. In fact, the first modern ecumenical council in 1910 was the fruit of many other previous regional and international partnerships among mission agencies that evangelical missionaries and missions have orchestrated.⁴³

John R. Mott, the then renown Methodist layperson, largely contributed to the formation of the Edinburgh conference, WCC, and many other preceding and subsequent regional and interdenominational partnerships.⁴⁴ Another important milestone in the Evangelical missional endeavor is the Lausanne Conference in 1974, which brought together 2,700 participants from 150 countries.⁴⁵ Whether with the more renowned figure as Mott, or the obscure missionary in a remote village in Northeast India, Evangelicals saw missions as a biblical mandate for the whole church and were willing to co-operate for the advancement of the gospel.

4. 2 Fundamentalism

Sometimes Christian schisms make us pause to consider whether the old adage ‘love unites but doctrine divides’ is really true. Differences and divisions seem to be an inevitable effect of the Fall. Not all Evangelicals were ready to co-operate at the expense of doctrinal compromise, so they justify. One group among these is what today has been come to be known as Fundamentalists.⁴⁶ George Marsden correctly states that

⁴³ Lewis, Pierard, *Global Evangelicalism*, pp. 114–117.

⁴⁴ Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, pp. 217, 220, 255.

⁴⁵ *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1*, p. 253.

⁴⁶ I must however reiterate that the terms ‘fundamentalism, evangelicalism, and liberalism are to a certain degree relative terms that are fluid in meaning. My theological journey has shown again and again that people tend to see the other as more fundamentalist or

Fundamentalism cannot be understood in terms of a consistent ideology; they express anomalous views and commitment.⁴⁷ However, a discernible overarching mark of Fundamentalism in relation to the global context of missions would be their strong emphasis and preoccupation on eschatology to the extent that their view of history became anti-development and anti-humanist.⁴⁸ Their eschatology, particularly the immanent return of Christ and the pessimistic outlook of the world, which they deduced from the Baconian method of reading the Bible,⁴⁹ compelled them to focus on evangelizing the world and not be pre-occupied with Christian ecumenical concerns. After all, they see the Roman Empire as Satan's puppet,⁵⁰ and the Roman Catholic Church as subjugating a large number of the world population with her Popish superstitions.⁵¹ Moreover, they do not consider all the so-called Protestants as real Christians. In some regions, this secluded mentality becomes a catalyst in their withdrawal from the larger society. For instance, in the North America, the crushing defeat at the Scopes trial in in the 1920s, and the subsequent negative portrayal by the media, pushed the Fundamentalists to withdraw from the affairs of the

liberal depending on the theological spectrum measured from the person making the judgment.

⁴⁷ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 6–7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴⁹ The idea, which was popularized by Francis Bacon, argues that truth can be precisely deduced by gathering all the relevant data and evidences. Such approach left little room for the situation of the reader.

⁵⁰ J. N. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. 5 (London: G. Morrish, 1940), p. 536. Even though Darby lived and died (1800-1882) before the birth of Fundamentalism in the early 1900, his Dispensationalist idea was largely instrumental in bringing about the movement. Not all Dispensationalists are Fundamentalists but almost all Fundamentalists are Dispensationalist.

⁵¹ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 68.

popular culture and begin building their own ghetto.⁵² Fundamentalists found their own way of doing missions and to date have not participated in the larger ecumenical movements. Another subset of Evangelicalism, but a movement that manifest a peculiar and strong emphasis on the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary age, is Pentecostalism. This distinctive feature prompts us to treat them differently. To that, we shall now turn.

5 Mission in Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movement

Influenced by the strong commitment to the Bible exemplified by Protestant reformers of the 16th century, and the renewed revival of the Methodist and Holiness movement of the 19th century,⁵³ the Pentecostals manifested both a deep biblical commitment and strong, charismatic impulse. What distinguishes Pentecostalism from the rest of the Christian denominations is its emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit without restricting any of the New Testament spiritual gifts to the first century.⁵⁴ While the earlier Pentecostals placed great emphasis on the ongoing intervention of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life, such that the new experience may even be taken

⁵² American historian Larsen believes the Scopes trial, at the most, contributed only indirectly to the apparent decline of Fundamentalism. Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*, ISSL library: [no. 201] ([Cambridge: International Society for Science and Religion, 2007?], 2007), p. 229. My point here is that such a defeat added another reason to the withdrawal mindset that the Fundamentalist already possessed.

⁵³ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity / Allan Heaton Anderson* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 25–28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

to surpass the clear teaching of the Bible, a more robust theology has emerged in the recent years.⁵⁵

In this new paradigm, new revelations are considered not something that surpassed or contradict the Bible, but as God's continues the redemptive story, one that is consistent with the biblical story and that which the Bible must evaluate.⁵⁶ The desire to validate the Pentecostal authentic Christian experience compelled its adherers and sympathizers to develop a broader theological rationale.

Amos Yong, a prolific Pentecostal theologian, argues that a pneumatological approach to Christian theology brings balance to the undue optimism of the approach through 'God the Creator' on one hand and undue pessimism through Christocentric on the other.⁵⁷ Yong's point is that the indigenizing and pilgrim Christian principle in theologizing is best done through a pneumatological approach. He musters a strong case biblically and theologically. Regardless of one's agreement with Yong, he shows that Pentecostalism is no longer a phenomenon that lacks rich theological articulation.

Even though the birth of modern Pentecostalism has been attributed to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, in 1906, the exact origin of Pentecostalism is hard to pinpoint.⁵⁸ Allan Anderson, after surveying the various approaches to the history of its origin, concludes, "Although it is clear that several centers [sic] of Pentecostalism emerged in the first decade of the

⁵⁵ Douglas G. Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 2,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁵⁷ Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions / Amos Yong* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 21.

⁵⁸ David Westerlund, *Global Pentecostalism: Encounters with Other Religious Traditions*, Library of modern religion: 5 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), p. 1.

twentieth century, the movement was given national and international impetus at the Azusa Street."⁵⁹ Anderson's narrative unduly exalts the Azusa Revival by ignoring the many indigenous revival movements before the Azusa incident. Regardless, he is right in claiming that Pentecostalism spread like the wind, reaching to all four corners of the world within a short time. It seems, on the one hand, that their emphasis on the rights of the individual to live out Christianity in an authentic local context has created a diverse expression of faith, such that Pentecostalism seems to be defined regarding difference. However, on the other, the recognition that others have exposure to the same Spirit created a culture of solidarity across the globe.

Today, Pentecostalism is classified into various divisions. Jacobsen categorizes four types with various characteristics: Classical, Charismatic, Neo-charismatic, and Independents.⁶⁰ What Jacobsen describes as Charismatic Christianity, a movement that Bevans and Schroeder see as more tied explicitly to the Second Wave of Pentecostalism has more in common with the indigenous expression of Christianity in many parts of majority world. In this regard, Charismatic Christianity predates Pentecostalism.⁶¹ All Pentecostals are, to a certain degree, charismatics, but not all charismatics can be classified as Pentecostals, or at least the Azusa Pentecostal.

The charismatic nature of Christian expression, and the firm supernatural orientation to the existential engagement of the Holy Spirit that Pentecostalism provides found its fertile ground across the globe, especially among the indigenous groups, making it the world's fastest-growing Christian movement.⁶² Even though 'Pentecostal-like faith' existed before

⁵⁹ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ Douglas G. Jacobsen, *The World's Christians*, pp. 57–59.

⁶¹ Lewis, Pierard, *Global Evangelicalism*, pp. 22–23.

⁶² Sebastian C. H. Kim, Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion* (New York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 12, 215.

the coming of Western Pentecostalism, many of the indigenous Christians found it easy to align with the movement as they came into contact with it. The message and experience of the power of the Holy Spirit that surpasses any local powers was liberating for the indigenous people. The emphasis on the personal dimension of spirituality on the one hand, and on the other, the stress on the communal life bound by the power of the Spirit, enabled this movement to such gain rapid growth that Jenkins speculates these types of “denominations will represent a far larger segment of global Christianity” within a few decades.⁶³ Jenkins’ overt optimism may be questioned, but his observation that Pentecostal-like faith has become a dominant segment of the Christian tradition in many parts of the world remains true.

The rapid spread of Pentecostalism across the globe is a witness that it has been a missionary movement with a global target since its conception. Since Pentecostals were busy planting churches and engaging in broader mission activities, it is only in the recent decades that they began to intentionally map out their theology of missions systematically.

The first among those works, as pointed out by Julia and Wonsuk Ma, is the work of Melvin Hodges, *The Indigenous Church: A Complete Handbook on How to Grow Yong Churches*.⁶⁴ Since then, not only has Melvin’s book undergone several revisions and updates, but there has also been an influx of articles and books on this topic.

One among them is *Mission in The Spirit*,⁶⁵ in which the authors map out three spheres of Pentecostal mission: proclamation

⁶³ Philip Jenkins, *The next Christendom : The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 10.

⁶⁴ Julie C. Ma, Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology*, Regnum studies in mission (Eugene, Or. : Wipf & Stock, 2010), p. 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

with the establishment of local congregations as a goal, the care for the needy, and more profound and wider mission engagement. While each sphere has contributed to the growth of the movement as a global force, it is mainly the third sphere, with its emphasis on justice in social, economic, political, racial, and environmental areas⁶⁶ that Pentecostalism has come in closer contact both with the outside world and other Christian denominations.

Journals, such as *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* (started 2002), *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (started 1998), and the *Australian Pentecostal Studies* (started 1999), have become essential outlets for dispersing their ideas and engaging with the broader community. Pentecostalism's emphasis on the pneumatocentric approach of doing theology found its sympathizers even within the Roman Catholic theologians, such as Donald L Gelpi and the charismatic Baptist Clark Pinnock.⁶⁷ Today Pentecostals actively participate in the broader Christian global network such as World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism (LCWE), and World Council of Churches (WCC).⁶⁸ A deep commitment on their part to be part of the global Christian network for missions has led to the formation of a Pentecostal and Roman Catholic dialogue in 1972 and with the Reformed Churches from 1996-2000 producing five documents on various issues related to church life and global mission.⁶⁹ This Christian network and unity, as the Pentecostal theologians Julie and Wonsuk Ma put it, is not the end goal for Pentecostals but a means to impact the wider world for the sake of God's kingdom.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

⁶⁷ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Amos Yong, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology, and Theology of Mission* (Lanham, MD : University Press of America, 2002), p. xvii.

⁶⁸ Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, p. 274.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 328-329.

⁷⁰ Julie C. Ma, Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit*, p. 272.

6 Conciliar and Ecumenical Missiology

The word conciliar and ecumenical is used here to refer to that aspect of Christian attitude and practice that fosters interdenominational Christian unity to address new challenges in new ways without emphasizing one particular doctrine. Even though the concept of ecumenical missiology found its origin in the Edinburgh conference (1910),⁷¹ it was through subsequent formations of global entity, such as the International Missionary Council (IMC, 1921), World Council of Churches (WCC, 1948), and its mission tributary Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME, 1961), that replaced IMC and various other national councils and regional councils that the ecumenism envisioned in 1910 was materialized.⁷² The CWME became a platform on which the Eastern Orthodox Church found its entry into the ecumenical fellowship in 1970.⁷³ Even though the Catholic Church would not become an official member of WCC, she has acknowledged that the contemporary effort to arrive at higher Christian unity is the work of the Holy Spirit⁷⁴ and her members would participate in different capacities.⁷⁵

As a global entity given to address new challenges in new ways, the Willingen Conference in 1952 endeavored to resolve the challenged posed to the traditional way of understanding missions. In this new era of decolonization, the traditional understanding of missions that was intricately tied to

⁷¹ Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ecumenical Missiology: Contemporary Trends, Issues, and Themes* (Bangalore: United Theological College, 2002), p. 29.

⁷² *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1*, p. x.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

⁷⁴ "The Catholic Church — World Council of Churches," Church Family, accessed September 19, 2017, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/church-families/the-catholic-church>.

⁷⁵ *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, V 1*, p. xi.

colonialism and the expansion of the church were challenged.⁷⁶ Such old ways seem no longer viable to the new generation. There was substantial push to relegate the church to the periphery as the new paradigm suggested that missions be liberated from the church centered approach. The idea of *missio Dei*, though the term was coined only later,⁷⁷ was given a secularized interpretation by such men as Johannes Hoekendijk.⁷⁸ Even though ideas such as that of Hoekendijk's will eventually be rejected, the idea of missions centered on the Trinitarian God, not on the church, will germinate and define the future articulation of missions.

The International Missionary Council integrated with the World Council of Churches in 1961 and eventually become the Commission on World Evangelism and Mission, which took up the mantle of organizing many of the subsequent missionary conferences - Mexico City (1963), Bangkok (1973), Melbourne (1983), San Antonio (1989), El Salvador da Bahia (1996), Athens (2005) and Edinburg (2010). What distinguished Edinburg 2010 from 1910 was its large network of representations from different denominations, geography, and gender. In all these endeavors the ecumenical council has successfully navigated to pull together Christians from various traditions. Their success perhaps comes from their openness to listen and their commitment not to align with any particular expression of Christian faith. This openness without any doctrinal demarcation, however, has become a stumbling block for some evangelicals who found doctrinal precision so crucial in Christian unity.

⁷⁶ Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ecumenical Missiology*, p. 33.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷⁸ Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, p. 291.

7 Conclusion

This paper has briefly traced the historical and theological development of the five confessional traditions—Orthodox, Catholic, Protestants/Charismatic, Pentecostal, and Ecumenical/Conciliar. While the historical development investigated, this paper has focused on the theological assumption that drove the impulse. The takeaway from this short survey and analysis is that no tradition originated in a vacuum. One's emphasis or de-emphasis on doctrinal precision has directed the trajectory of a particular confessional movement. Since such is the case, it would be worthwhile to contemplate not just what we believe and why, but also what directions our beliefs/disbeliefs might stir our path.

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