

*'Increase our faith' (Lk 17:5)*

**JESUS CHRIST THE WAY TO THE FATHER:**

*The Challenge of the Pentecostals*

by

**John Mansford Prior, svd**

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## INTRODUCTION

Asia has witnessed an unprecedented resurgence of religious vitality over the past fifty years. The religions of Asia have 'reawakened' as countries regained their political independence, embarked on economic development and become enveloped by globalisation. This renaissance has also encompassed all varieties of Christianity, the most dramatic upsurge taking place in the Pentecostal/charismatic sector. We are being challenged by recent, indigenous Pentecostal churches which have rooted themselves in areas of Asian culture that we tend to neglect: healing and spirit possession.

For over thirty years the FABC has encouraged a three-fold dialogue with cultures, religions and the poor. These reflections have been developed through a host of consultations and publications. Nevertheless, the 'pentecostalisation' or 'sectarianisation' (Diotallevi 2003:107-121; Melloni 2003:8) of Asian Christianity has not received due attention. Responding to an invitation from the Pontifical Council for Culture, this essay examines this issue.<sup>1</sup>

The challenge is not just from outside 'sects', for in opposing the 'sects' we may in turn become sectarian. We resist sectarianism through engagement with ecumenical and interfaith dialogue. During the FABC Jubilee Assembly Antonio De Los Reyes urged that basic ecclesial communities and the charismatic/Pentecostal movement be brought together. While fully concurring with his suggestion, this essay points out the complexity of the issue. In general the charismatic movement and basic ecclesial communities cater for different social sectors and have different takes on Vatican II; meanwhile neither neatly conforms to the conventional parish - the more dynamic they are the more 'extra-parochial' they tend to be. Both movements challenge us to re-root our theology and pastoral practice in oral or 'pre-literary' culture.

Part 1 surveys the development of Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity in the *five Asian countries* with significant numbers of Catholics while Part 2 reviews a growing awareness of 'sects and new religious movements' in *church documents*. Briefly Part 3 looks at how social *science* understands the 'rise of the sects' before, in Part 4, taking up the *pastoral challenge* to link the dynamism of Pentecostal/charismatic movements with the social conscience of basic ecclesial communities.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was written for the Asian Convention of the Pontifical Council for Culture planned for Jogjakarta, Indonesia, 12<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006.



## **1.] PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS IN ASIA**

### **Background and Characteristics**

The dramatic rise of Pentecostalism from a minuscule minority 50 years ago to become a major stream in contemporary Asian and global Christianity faces us with issues of fundamental theological and cultural import. Not just Catholicism but the whole of Christianity is undergoing a major shift from the global North and West to the South and East where more than 60% of the world's Christians now live. This marks a move from the traditional spiritual, theological and ethical centre of mainline Christianity to the periphery (Matthey 2004:163). Pentecostals are a major factor in this paradigmatic shift.

Pentecostalism represents a decisive structural break with the religious cultures of Catholic, East Syrian, Orthodox and Reformation Christianity. Concomitant with this, the rise of charismatic movements within the Catholic and Protestant Churches is creating social diversity, religious non-conformity and cultural pluralism within the urban parish and therefore in virtually all dioceses. This split is as much cultural as it is theological; the Pentecostal and charismatic movements thrive in oral, narrative and inclusive cultures while conventional Christianity is rooted in literary, conceptual and exclusive traditions.

The opening years of the twentieth century saw a series of independent renewals among Protestants that led to the Pentecostal movement (Hwa Yung 2003:65-82; 2005). Pentecostal renewals are recorded in Korea (1903), India (1905), Manchuria (1908), and most spectacularly at Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, USA (1906-1909) (Blumhofer 2006:59-64). In its beginnings, Pentecostalism was interracial, pacifist, alive with social concern and enhanced the position of women. From its inception the movement was missionary.<sup>2</sup> Early Pentecostal missionaries ventured abroad with limited financial resources, little preparation and almost no knowledge of the language and culture of the people they were attempting to evangelise. Pentecostalism spread without benefit of institutions. The spread of the Pentecostal movement was facilitated by ease of travel and two-way migration, such as Filipinos and Koreans returning from the USA. The movement has moved readily across cultures and as such is a manifestation of modernity and the religious mobilisation of cultural minorities.

Without any agreed set of doctrines, but with a dynamic primal spirituality, Pentecostals of a great variety of hues celebrate an oral

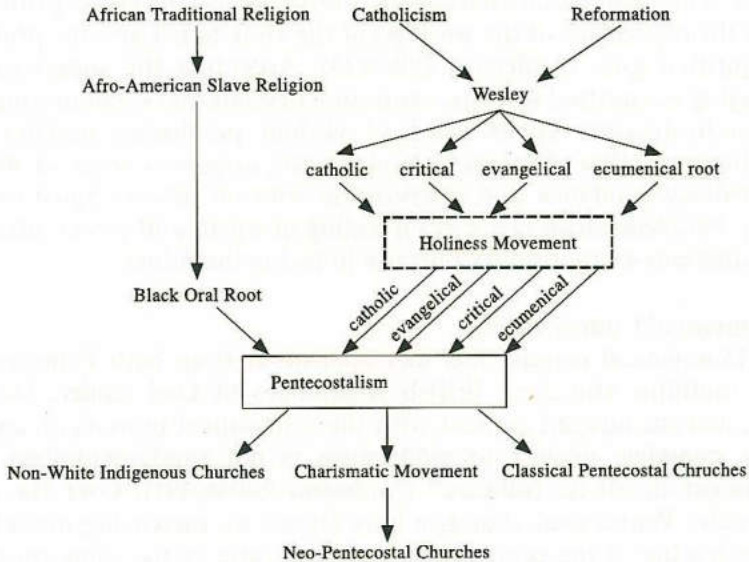
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<sup>2</sup> The missionary thrust of the movement had a tremendous impact on Protestant bodies such as the many youth movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (YMCA, YWCA, SVMFM etc.). For a comprehensive analysis see Hooper 2005.



liturgy, proclaim a narrative theology and witness, create maximum participation, include dreams and visions into personal and public forms of worship and have renewed the relationship between the natural and the supernatural through healing (Hollenweger 1997:18-24; 1999:36-39).<sup>3</sup>

The multiple roots of Pentecostalism have been described at length by Walter Hollenweger. He has placed the black, catholic, evangelical, critical and ecumenical roots into a simple diagram as follows (1997:2) :



### *Three Waves of Pentecostalism*

The first wave, or classical Pentecostals, established its presence slowly during the first half of the twentieth century. The second wave, or the charismatic movement within mainline Christianity, has flowered since the 1960s. The third wave, or Neo-Pentecostals, consists of more recent independent, post-denominational groups and indigenous churches such as the house churches of China. These churches are more ecumenical, experiential and pneumatologically oriented than classic Pentecostals (Anderson 2000: 129-132). They are 'contextualising from within' using the categories and root metaphors of local cultures (Ma 2003). Their pastors have little or no formal theological training. Worldwide there are around twenty thousand independent, indigenous

<sup>3</sup> For a Catholic view on the relationship between the physical and the spiritual see Hocken 1989:123-133.

post-denominational Pentecostal churches which now form a clear majority in the Pentecostal/charismatic movement.

### *Characteristics*

With exuberant worship, an emphasis upon subjective religious experience and spiritual gifts, the Pentecostal and charismatic movements speak the language of experiential spirituality by which they live out the will of God in daily life. This 'intuitive', 'immediate', 'literal' spirituality is the 'essence' of Pentecostalism (Land 1993; Villafaña 1993). The Pentecostal/charismatic movement is concerned primarily with the *experience* of the working of the Holy Spirit and the *practice* of spiritual gifts (Anderson 2004b:14). Accenting the supernatural, engaging in spiritual warfare, exorcising demons and encountering the divine in dreams, visions, words of wisdom, prophecies, tongues and the interpretation of tongues, Pentecostals acquire a sense of divine immediacy, guidance and intervention with an intense Spirit-driven piety. Pentecostalism generates a feeling of worth and power, offering its adherents extraordinary purpose in facing the future.

### *Ecumenical Conversations*

Ecumenical contact has met opposition from both Pentecostals and mainline churches. British Assemblies of God leader, Donald Gee, has encouraged contact with the ecumenical movement saying, "The complete answer to modernism is not fundamentalism, but Pentecost in all its fullness." (Anderson 2004a:491). Over the past ten years Pentecostal churches have shown an increasing interest in participating in the ecumenical movement and at the same time the ecumenical movement has been showing a mounting awareness of the Pentecostals.

South African Pentecostal David J. du Plessis took the initiative to contact Cardinal Bea in 1960 and was the one Pentecostal observer during the Third Session of Vatican II (du Plessis 1977:199-247). This led to a formal dialogue which since 1972 has involved five quinquennium (1972-1976; 1977-1982; 1985-1989; 1990-1994; 1998-).<sup>4</sup> Walter Hollenweger in his life and academic work promoted ecumenical dialogue with the WCC, Catholic and Independent churches (Hollenweger 1997; Jongeneel 1992). Ecumenical relations between Pentecostals and Catholics have not advanced uniformly nor have they managed to eradicate a history of "territorial disputes and border skirmishes" (Hollenweger 1996:185-216).<sup>5</sup> Between 1972 - 1997 the Catholic-Pentecostal international dialogue involved classical Pentecostals only. Thus Hollenweger has suggested that more progress



would be made in the formal conversations if representatives of the classical churches of the North Atlantic were complemented with Pentecostals from the Third World and that a platform be given to minority positions in both churches: "Perhaps it is no longer necessary to keep the dialogue partner fixed in positions which might still be 'official' but which are no longer viable in either community" (p.211). Since the 1998 Plenary the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity has encouraged conversations in Europe between Catholic charismatics and Pentecostals.

Until 1996 the only international ecumenical Pentecostal dialogue was with the Catholic Church. The first time a significant number from the Pentecostal movement participated in a WCC Conference was as recently as 2005 (Athens).<sup>6</sup> This openness of the WCC to Pentecostalism has caused not a little concern (Athyal 2005:535-545; Grundmann 2005:546-556). In Asia some Pentecostal-like churches are in contact with their respective National Council of Churches.

### **An Intuitive Reading of the Bible**

Pentecostals respect the authority of scripture as an inspired text and once tended towards literalism. However today many Asian Pentecostals emphasise an intuitive reading of scripture rather than a

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<sup>4</sup> None of the documents are available on the Vatican website (June 2006). However, the *Information Service* of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity publishes a short report on each July meeting and the reports and evaluations that are presented at its Plenary Assemblies as well as the Final Reports of each quinquennium. For First Phase Final Report see No. 32 (1976) III, 32-37; Second Phase No. 55 (1984) II-III, 72-80; Third Phase No.75 (1990) IV, 179-191; Fourth Phase No.97 (1998) I-II, 38-56. The Fourth Report has a critical commentary by Thomas Stransky (pp.57-61). *One in Christ: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* (London) also published the official report of the first conversation (XII (1976) 4, 309-318). In addition to the mini-reports of the July meetings, *One in Christ* has also published some of the papers delivered during those meetings (XIII (1977) 1/2, 3-86; XIX (1983) 4, 306-386) and commentaries by participants (Hocken 1994:101-123; McDonnell 1995b:20-31). A detailed two volume study of Roman Catholic/Pentecostal dialogue is that of the first co-secretary, Sandidge (1987). Commentaries on the ongoing Catholic/Pentecostal dialogue can be found in the Pentecostal journal *Pneuma* (Maryland) (1983:34-45; 1985:41-60; 1989 11/2; 1996:185-216; 2003:93-96; 2004:99-107). An entire issue published the first three Final Reports together with 13 responses (1990 12/2); the first issue of 1999 published the report of the fourth quinquennium with another 13 responses. One issue was devoted to dialogue with the charismatic movement (1994 16/2) another to Pentecostals in dialogue (1995 17/2) See also Kilian McDonnell, "The International Classical Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue", *Pneuma* 17 (1995a) 175-188.

<sup>5</sup> Terry L. Cross (2006:3-22) also details Pentecostal-Catholic skirmishes, in particular on his own Pentecostal side.

<sup>6</sup> Contact between Pentecostals and the WCC since 1998 can be traced through the pages of *International Review of Mission* (IRM). For Athens papers see IRM 94 (2005) No.374. An issue of *Pneuma* has focused upon the report of the dialogue between Pentecostal and Reformed Churches (2001 23/1).



rigidly fundamentalist one. This leads them to take a special interest in the supernatural elements of scripture such as miracles, visions and healings and a belief in the continuing power of prophecy.

Experiencing a sense of transience and frailty in an uncertain world, Asian Christians can identify strongly with sections of the bible that mean little to Western believers, such as passages about healing and spiritual warfare, apocalyptic passages and readings that demonstrate a real suspicion of the secular state. In Asia these speak to daily realities. The bible has also found a congenial home among Asian communities who identify with the pressing social and economic realities it portrays in both Testaments. The bible has become a fresh, authoritative source and guide for daily living.<sup>7</sup>

This intuitive reading should not necessarily be identified with a literalist or fundamentalist one, the only method described as 'dangerous' by the Pontifical Biblical Commission when it examined over a dozen approaches to reading the bible.<sup>8</sup> Fundamentalist Pentecostalism is largely, though not entirely, confined to the 'prosperity gospel' of white, middle-class North Atlantic. Elsewhere a fundamentalistic approach has evolved into a more intuitive one. Western scholars contrast the Pentecostal counter-culture with mainline church culture as 'ecstatic' rather than 'technical', 'holistic' rather than 'analytical', 'submissive' rather than 'activist' and 'intuitively certain' rather than 'pluralistically relative' (Coleman 1983:viii).

In Asia, Africa and Latin American a majority of Pentecostals-charismatics belong to grassroots movements and have become a 'powerful movement of the poor... pregnant with potential for the transformation of society' (Johns 1993:78).

In line with both *Dei verbum* and *Gaudium et spes*, conciliar Catholics read the bible in the light of Asian realities which push them to address their faith to issues of poverty and social injustice, political violence and corruption, communalism and social reconciliation and to face the question of religious pluralism. In principle this contextual approach does not deny the value of an 'emotional' or intuitive one as long as the latter is not reduced to personal feelings that blend out critical thinking or to private piety devoid of social conscience.

### Asia

Pentecostalism has set its stoutest roots among Asian ethnic minorities and social classes which lack political or ideological power.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See also "Hermeneutics: Who Interprets Scripture Correctly" in Hollenweger 1997:307-325. Also Kärkkäinen (1998: 337-359) reads *Dei Verbum* with sympathetic Pentecostal eyes.

<sup>8</sup> *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Vatican City, 1993.

While some of these groups have little economic clout, such as members of the house churches in China, others, like the professional class in India and Chinese traders in Southeast Asia, are prosperous. The national networks in Asia are largely autonomous local congregations. They are demonstrating their potential for mobilising large numbers of people to create institutional structures capable of performing various educational, community development, social service and political functions. The past 30 years has witnessed Asian Pentecostalism move from marginality into the mainstream, from being a 'third force' among Asian Christian communities to fast becoming the 'first force' expanding more rapidly than both Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Since 1950 Pentecostal growth has outstripped the growth of all other branches of Christianity. During 1970-1990 alone Pentecostal numbers tripled. Some 43% of Asian Christians are now Pentecostal/charismatic (Ma 2005:496).<sup>10</sup>

#### PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS IN ASIA

	Classic Pentecostals	Charismatics	Neo-Pentecostals
China	47,686 (0%)	629,491 (1%)	53.6 m. (99%) = 54.3 m.
India	1.3 m. (4%)	5 m. (15%)	27.2 m. (81%) = 33.5 m.
Philippines	765,813 (4%)	11.7 m. (58%)	7.6 m. (38%) = 20 m.
Indonesia	1.4 m. (15%)	971,415 (10%)	7 m. (75%) = 9.5 m.
S. Korea	2.4 m. (32%)	2 m. (27%)	3.2 m. (42%) = 7.6 m.
Vietnam	51,101 (7%)	157,802 (20%)	588,097 (74%) = 798,000
Brazil	24.8 m. (31%)	34 m. (42%)	21 m. (26%) = 80 m.
USA	5 m. (7%)	19.4 m (26%)	5.7 m. (68%) = 75 m.

#### Notes

1. Numbers taken from the 2002 edition of *The New international Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess (ed.). Even if the figures are inflated, the trend is clear. Barrett (2006:28) gives a world total of Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neo-Pentecostals of 526,916,000 in mid-2000 growing by another 70 million by mid-2006.
2. 'Pentecostals' are the classic churches reaching back to the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 'Charismatics' are Pentecostal-like movements within mainline Christianity primarily in the Catholic Church. 'Neo-Pentecostals' ('Neo-Charismatics') are the 'third wave' of the Pentecostal renewal of more recent indigenous and independent churches.

<sup>9</sup> Jungja Ma outlines critical social issues that form the context for Pentecostal mission (1999:185-189) and contemporary social challenges (pp. 189-193).

<sup>10</sup> Wonsuk Ma is quoting Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2001). Not everybody accepts Barrett's figures.



As the majority of Asian Pentecostal churches are less than two generations old, culturally they are still undergoing a 'severing process' (Ma 2005:504-505), that is, they are continuing to mark out their distinctiveness from the surrounding culture. In actual fact, much Pentecostal phenomena has linked up with popular religiosity and shamanistic practice. Charged to 'win the lost', they are not yet inclined towards inter-faith dialogue, although reflections by younger Pentecostal scholars on religious pluralism and dialogue are increasing (e.g. Yong 2003, 2005).

The following notes are in no measure comprehensive. They aim to sketch the scope of the challenge Catholics are facing as Pentecostal communities become a major Christian force in China, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia and India.

### **China**

The first Pentecostals arrived in China in 1907 hoping to renew the entire missionary enterprise.<sup>11</sup> However, by 1915 they ended up forming their own separate agencies and institutions much like other denominations, although a good number of Pentecostal missionaries remained independent, unaffiliated to any organisation (Bays and Johnson 2002:58-64). In the Shandong revival of 1930-1932 Baptists and Presbyterians who were baptised in the Spirit were hurled to the ground and engaged in 'holy laughter'. They grew rapidly at a time when they faced severe opposition (Anderson 2004b:133).

### *Indigenous Movements*

Pentecostalism in China is a grassroots movement, thriving in oral traditions which emphasise charismatic, change-oriented and action-motivated mentalities (Bays 1993:161-179). The stress on the miraculous and the supernatural proved to fit better with traditional Chinese folk religiosity than did the increasingly institutionalised older missions. Pentecostals are considerably less structured and centralised than other missions and gave more scope for talented Chinese co-workers to rise faster and have more responsibility. The nature of Pentecostalism, with its egalitarianism and making God's direct revelation available to all in dramatic fashion, meant that any Chinese believer could have the same access to God and to the gifts of the Spirit as the foreign missionaries. The focus is upon spiritual piety intertwined with popular religiosity (Yong 2005:53; Anderson 2000: 118-123).

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Bays (1993:161-179) outlines the history of revival in China and the first thirty years of Pentecostalism in China (Bays 1995:124-143).



The most important Chinese Pentecostal church of the twentieth century is the radically anti-foreign and rigidly exclusivist millenarian *International Assembly of the True Jesus Church* founded by (Paul) Wei Enbo in Beijing between 1917 and 1919 independent of foreign direction (Bays 1995: 124-143). By the late 1940s the True Jesus Church had over 100 thousand adherents. In 1958 it was banned as counter-revolutionary by the Communist government and its leaders jailed. However, at that time it was already established in Taiwan and today has congregations among the Chinese diaspora on every continent. Since 1980 the *True Jesus Church* has re-emerged in China becoming strong enough to achieve recognition with possibly up to three million members. This movement practises Pentecostal phenomena such as speaking in tongues, trembling, singing, leaping and dancing in the Spirit (Bays and Johnson 2002:63; Anderson 2004b:134). The movement is indigenous in its supernaturalistic cosmology, its emphasis on filial piety (transferred to a Jesus piety) and in its symbiosis between spirit possession and Spirit baptism (Bays 1995:132-137; Anderson 2000:115-132; Yong 2005:53).

### *House Church Movement*<sup>12</sup>

By 1949 the Pentecostal movement had reached over 500 thousand members but during the first twenty years of Mao's rule steadily declined to around 150 thousand. An unexpected but significant development for Chinese Christianity was the rise of the house church movement (Anderson and Tang 2005:411-488). These cell groups emphasise informality, spontaneity and personal experience stressing personal evangelism. They remained quietly active after 1949 and were better prepared for the repression of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). House meetings were highly dangerous and groups had to remain very small to avoid detection (Wesley 2004:123). Today many ethnic minority churches collectively have over a million members. However, it would be misleading to describe all houses churches as either Pentecostal or charismatic.

From the cultural revolution, when open religious activity was banned, until 1995 the Chinese Church grew from perhaps less than two million to anything between 40 and 80 million. By the year 2000 China had more Pentecostals and charismatics than any single country in the world except Brazil and the USA. Catholic charismatics number over a million (out of perhaps 12 million Catholics in China) and are

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<sup>12</sup> For a brief study of the house church movement see Thurman 1992.

found in both the government-recognised and unrecognised sections of the church. Today Chinese Pentecostalism remains egalitarian and theologically untrained. Its focus on the miraculous and otherworldly aspects of Christianity allows it to maintain its distance from the government recognised churches (Tang 2005:472; Yong 2005:52).

Further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century China might well boast the largest number of Christians of any Asian country and the largest number of Pentecostals, charismatics and Neo-Pentecostals in the world.<sup>13</sup>

## **Korea**

### ***Background***

Since introduced in 1884 Protestant Christianity has proceeded to become the nation's largest religion with over one fifth of the total population of South Korea.<sup>14</sup> Since 1910, the first year of Japanese occupation, Protestantism has doubled every ten years. Catholic Christianity was introduced to Korea in 1784 by a group of lay intellectuals. After bouts of severe persecution for nearly a century (with more than eight thousand martyrs, a quarter of the Catholic population, during 1866-1867 alone) Catholicism has steadily grown to over four million members to be the country's third largest religious group after Protestantism and Buddhism.

Kim Byong-suh (Kim 1985:60-64) classifies the growth of Protestantism in Korea into three time periods: first, growth with an emancipation motif (1884-1910); second, growth with a pioneering spirit (1906-1930); and third, growth with sectarian factionalism (1940-1960).

Christianity has been the principle agent of economic, political and social modernisation in South Korea. At the same time key aspects of indigenous religious belief and practice have been absorbed into both Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Christianity has also introduced several key values that mark modernity such as freedom, human rights, democracy and equality. Christianity is not only a means of entry into modern society but also an access to what is believed to be a more advanced civilisation, a vision of how things might or ought to be. Christians have been prominent in twentieth century independence and democratic movements. Conversion to Christianity came to mean enlightenment (Kim 2000:112-119).

<sup>13</sup> Projections differ widely from Jenkins' (2002:90, 223) stable 60 million Chinese Christians between now and 2050 to Schering' (2006:94) growth of between 5 to 10 million a year leading to 130 million Christians in state-recognised churches and a further 70 million house church, largely Pentecostal-like, believers.

<sup>14</sup> Figures differ from a total Christian population of 26% in South Korea to the 41% of Barrett's World Christian Encyclopedia (2001).



Hollenweger, following Yoo (1988), divides Korean Pentecostalism into three streams: fundamentalist Pentecostalism (from 1900 onwards), mystical Pentecostalism (since 1930s), and *Minjung* Pentecostalism (since 1970s) (Hollenweger 1997:99-105).

### *Fundamentalist Pentecostalism*

Pentecostal characteristics such as healing, gifts of the Spirit and supernatural miracles were manifested in South Korea a quarter of a century before the arrival of the first Pentecostal missionary in 1928.<sup>15</sup> The first revival began at Wonsan in 1903 and reached a second wave in Wonsan, Pyongyang and Seoul in 1905-1906 reaching a climax the following year at the Pyongyang meetings. There were many miracles, healings and the casting out of demons. At the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 it was stated that, "the Korean Revival... has been a genuine Pentecost." The Spirit-filled people of Korea spread the gospel in spite of persecution during the Japanese occupation (Eim 2002:234-246). The (Pentecostal) Korea Holiness Church (KHC) was established in 1907 and today is the third largest Protestant body in Korea.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to liberation in 1945 there were 67 new religious bodies in Korea according to the report of the Governor General of Korea. Today about 300 kinds of new religion, including new foreign religions, are being propagated.<sup>17</sup> This 'explosion' of new religious movements came about when a number of factors coalesced during the occupation and then rapid social change after independence. In the first place, as Syn-Duk Choi (1987:113) notes, new religious movements arise after a religious system loses some of its ability to satisfy various individual and group needs. In the second place, with the introduction of Christianity, Confucianism lost its 500-year monopoly as the only norm for morality and the field was open. In the third place, the precarious political and economic conditions during the Japanese occupation brought about cultural confusion. Occupied by a foreign power, people looked for a saviour whose arrival would solve their spiritual problems. In the fourth place, rapid social change and mobility since 1950 has created cultural conflicts, alienation and emotional starvation. Existing religious groups, including the churches, were failing to answer felt needs, which are, a) a sense of confidence in the face of despair, hate and anxiety and, b) the

<sup>15</sup> The classic theological history of Korean Pentecostal-like movements and churches is that of Ryu Tong-shik which is in Korean (see Kim 2006). The first book length historical-theological study in English is that of Yoo Boo-Woong (1988).

<sup>16</sup> For the historiography of the KCH see, "The Rise of the Korea Holiness Church", Meesaeng Lee Choi. Ph.D. dissertation (Drew), 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Apart from completely new indigenous religions, Syn-Duk Choi notes that Buddhism has given birth to some 49 new religious movements, Christianity to 40 and Shamanism to 27.



ability to integrate the social order. The churches had become centred on their own organisational concerns, largely ignoring the thirst of the masses for answers to life's quest.

### *Yoido Full Gospel Church*

The most prominent fundamentalist Pentecostal church today is (David) Cho Yong-gi's Full Gospel Church.

Cho Yong-gi (b. 1936) received his commission from the Lord after a critical illness (tuberculosis), visions and after meeting a Pentecostal missionary. Commencing with five members in 1958, by 1973 there were 12,500. Between 1973 and 1975 the church increased by 83% and between 1975-1977 increased by a further 121%. Cho Yong-gi now has the largest parish in the world (Yoido Centre) where up to one million parishioners worship each Sunday.<sup>18</sup> The leading feature of the Full Gospel Church's doctrines is the teaching of the three-fold salvation – physical (health), spiritual (forgiveness) and material (prosperity) with emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit (based on 3 John 2).<sup>19</sup> Weekly sermons give power and hope in simple, positive catch phrases such as: "Think it, see it, name it, speak it – in boldness." And, "Through visualising and dreaming you can incubate your future and hatch the results."<sup>20</sup> The most common reason for joining the Full Gospel Church is 'to get healed'. Yonggi Cho's theology of the three-fold blessing has produced a powerful social movement for a better life; illness, poverty and business failure are due to sin and spiritual impurity (Syn-Duk 1987:123; Myung 2003:159-171) This mega-church has retained its cohesion through its emphasis upon the home cell group as the focus of pastoral care, discipleship and evangelism (Cho 1997). By 1982 the Full Gospel Church had 116 missionaries working in 17 countries.<sup>21</sup> Both Lee's revival and Cho's Yoido church are therapeutic in nature.

Perhaps half of the parishioners joined the Full Gospel Church due to the persuasion of family members or friends, another fifth joined to recover from illness. The third reason, a mere 6%, joined to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. Women outnumber men by more than two to one. Members have an educational attainment at or below a high school level. There is a preponderance of working class and middle class. Cho's Full Gospel Church stresses the stability of the family and its role

<sup>18</sup> At the WCC WME Conference in Athens (May 2005) church membership was given as 760,000. See Kim 2006:160 footnote 26.

<sup>19</sup> "Beloved I pray that all may go well with you (material blessing) and that you may be in good health (physical blessing), just as it is well with your soul (spiritual blessing)." (3 Jn. 2)

<sup>20</sup> Yoido Full Gospel television website <http://www.fgtv.com>

<sup>21</sup> There are at least 8,000 Korean Protestant missionaries working abroad.

in society. Its conservative ideas about family structure and the role of family members appear to go against the trend in the rapidly changing society of Korea. The basis of Korean social and cultural structure has been Confucian teachings, allegiance to traditional values.

Eungi Kim (Kim 2000:112-119) notes a plausible affinity between Shamanism and the spirit of capitalism. Neither passivity nor fatalism is inherent in Shamanism whose followers work hard in order to achieve success to realise their Shamanism-induced wish for material success. They are free to work hard as they are emotionally secure that they have done everything, spiritual and practical, to ensure success. Further, the churches combine personal responsibility and inventiveness, both needed in an entrepreneurial economy (Cox 1995:219). Hollenweger (1997:99-105) has suggested a positive link between Cho's theology and Korean shamanism and that this cross-fertilisation can take either a conservative or a radical path.

It must be emphasised, however, that most Korean Pentecostals reject any notion of syncretism; their message is that of classical Pentecostalism. For instance, Dongsoo Kim (1999:123-139) does not believe in any direct shamanistic influence. Nonetheless both movements are similar in that they perform an analogous role in unravelling *han*, the 'wounded heart', the deep pain felt by a people whose feelings and dignity had been battered by occupation, civil war and poverty. He points to close parallels not only between the function of Pentecostalism and shamanism in peoples lives, but also between the role of the pastor and the shaman and between the methods used by both movements. Similarly Anderson (2003:85-105) notes not just the similarity between Korean Pentecostalism and shamanism but the equally strong continuity with the biblical record; biblical Pentecostalism has much in common with primal (shamanic) religiosity. For Anderson it is not a question of syncretism but rather of creative contextualisation "to the felt needs of a people" (2003:105).

### *Mystical Pentecostalism*

The Prayer Mountain Movement is an indigenous Korean Pentecostal movement. A Methodist minister, Lee Yong-do (1901-1933), after graduating from bible college in 1928, went to Kumkang Mountain where he spent ten days in prayer and fasting. He saw a vision and heard a voice from heaven calling him 'to cast out demons'. In 1930 he organised Pyongyang Prayer group. Highly critical of church leaders constrained by the missionaries' theology, Lee was banned by both the Presbyterian and his own Methodist Church. He preached an individual, internalised spirituality involving spiritual warfare and



personal piety (Kim 2006:159). He died of tuberculosis when only 33 years old.

The Prayer Mountain Movement took off after liberation creating a space for prayer, fasting and bible meditation. Even though there were many Buddhist temples in the mountains, there were no Christian prayer mountains in Korea before independence. In 1942 Woon Mong-ra established *Aehyangsook* (love-country-class), a community to create a country of love. The spirit of *Aehyangsook* is expressed in the five-phrase expression: "worship God absolutely, love other people as yourself, carry the truth, commune with the earth, and study in life". In 1947 thousands gathered to be blessed at this mountain from the four corners of the country. This included the blessing of solving life's problems, healing the sick and casting out poverty. Ra travelled from village to village returning to Yongmun Mountain to recover his spiritual power by prayer, fasting and bible meditation. There he experienced the presence of the Lord and received the gift of tongues and prophecy. In 1954 some ten thousand people held a revival on the mountain.

More prayer mountains were established during the 1980s than in any other period, more than half near Seoul. Christians in urban areas look for a solitary place where they can be with God personally; on the mountain people can concentrate on prayer. Christians long for spiritual experiences and the mountains emphasise the experiential dimension of Christian life. Christians visit prayer mountains to solve their life problems in business, family and personal struggles and to receive physical and spiritual healings. This 'mountain movement' has much in common with the primordial values of Korean culture and in keeping with the character of Korean primal religion (Kim 2006:160). The mountain has also become a place for family vacations.

### *Minjung Pentecostalism*

Christianity's affinity or convergence with the central religious values of Koreans, particularly those of Shamanism, has ensured the spectacular rise of the incoming faith. Christianity has adopted a shamanic emphasis on the fulfilment of material wishes through prayers to, or communication with, spirits. Taken up by Christianity, this-worldly, materialistic and even capitalistic tendencies have been taken over from Shamanism (Cox 1995:229-231). Acceptance of the gospel is often viewed as a means of improving social and financial standing, attaining advantages in an unfamiliar social context and sharing in national prosperity (Gallup Korea 1985, 1990). Nevertheless Yoo Boo-Woong (1988) senses a merging between the streams of shamanistic



Pentecostalism and the *minjung* passion for justice.<sup>22</sup>

According to Lee Hong-jung (1999:138-160) the Pentecostal movement in Korea commenced as an expression of the politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially alienated and culturally marginalised *minjung* but was soon 'ideologised' by North American missionaries becoming a syncretism of capitalism, shamanism and religious fundamentalism. The split, then, is between the conservative evangelical and the radical 'shamanic' *minjung*.

The new religious movements of Korea, including Neo-Pentecostal communities, place emphasis on this world as well as on the other world (Anderson 2000: 123-129). Each of these movements, both Christian and otherwise, despite a gulf in matters of basic doctrine, organisation, rites and relations with the wider society, are all concerned with the this-worldly benefits of religion, the sanctity of the family and the cultural integrity of Korean society. The movements lighten people's lives by releasing them from uneasiness and uncertainty. They give answers to their followers' questions. They adhere to, rather than break with, traditional Korean culture and ethnic identity. New forms of Christianity are working for a cultural metamorphosis by merging with traditional Korean culture (Syn-Duk 1987). Harvey Cox (1995:213-241) has little problem with shamanism and Pentecostalism cohering in Korea or anywhere else in Asia. Meanwhile Yoo maintains (1988) that whereas the liberation theology of professional theologians in the 1970s concerned itself with the liberation of the poor, *minjung* Pentecostalism is the poor themselves theologising.<sup>23</sup>

### *Catholic Charismatics*

Miriam Knutas, a Pentecostal in Sweden, was a nurse. While praying she heard the Lord asking her to go to Korea to preach the Pentecostal gospel to Catholics. In 1971 she went to Korea and worked as a nurse in the USA 8<sup>th</sup> Army Camp. Later the same year the missionary Gerald Farrell returned after participating in the Catholic charismatic movement in the USA and joined the newly born Catholic movement in Korea. Until that time the meeting was interdenominational and most of the members were foreigners, ministers and religious. By the end

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<sup>22</sup> Not all classical Pentecostals recognize themselves in Asia's indigenous 'third wave' Pentecostalism. See review of Yoo's thesis in *Pneuma* 1989.

<sup>23</sup> See also the study of Dongsoo Kim who compares and contrasts the way in which *Minjung* theology and Pentecostalism 'unravel *han*' (1999:123-139). In his studies in Brazil, David Lehmann (2003:124) also maintains that the charismatic-Pentecostal movement has more claim to 'come from below' than liberation theology which is a tendency within the world of professionals and activists (Hewett 1991).

of the twentieth century there were more than 700 thousand Catholic Pentecostals/charismatics in Korea<sup>24</sup> (Eim 2002:246).

## **Philippines**

### ***Background***

The first Pentecostal missionary to arrive in the Philippines was Joseph Warnick in 1921 who, with a local preacher Teodorico Lastimosa, began the Philippine Church of God (Anderson 2004b:131). The first Assemblies of God minister arrived in 1926. In the 1940s Filipinos returning from the USA became missionaries to their own people which led to major Pentecostal churches (Suico: 1999:11). Early believers had to endure harassment from Catholics yet the movement grew by leaps and bounds. The 1970s and 1980s showed a surge in the birth of major Pentecostal groups. This coincided with the explosion of charismatic fellowships in the country. Today there are at least 18 Pentecostal or Pentecostal-like denominations or groups among 51 entries in the directory of the Philippine Council of Evangelical churches (Ma 2002:201-207).

From 1926 until the Japanese occupation (1941-1944) growth in Pentecostalism was slow. Enthusiastic missionary activity - evangelism, church planting, radio and literature ministry, revival meetings and outdoor crusades - began after liberation. But the time of social and political unrest under Marcos witnessed explosive growth. During the 1980s the number of Pentecostal churches more than tripled. In 1999 the *Assemblies of God* had 2,357 local churches, almost twice the number 20 years previously, with close to 130 thousand members as well as 3,200 affiliated ministers/workers. The church has 35 ministerial training schools including one for the deaf, and has trained and sent 15 cross-cultural missionaries overseas.

The *Foursquare Gospel* was started by Vicente Defante, a USA Navy cook, in his home town of Iloilo City in the mid-1930s. Congregations were founded in Cavite and in Ilocos Norte by Filipinos who had spiritual experiences at Angelus Temple, Los Angeles.<sup>25</sup> By 1949 there were 13 Foursquare churches and in 1958 the church was organised into four districts: Northern Luzon, Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas. By 1972 there were more than 200 churches, three bible colleges and two Christian schools (Suico 1999: 12).

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<sup>24</sup> For a short note on Pentecostalism in Japan see Anderson 2004b:140-141.

<sup>25</sup> Angelus Temple in Los Angeles was dedicated by Aimee McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, to "the cause of interdenominational and worldwide evangelism."



Other Pentecostal churches in the Philippines include the *Filipino Assemblies of God of the First Born* which began in Northern Luzon in 1941. The *Church of God World Missions of the Philippines* began in Northwest Luzon in 1947. The 1980s proved a time of great growth in response to the social and political turmoil of martial law. In 1981 there were 150 churches with more than 30 thousand members served by 450 ministers.

The *Universal Pentecostal Church* was established by Romeo Doming Corpuz in 1976. This indigenous Pentecostal group began near Manila using a Catholic chapel for six months while the Catholic Mass was moved to Saturday. Today there are 113 local congregations with 100 ministers, ten day care centres and one Christian school. This church is part of the *Philippines for Jesus Movement* (PJM). The three largest Pentecostal churches are the *Jesus is Lord Church* founded in 1978, the *Jesus Miracle Crusade* and the *Assemblies of God*.

George W. Harper (2000:225-259) has studied the statistics of major fundamentalist and indigenous Pentecostal churches in the Philippines, comparing and contrasting divergent methods of calculation and projection. With a number of important caveats, he concludes that, "in 1990 5.1% of all Filipinos were Evangelicals... by 2000 Evangelicals will constitute 6.5% of the population, reaching 8.2% in 2010... and 17.0% in 2040 (p.251). If the one large Catholic country in Asia loses between 15% and 20% of its members to Evangelical/Pentecostal groups, then the situation would be comparable to that which obtains in Chile.

Jungja Ma sees that one reason for the success of Pentecostalism in the Philippines is its similarity to the shamanic spirituality of tribal peoples which is centred around the concept of power; the Pentecostal message demonstrates God's supremacy over spirits (1999: 194). Shamans negotiate the relationship between spirits and the people through counselling, performing thanksgiving or healing rituals and interpreting omens, dreams and visions. Filipinos have a strong spirit-world belief system and are much attracted to Pentecostalism's emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit. Rites of passage such as birth, marriage and death are accompanied by shamanic rituals. Spirit baptism seems to graft well onto spirit possession and exorcism onto the tribal appeasement of spirits. While Julie Ma views this as syncretism (2000a, 2000b), Yong (2002:110-128; 2005:46-50) evaluates the correlations between Pentecostal cosmology and primal worldviews more positively.

Pentecostals believe that social change is only possible through personal conversion and incorporation into the community of faith.

Structural change is not usually part of their social agenda. As stated in the 1997 report of the Pentecostal/Catholic International dialogue, "Effective social change often takes place at the communal and micro-structural level, not at the macro-structural level."<sup>26</sup> Once personal salvation is achieved the healing effects are noticeable in the person's personal and family life and on their physical health and well being. Pentecostals are committed to rebuilding family life in communities shattered by social and economic dislocations. Upon conversion the person acquires a sense of worth, new meaning for life, disciplines for work and models for family life. At the turn of the century Filipino Pentecostalism was still largely limited to the family and to interpersonal relations (Suico 1999:16, 19).

### *Catholic Charismatics*

The first charismatic prayer meeting was held in Manila in La Salle, Greenhills in 1969. A dramatic turning point came during the World Missionary Assistance Plan conference outside Manila in 1973. Close to two thousand pastors, priests, nuns, missionaries and lay leaders registered, representing 20 different denominations and groups.

Participants in the Catholic charismatic renewal study the scriptures diligently. They have adopted several evangelical concepts such as being 'born-again' and have sought distinctively Pentecostal experiences such as baptism in the Spirit, spiritual gifts, especially speaking in tongues and physical healing. The emotional richness and the religiosity of the Filipinos find these Pentecostal phenomena suitable for expressing their spirituality. Hence joyful singing and fervent prayer have become a vital part of the movement.

Enthusiastic charismatics opened their homes, offices, factories, restaurants and schools for bible study and prayer meetings. Unlike classical Pentecostals who ministered among people in lower socio-economic strata, these new seekers were businesspeople, educated professionals, corporate executives, government employees, teachers and army officers, including generals. They prayed regularly for healing and spiritual gifts. As small bible studies grew rapidly, hotel ballrooms and big restaurants were rented for regular Sunday celebrations. These neutral locations were attractive to Catholics who did not wish to be identified with 'born-again' people. Likewise, Catholic groups do not call themselves 'churches' but 'fellowships'. Spirit-filled believers,

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<sup>26</sup> "Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness: The Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue 1990-1997 between the Roman Catholic Church and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders", *Information Service Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity*, No.97 (1998) I-II, 38-56.



regardless of their ecclesial affiliation, demonstrate 'spontaneous ecumenicity' among themselves (Ma 2005:502)<sup>27</sup>

Often groups are centred around a gifted preacher or bible teacher, not necessarily one with a traditional bible school or seminary education (see *El Shaddai* below). Many self-taught leaders have demonstrated creative leadership and make active use of the laity in various ministries. Like-minded professional laypersons often turn to ministry after in-house training and then become leaders of daughter fellowships.

With a strong emphasis on bible study and a dedicated life, these fellowships attract many middle-class professionals and businesspeople to the gospel. Groups have been planted all over the Philippines and among overseas Filipinos such as those working in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea and Japan and among professionals in European countries and immigrants in the USA, Canada and Australia. Some fellowships have evolved into quasi-churches training workers and commissioning them.

After two decades of consolidation some charismatic fellowships live in tension with Catholic parishes. Participation in fellowships is replacing Sunday Mass and there has been a slow but steady exodus from the church.

### *El Shaddai*

The largest of these independent, lay-led Catholic movements is *El Shaddai*. Mariano Z. Verlarde (Brother Mike) commenced his ministry in 1982 after a miraculous healing. The following year he acquired radio station DWXI and began broadcasting evangelistic programmes. This station is now the third most popular in Metro Manila broadcasting 24 hours daily. By 1984 this radio ministry had burgeoned into the *El Shaddai* movement. It aims to attract Catholics who have neglected their Christian practice and no longer attend Mass.

*El Shaddai* holds its own Sunday meetings. A jail ministry and disaster support ministries have developed as well as bible study and prayer meetings. By 1997 *El Shaddai* had over 300 thousand registered members but a much larger number, up to six million, attend Sunday gatherings throughout the country and in 62 overseas chapters. The Metro Manila flock gathers every Saturday at the Philippine International Convention Center. Warming up in the afternoon, these overnight gatherings can draw 100 thousand people, on occasion as many as half a million. Three million gathered for *El Shaddai*'s eleventh

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<sup>27</sup> Wonsuk Ma is quoting Koichi Kitano's Ph.D. dissertation, "Spontaneous Ecumenicity between Catholics and Protestants in the Charismatic Movement". Manila: Centro Escolar University, 1981.

anniversary in 1994. A group of 200 thousand once braved Typhoon Mameng; despite howling winds and rain they stayed until 4:00 am the following day.

According to Leonardo Mercado (2005:80-81) El Shaddai is hugely successful because it a) emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit and the recovery of primal speech which has survived in Filipino folk Christianity; b) holds attractive worship where everybody participates with the Filipino penchant for the dramatic; c) uses communication effectively, broadcasting 14 hours of television weekly in channels throughout the Philippines. *Bagong Liwanag Magazine* has a run of 300 thousand per month and the *Miracle Newsletter* reaches 150 thousand per issue; d) the charisma and method of Mike Velarde and his use of psychology and showmanship; e) El Shaddai answers the immediate income and health needs of the people who come from the lower classes; f) reflects on lived experiences in the context of the world in the light of God's word; g) empowers the laity in line with folk Catholicism; h) uses Filipino symbols and the Filipino concept of causality. Culture works on the level of the physical, the social, the worldview and the symbolic.

El Shaddai uses Tagalog for the prayer service, English very little. The huge rallies with fiesta atmosphere have a Filipino flavour while interpersonal touch remains among the participants. Mike Velarde's leadership style, his relationship with members, his oratorical style, all suit the Filipino temperament. Use of a this-worldly theology reflects the Filipino philosophy of time. All these Filipino elements help contribute to an experience of community, belongingness, hope and confidence among the members (Salazar 1994:190-205).

A conservative estimate would place the various Catholic charismatic groups at around 30% of the Filipino Catholic population.

## **Indonesia**

### ***Background***

The first two Pentecostal missionaries arrived in Indonesia (then the Dutch East Indies) in 1921 and began work in Bali, holding evangelistic services in a copra warehouse. They had the Gospel of Luke translated into Balinese. Ten months later the Dutch authorities expelled them from Bali. Nearby Surabaya in East Java became their new base.

The church began with a nucleus of ten people growing to 40 by the end of the first year. A majority were Dutch and some of mixed Dutch-Indonesian parentage. In 1923 the first 13 were baptised by immersion with the 'Jesus only' formula. A group of young men, converted in 1924-1926, became the backbone of the movement when the Dutch leadership was interned during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945).



From the East Javanese town of Malang young evangelists were sent to North Sumatra, North Sulawesi, Ambon and Timor where Pentecostal churches were planted by the 1930s. By the late 1920s some influential Chinese-Indonesians had been converted and subsequently Pentecostalism became a largely Chinese-Indonesian movement. There is no record of great receptivity towards Pentecostalism among the Javanese during this early period (Lewis 2002:124-127).

Strong charismatic national leaders began to emerge especially when the Japanese occupation required Indonesians to take over leadership positions formerly held by Westerners. A major revival occurred after the overthrow of Soekarno's government by the army in 1965, most spectacularly in the Presbyterian Church of West Timor.<sup>28</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century there were around 100 evangelical centres of study, most of them founded during the past 30 years. Their strength, besides personal devotion, is their evangelical and missionary spirit; their weakness is their not adjusting to the requirements of the national educational system (Steenbrink forthcoming).

Theirs has been an astonishing growth: from a house church of ten in 1921 they have become a major force in Indonesian Christianity. Totalling almost two million by 1980, they had reached at least six million twenty years later. Today Pentecostal denominations constitute perhaps half of all evangelicals in Indonesia (Lewis 2002; Anderson 2004b:130).

Among Indonesian Muslims the quest for direct experience of the divine and faith healing found expression in the traditionalist *kebatinan* societies among the Javanese elite from independence until 1965 (Subagya 1973), and since the 1980s in trans-denominational spiritual movements among the Islamic middle-class (Howell 2006). The latter has much in common with Indonesian classic Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement.

The *Gereja Pantekosta di Indonesia* (Pentecostal Church in Indonesia) is the biggest Pentecostal church with more than three million members. The *Jemaat Allah di Indonesia* (Indonesian Assemblies of God) has a membership of 70 thousand with about 700 congregations in most provinces of Indonesia. One of the prominent phenomena in the development of the Pentecostal churches in Indonesia is the intensity of

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<sup>28</sup> Spectacular statistics need to be taken with a grain of salt (pace Koch 1970 and Tari 1973). Most 'conversions' in West Timor occurred among the baptised, while most of the baptisms in Java were not of Muslims but of Chinese-Indonesians. For a sober appraisal see Cooley 1974-77, Vol. II.

schism which have birthed around a hundred new Pentecostal groups. There are now more than 40 Pentecostal denominations in Indonesia most of which are continuing to grow (Lewis 2002:129-130).

### *Characteristics*

Indonesian Pentecostalism has focused upon prayer for the sick. This power-encounter approach in evangelism has created an openness and responsiveness to the gospel. Almost every testimony from those who have been converted to Christianity from a Muslim background involves some kind of miracle such as healing, deliverance or a dream. Since John Sung's crusade in 1939 large crowds have gathered in soccer stadiums, theatres and public halls to hear Pentecostal evangelists. The style of worship, as elsewhere, incorporates hand clapping, lively music and simple worship choruses. This has brought new life to many staid congregations. The Pentecostal bible schools have produced few theologians yet have proven effective in turning out church planters and pastors; the stress is on practical ministry (Lewis 2002).

While some, like Yakub Nahuway, student and follower of David Yonggi Cho of Korea and leader of the *Mawar Saron* Church, have adopted the theology of success, others accompany proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ with sensitive social responsibility. The emphasis is on personal and household evangelism.

Quite a few Indonesian evangelists have been sent to other Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand,<sup>29</sup> Kampuchea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Some have gone to Europe, Latin America and Africa with the aim of planting new churches.

Pentecostals antagonise through eager evangelising among other Christians and attempting to convert Muslims.<sup>30</sup> Even if other Protestant churches are already present, they do not hesitate to start a home fellowship or rent a hall and begin holding evangelistic meetings with the goal of starting a new church (Lewis 2002:131). However, since the 1990s steps have been taken to minimise tension and polarisation. Dialogue with Muslims, rooted in interpersonal relations, aims at forging points of contact so as not to antagonise Muslim neighbours.<sup>31</sup> After the 9/11 incidents in New York and Washington the antipathy of American conservative evangelicals might once again increase tensions.

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<sup>29</sup> For a short summary of Pentecostalism in Southeast Asia see Anderson 2004b:128-132.

<sup>30</sup> Most Christian churches in Indonesia burned down in the 1990s were Pentecostal.

<sup>31</sup> Generally for Pentecostals 'dialogue' is a strategy rather than a way of life, pre-evangelisation rather than a mode of mission.



## *Catholic Charismatics*

*Pembaharuan Karismatik Katolik* (Catholic Charismatic Renewal) began in Jakarta in 1977. By the early 1990s only two dioceses had not yet acknowledged the movement (Subangun 2003). A study in 1993 discovered that many charismatics do not remain in the movement but pass through it. No less than 57.4% of charismatics join the movement from between a few months to three years. Some move on to join a Pentecostal church, others return to more conventional Catholicism. Almost all Indonesian Catholic charismatics are found in the cities and a majority (60.2%) among the Chinese-Indonesian minority. Their ethnic minority status, their distance from politics and their economic prosperity together with an otherworldly spirituality, all tend to make this movement ingrown, even escapist. Internally, members develop strong emotional bonds. Positively charismatic groups have given 'heart' to a more formal and dutiful religious observance (24%).

Some Catholics join after personal problems (24%) or a serious rift in their family (22.3%). A large majority began going to meetings 'to know more about the charismatic movement' (66%). Many were looking for blessings (25%) such as speaking in tongues (67.1%) and healing (32.8%). Others seek knowledge of the Word (18.6%) and prophecy (16.9%). A fifth joined because they were initially invited by family or friends (22.8%) (Subangun 2003:35-43).

This study shows how issues of boredom in life and in the conventional church as well as emotional problems trigger entrance into a charismatic group, at least for a while. Social justice is not on the agenda. An attempt to bring about a dialogue between the movement and basic ecclesial communities did not bear much fruit (Prior 2002:18-35). Reading the results of this study together with that of other surveys, Subangun concludes that charismatic Christianity can be counted under the rubric of religious entertainment (Subangun 2003:43).

Catholic charismatics are less prone to inter-religious tolerance than non-charismatics. Some 27.1% of charismatics have an unconditional positive attitude to Muslims while 36.5% of non-charismatic have such an attitude. Charismatics know they are held in suspicion by other Catholics; 22.7% feel their families support them, 13% have families who forbid them joining, while 36.6% find their families appreciative.

In 2003 the Episcopal Vicar for apostolates in Jakarta Archdiocese, B.S. Mardiatmadja SJ, published a very restrictive letter with ten guidelines for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The letter was in response to a perceived drift of the movement to Pentecostalism.

## *Komunitas Tritunggal Mahakudus*

*Komunitas Tritunggal Mahakudus* (KTM, 'Most Holy Trinity Community') is a Catholic charismatic network of small cells founded by Yohannes Indrakusuma O.Carm (Romo Yohanes) in 1987. The cells emphasise personal relations with God and others and, like other charismatic communities, are active among affluent Chinese-Indonesians. Romo Yohannes himself has an almost cult-like status among core members while the network as a whole, together with the two religious congregations that Yohannes founded, namely *Komunitas Suster Putri Karmel* (PKarm) and *Komunitas Frater Carmelitae Sancti Eliae* (CSE), have had tense relations with the hierarchy. The profound sense of interdependence between Romo Yohanes and KTM members, whereby the one considers him or herself to be the extension of the other, mirrors the situation in Pentecostal congregations. The key difference lies in the acceptance of KTM of the broader Catholic tradition while often enough the horizon of a Pentecostal congregation is limited to that of its pastor.

By April 2006 there were 332 adult and a further 133 youth cells of KTM in 19 Indonesian dioceses. There were 33 adult and 46 youth cells overseas in Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, USA, Canada and the Netherlands. Largest numbers of members (both adults and youth) are in the cities of Surabaya (1,340) and Jakarta (835) with a total of 4,900 members in Indonesia as a whole. Overseas the biggest group is in Australia with 382 members.<sup>32</sup> While undoubtedly sectarian in tendency, all KTM members identify themselves as solidly Catholic although their open hearted generosity is no longer centred on the local parish but on KTM activities.

## **India**

### *Background*

India may have been the first country to experience the modern Pentecostal outpouring, certainly the earliest in Asia (Anderson 2004b:124). Pentecostal-like movements preceded the development of twentieth century Pentecostalism in Europe (Wales) and North America (Los Angeles) by at least 40 years. During the twentieth century Asia has developed independently from the influence of similar revivals in the West (McGee and Burgess 2002:118-126).

Major early revivals were marked by the restoration of charismatic gifts and the advance of indigenous leadership. Revivals were reported

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<sup>32</sup> Numbers and locations from the *Komunitas Tritunggal Mahakudus* website [www.holytrinitycarmel.com](http://www.holytrinitycarmel.com)



in Tamilnadu (1860-1861) and spread to Kerala a decade later (1874-1875). From the outset the revival took an indigenous course. Missionaries and Western money had little if any influence. Indians saw visions which revealed the names of those who should be appointed as apostles, evangelists and prophets, all of them Indian. Caste was negated, music was composed by Indians themselves. Despite the disapproval of foreign missionaries this revival survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century though much diminished.

In 1905-1907 a revival occurred at Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission in Pune where young women baptised in the Spirit saw visions, fell into trances and spoke in tongues. The same year saw a revival among the tribal peoples in the Khassia Hills, Northeast India. Believers began confessing their sins in 'prayer-storms', that is, in long hours spent in fervent and loud prayer. Pentecostal phenomena has been noted in many parts of India: dreams, visions, signs in the heavens, reception of the 'burning' work of the Holy Spirit, accounts of visible 'tongues of fire', prophecies and even miraculous provisions of food. All this was unrelated to the birth of the Pentecostal movement in North America in 1906, although the first Indian Pentecostal congregation was formed in Kerala in 1911 a result of the work of German missionary George Berg who was baptised in the Spirit at Azusa Street, USA. Women made notable contributions including theological and missiological reflections.

Many Dalits converted to Pentecostalism from other churches because insufficient progress had been made regarding their lot and because the egalitarian understanding of Spirit filled and baptised Christians promised them the liberation they sought. However early integration did not abolish caste discrimination and in 1972 Syrian Pentecostals formally separated from the Dalits. Twenty years later the segregated Dalits had grown from 60 churches to over two hundred (Yong 2005:57).

### *Indigenous Churches*

Neo-Pentecostals are now the largest renewal group in India. These are indigenous bodies. The largest is the *New Apostolic Church* founded in 1969 with 1,448,209 adherents in 1995. They established a mission in Kenya, East Africa, in 1973. The second largest is the Indian Pentecostal Church founded in 1924 with 900 thousand adherents throughout India and in 10 other countries. The *New Life Fellowship*, founded in 1968, has about 480 thousand followers. According to Pentecostal sources, the total Indian membership of Neo-Pentecostal denominations is over 15 million.

These churches have suffered from all sides: persecuted by radical Hindu groups, denied government benefits after conversion, weakened by frequent divisions and derided by Syrian Christians as too emotional.

### *Catholic Charismatics*

The charismatic movement was brought to the Indian Catholic Church in 1972 through a young Parsi civil engineer who was converted to Catholicism while at Fordham University, USA. Two Jesuit priests were introduced to the charismatic movement while studying in the USA and, on returning, began groups in Mumbai from where the movement spread to Pune. The first National Charismatic Convention was held in Mumbai (1974-1975) for 30 charismatic leaders.

Matthew Naickomparambil (1947-), a priest of the Syro-Malabar Rite, is a leading charismatic healer from Kerala. He was baptised in the Spirit in the early 1970s and ordained in 1976. In 1990 his Vincentian Order purchased a hospital in Muringoor near Cochin where the Divine Retreat Centre was established. Some 15 thousand come to the centre each week, many of them Hindus. As many as 150 thousand attend five-day conventions.

### **Conclusion: An Empowering Movement**

The sketches above concern the five Asian countries that are witnessing the fastest growth of Pentecostalism as a grassroots movement and where we have significant numbers of Catholic charismatics. While the greatest increase in this 'primal spirituality' is in South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines a similar scenario is palpable elsewhere.<sup>33</sup>

We are all being challenged by the exponential rise of Pentecostal-like movements throughout Asia and the rest of the world and there are no signs that the growth of Pentecostalism is abating. These movements do not hesitate to evangelise<sup>34</sup> among mainline churches and not without success. They represent a mission from below, a mission of transformation, a popular religious culture taking the popular worldview of the people with its felt needs seriously. They emphasise

<sup>33</sup> A switch of allegiance is not the only option; many permutations are available such as dual membership. For instance, a majority of Catholic and Protestants in Pakistan are happy to be associated with more than one church at any given time (O'Brien 2005:93). Pentecostal worship feeds weekly religious needs while Catholic sacramental celebrations continue to mark rites of passage, in particular birth, marriage and death.

<sup>34</sup> Pentecostals deny they are 'proselytising' if by this term we mean aggressive recruitment. Accused of 'sheep-stealing' one pastor remarked, "I don't steal sheep; I plant grass." (Anderson 2005a:341).



oral tradition, lay leadership and maximised participation. Their dynamic Christian experience and participatory worship empower laity, in particular women. They are united by a close, warm fellowship nurtured in worship.

Pentecostal groups also tend to be authoritarian and focus on a charismatic evangelist-healer;<sup>35</sup> they emphasise an intuitive and emotional (rather than rigidly literalist) reading of the bible and doctrine; they present a simple, indeed simplistic, version of Christianity which is attractive and easy to grasp. Most neglect the social gospel although they empower their own membership. In contrast to fundamentalist movements among the majority religions of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism which have become politicised, the Pentecostal groups of minority Christian communities are predisposed to be quietest, centred upon themselves and their families. Ethnic markers often sharpen their distance from others. Social change is also widening the disparity between rich and poor which has led to estranged groups within the parish which ignore each other and then are in a position to separate.

### *Searching for Security and Hope*

The phenomenal growth of these movements has a complex background, but surely the key cause is rapid social change. Swift social transformation has left many people uprooted from their culture and led to social and moral confusion. Bewilderment is exasperated by the resurgence of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Fleeing from uncertainty to certainty the perplexed seek refuge in a tight faith community with unambiguous boundaries. Pentecostals bring hope to those baffled by the moral relativism of the consumer society and a downplaying of the non-rational in both the bible and religious practice. The promise of an unmediated experience of God and of health and wellbeing now attracts a wide variety of seekers (Cox 1999:9).

A tightly-integrated community promotes conformity and a measure of stability in an individual's life. Predictably, then, many people join a Pentecostal movement after a life-crisis. Religious doctrine is not usually the key element but rather the social bond among members of the congregation and the comforting power of religious compensations. Also, Asian Pentecostalism provides a spiritual and emotional outlet for suppressed hurt and buried feelings traditionally processed through Shamanistic rites. Asia's minorities do not just join Pentecostal churches, they are its main players. Socially ostracised in

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<sup>35</sup> In its Instruction on Healing (2000), the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith states categorically that the charism of healing cannot be claimed by a certain group of the faithful or by its charismatic leader. The Holy Spirit is free to use anybody. See No.5 par.5.

the wider community they find themselves at the centre of their religious life; this is vibrant social empowerment.

Asia's deprived and socially dislocated peoples have welcomed the highly charged Pentecostal message which generates hope. Close fellowship supports stability while the common discipline and strict morality encourages an upwardly mobile network (Weber applied by Wilson 1966). Urging their members to be thrifty, industrious and honest, Pentecostals bring about the moral regeneration of their flock which forms an intensely integrated moral community. Within a generation or two these communities have become economically prosperous. Wonsuk Ma points out that the main difference between the western prosperity gospel and its Asian version is context: the powerful and loving Christian God 'has to' accompany the Asian peoples in their daily struggle to survive (Ma 2005:498).

### *Searching for Spiritual Strength*

The more successful of the movements have rooted themselves in cultural areas not frequently tapped by mainline churches: the consciousness of ever-present spirits, the power of the supernatural in everyday life and faith-healing. Pentecostals are longing for strength, for the miracles denied them in mainline churches. Among the more flourishing indigenous churches we noted the house church movement in China, the healing churches in Indonesia and the Yoido Full Gospel Church of Korea. Charismatic movements that have blended with local culture include the Divine Retreat Centre in India, and El Shaddai in the Philippines. These movements display a different pattern of inculturation than that adopted by the FABC (c.f. Dias 2005). With its freedom in the Spirit Pentecostalism has an innate ability to make itself at home in almost any context and develop its own culturally relevant expressions (Anderson 2004b:283).

However, it should also be remembered that while non-rational factors such as miraculous healing or rapturous religious music may explain an initial attraction to Pentecostalism, continuing participation depends upon other factors. Unlike popular Catholic devotions which are more expressive and aesthetic (pictures, statues, shrines, holy water and so forth), Pentecostals rely greatly on the bible. To read the bible Pentecostals are encouraged to use their literacy and develop speaking skills. In bible cells they learn through practice how to formulate ideas and opinions. This is useful for individual social mobility and potentially for involvement in wider community organisations such as NGOs or even political parties.<sup>36</sup>



### *Searching to Heal Society*

Harvey Cox makes the important distinction between Pentecostals/charismatics who verge towards conservative evangelism ('fundamentalist') and those that are socially engaged ('experientialist') (Cox 1995:300-305). It is with the latter that we can engage in dialogue and renewal. For where Pentecostal communities are rooted among the poor and so alienated from the developing world around them, they bring an experience of empowerment and freedom which provides them with the potential for healing unjust social structures (Wickeri 2004:195). They can take a stand against the world's oppressive order, feel free to criticise what the world holds dear, question society's unquestionable assumptions, challenge society's unchallengeable conclusions and expose deceptions in the dominant ethos of the day. They are free to opt out of the world's structures and act as a 'creative minority'.<sup>37</sup> Pentecostal groups at the margin can freely criticise the world's injustice in God's name, for Jesus is calling for a public choice between God and the world.

### *The Inadequate Catholic Response*

We are forced to conclude, then, that the Catholic Churches of Asia have been ill-prepared to cope with the problem of social change and religious pluralism and have not been responding adequately to the felt religious needs of those battered by ongoing social, cultural, religious and moral upheavals. We have become too static a force in a very dynamic society. In particular, our churches have not satisfied the desire of many to experience the healing power of God in their daily life, to have direct contact with the bible, to live in an active and warm fellowship, to enjoy sustained pastoral care. We are being challenged to take religious experience more seriously. Those leaving the church are among the most neglected pastorally and the most fervent spiritually. Pentecostals reveal what is lacking in the Catholic Church's presence which is not responding adequately to the immediate cultural context. To respond will call for an enormous exercise in imagination.

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<sup>36</sup> The Labour movement of Britain (both the trade unions and later the political party) can trace its roots to the Methodist circles of the late 18th century where working people learnt to read (in order to read the bible), hold discussions and practice leadership.

<sup>37</sup> 'Creative minority' is a notion developed by Benedict XVI (taken, I might add, from the writings of British historian Arnold Toynbee).

## 2.] CHURCH RESPONSES

If the trends indicated in the above survey continue the shift of global Christianity to the South and the East will be predominantly Catholic and Pentecostal (Jenkins 2002). This highlights the importance of Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue. How, then, have documents from the Catholic Church been evaluating this manifestation of “primal speech (ecstatic utterance), primal piety (mystical experience, trance and healing) and primal hope (the unshakable expectation of a better future... (the) unanticipated reappearance of primal spirituality in our time” (Cox 1995:83)? The following note begins with a Vatican Report of 1985 and concludes with an FABC Plenary Workshop in 2000.<sup>38</sup>

### **Report on Sects and New Religious Movements, 1985**

It is not always clear to what the term ‘sect’ refers in church documents.<sup>39</sup> When the Secretariat for Christian Unity collated the results of a questionnaire on the presence and activity of ‘sects’ and ‘new religious movements’ in 1985, descriptions of ‘sects’ by the respondents were so diverse and contradictory that no unambiguous picture emerged.<sup>40</sup> And so the Secretariat opted for a pastoral understanding of the term ‘sect’. ‘Sects’ refer to those Christian bodies which are successfully recruiting among other Christians, including Catholics. In the final analysis this is the challenge we face.

With Barreda (1998:355-361) I say ‘challenge’ rather than ‘threat’, although this is the term once employed by John Paul II, “The expansion of these sects represents a threat for the Catholic Church and for all the Ecclesial Communities with which she is engaged in dialogue” (RM 50). That same year (1991) John Paul wrote of the “danger of fanaticism or fundamentalism among those who, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious, claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good... Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid schema... in constantly reaffirming the transcendent

<sup>38</sup> I leave to one side the 26-year process whereby the charismatic movement was officially recognised by the Vatican. For this process see McDonnell 1980. Teresa O. Goncalves of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue has published short surveys of both the activities of the PCID regarding sects (1999) and developments in thinking about sects over the years (2004).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Sects and New Religious Movements: An anthology of texts from the Catholic Church 1986-1994*, ed. Working Group on New Religious Movements, Vatican City (USA Catholic Conference 1995). There is little consistency in terms. For instance, while the extraordinary Consistory of April 1991, convened by John Paul II, discussed ‘the challenge of the sects’, the relator, Cardinal Arinze, preferred the term ‘new religious movements’.

<sup>40</sup> The questionnaire was part of a study involving the Pontifical Council for Culture.



dignity of the person, the church's method is always that of respect for freedom." (CA 46) The concern of John Paul II is understandable; on the basis of the present rate of growth, in four years time (2010) there will be more Pentecostal-like Christians worshipping each week in Latin America than Catholics – and this within *the* Catholic continent. Meanwhile as many as 75% of Brazilian Catholics who do worship on Sundays are involved in Basic Ecclesial Communities. In both cases powerful grassroots movements are attracting ordinary people (Kirk 1999:137).<sup>41</sup>

### **Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture, 1999**

The short section on 'sects and new religious movements' in the Pontifical Council for Culture's *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture* (1999:46-48) concentrates on 'pull and push' factors that are drawing Catholics out of the church and into new religious movements. These movements are understood as a reaction to secularised culture and the consequence of social and cultural upheavals which have uprooted traditional religion. Social and cultural upheavals certainly help us understand why Pentecostal movements have been remarkably successful in Asia over the past 30 years.

*Self-Reflection:* Earlier John Locke SJ opined that any pastoral approach should begin with a reflection on the "shared experience of living in a threatening world of constant change... How has it affected us personally? How has it affected our local Catholic Church?" (Locke 1990:15). The Second Vatican Council laid aside the image of the church as a fortress and returned to the patristic image of the people of God. On pilgrimage, we are engaged in the 'threatening' process of incarnating the Reign of God in the contemporary world (Locke 1990:21).

For open-minded believers truth has to be sought continually for truth is greater than ourselves and larger than our individual traditions, for God is truth. Thus we contemplate truth rather than possess it.

*Stark Simplicity:* The success of Pentecostal-like churches lies in their ability to present a truth that can serve as an anchor for social customs and practices while seeking to reorganise all spheres of life according to their particular set of values (Fonseca 1999:590). Stark simplicity is not necessarily a negative, this depends on how the movement relates its membership to the rest of the world. One positive example

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<sup>41</sup> Charles Self (1992: 68-68) suggests that the most generous figures for active participation in BECs in Brazil at the end of the 1980s was from two to four million, while charismatic Catholics came to between four and five million and *evangelicos* (mostly Pentecostals) were already between 20 and 30 million.

is that of Mahatma Gandhi who united the Indian people around appropriate symbols (salt, satyagraha, charkha) and so galvanised the nation through a simple but convincing constructive programme (national education, village industries, etc.) (Fonseca 1999:592). To be simple and clear is not necessarily to be fundamentalist and sectarian.

#### **Ecclesia in Asia, 1999**

*Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) reflects on the deliberations at the Synod for Asia (1998) under the theme, “Jesus Christ the Saviour and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia: ‘That they may have life and have it abundantly’”. While *Ecclesia in Asia* makes no mention of sectarian or fundamentalist religious movements, it does provide us with an appropriate frame for tackling the problem when it refers to Asian ways of proclaiming Jesus Christ. The Asian approach is, “prompted not by sectarian impulse nor the spirit of proselytism nor any sense of superiority... (but) speaks the truth in love (Eph 4:15) with loving respect and esteem for her listeners... respects the rights of conscience and does not violate freedom... follows a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step... (is) more relational, historical and even cosmic... open to new and surprising ways...” (EA 20).

#### **FABC, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000**

FABC responses to Pentecostal-like movements have been remarkably positive, a clear case of ‘receptive ecumenism’.<sup>42</sup>

*Taking Religious Experience Seriously: The Office for Theological Concerns* (FABC-OTC) sees the conversion of Catholics to Pentecostalism as challenging us to take religious experience more seriously. The departure of so many Catholics is also challenging us to rethink the theology of Baptism in the Spirit and the role of glossolalia in a way that would harmonise with and not obscure other Catholic beliefs. The FABC-OTC itself sees signs of the presence of the Spirit in the thirst for prayer, a hunger for the Word of God, the rise of participatory celebrations of the Eucharist, a docility to charisms and in the promotion of peace and justice (FABC-OTC 1997:81-82). Reflection on lived experience has the power to transform.

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<sup>42</sup> The term is Walter Kasper’s, President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In his paper on Catholic and Protestant ecumenical principles (Durham University, UK, January 2006) he described ‘receptive ecumenism’ as the openness to accept what gifts other churches can give us that we need in order to be more complete than we were before. This approach is rooted in the thought of John Paul II who describes ecumenical dialogue as: “not only an exchange of ideas but an exchange of gifts” (*Ut unum sint* 28).



*Popular Religiosity:* The FABC-OTC goes on to link elements of Pentecostalism to certain characteristics of popular religiosity where the heart, feeling and poetic discourse are more important than the intellect, reasoning and analytical language in our relationship with God; where there is a strong sense of God's presence in everyday life and in nature, in images and in places; where the religious meaning of life, marriage and death is emphasised; and where the religious values of the weak and the sick, the poor and the marginalised, the elderly and children are acknowledged as loci of God's presence. (FABC-OTC 1997:83).

*Neglecting the Social Gospel:* At a workshop during the *Seventh FABC Plenary* (Bangkok 2000), Antonio De Los Reyes presented a paper on charismatic movements and small Christian communities. He opinions that the charismatic movement, "has not come to grips with the imperative of channelling its formidable power into the needs of the temporal world, towards the gospel's call to transform the social order according to the plan to God... The movement has been unable to catalyse most of its adherents to embrace the radical discipleship of the early Christian communities. It has confined itself to a spirituality of conversion, of holiness and fellowship, failing to galvanise its adherents into a force of advocacy and action against the structures of sin" (De Los Reyes 2000:10). On the other hand de Los Reyes sees small Christian communities as, "circles of households living in the same geographical area who integrate worship, catechesis and social action into their social, cultural and economic life... centred on Christ, rooted in the Word of God, gathered in meaningful celebrations of the Eucharist, open to dialogues of life with people of other faiths, and committed to the transformation of society and the liberation of people from oppressive structures." (De Los Reyes 2000:11). He asks that the two movements enrich each other and asks, "Is it viable to merge the dynamism of the charismatic movements and the solidity of the basic ecclesial communities to strengthen the catholic faith in Asia? Not only is it viable, it is perhaps the soundest option for the church." (De Los Reyes 2000:12).

While it is true that much of the charismatic movement has little social conscience, BECs per se cannot be identified with social activism. Many dioceses established BECs in order to re-organise large parishes with insufficient ordained pastors and so BECs have developed as parochial sectors directed by the centre rather than as a grassroots church of the poor. Many BECs remain as small neighbourhood groups for pietistic bible sharing and administrative units for the larger parish. Nevertheless, the crucial challenge made by De Los Reyes must be considered further (Part Four).

*Experience and Fellowship:* At the same Bangkok Assembly John Locke SJ, then secretary of the FABC-OTC, presented a paper on the challenge of religious fundamentalism. He refers to a survey commissioned by the Catholic bishops of India who wished to understand why so many Catholics were joining the Pentecostals (Arulsamy 1996). This survey revealed four main reasons why Catholics are so attracted, namely, they wish to 'experience God', they are looking for direct contact with the bible, they want to be actively involved in a warm, close fellowship, and they are looking for sustained interpersonal pastoral care (Locke 2000:12; also commentaries by Parathazham 1997 and Kavunkal 1998). As this is one of the few detailed surveys conducted in Asia, it deserves attention.

The *Indian survey* relates the fundamentalist attitude to a sense of bewilderment and confusion: "The rise of pluralism and the explosion of knowledge in the modern world have severely shaken the plausibility of several traditional religious definitions and practices, leaving many disoriented and insecure. In the Catholic Church the problem has been exacerbated by the profound changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council. Today many Catholics are intellectually unsettled; they are not as sure as they used to be of the validity of their beliefs and practices. Pentecostal movements may be seen as a product of this uncertainty. The exodus of believers from the mainline churches to the fundamentalist sects is in a sense a flight from uncertainty to certainty... the church urgently needs to address the problem of how to help these Catholics cope with their sense of uncertainty and disorientation without yielding to the fundamentalist temptation of interpreting the scriptures and tradition literally with sectarian certitude." (Parathazham 1997:319-320)

*Middle-Class Urbanites:* The Indian Catholics who are joining Pentecostal churches are mostly urban, educated and middle-class (Parathazham 1997:309). This gives a very different portrait from the situation in Latin America where poorer, recent migrants to the cities are joining these churches. Meanwhile ethnically-rooted churches are losing very few members despite proselytising. When Catholic and ethnic identity coincide change in ecclesial allegiance is rare.

*Religious Experience and Pastoral Care:* those Catholics in India who are joining the Pentecostals are among the most devout (Parathazham 1997:310). Just over a quarter who left the church for Pentecostalism were involved in the charismatic movement beforehand. Evidently, for some Catholics the charismatic movement paves the way for Pentecostalism, for others, perhaps, it has stopped a larger haemorrhage. Nothing less than 58% of former Catholics gave lack of



pastoral care as a reason for joining the Pentecostals.

Jacob Kavunkal (1998:421) sees the new religious movements as an invitation to us as a church to accept the active presence of the Holy Spirit poured out on all. He writes, "People are hungry not so much for doctrinally correct and dogmatically defined sermons, as for experiential knowledge which nourishes their hearts. Mission thrives through authentic witness and shared experience." In brief, many Catholics who join Pentecostal communities are searching for a religious experience which their traditional parish is not providing.

*Rooted and Concerned:* In line with the central thrust of the Asian Catholic Churches, John Locke notes two important criteria in discerning the authentic presence of the Spirit in these new religious movements. Firstly, have they taken root in Asian cultures and traditions? And, secondly, do they lead people to a concern for the poor and the marginalised and for social transformation? (Locke 2000:14)

*Parish Renewal:* In response to the results of the survey the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India has called for parish renewal through smaller Christian communities and the Catholic charismatic renewal (CCBI-LR 1997:9-10). In a similar vein the Catholic Bishops of Indonesia issued lengthy, cautiously positive guidelines on the charismatic renewal (KWI 1997:13-36) and at their national assembly in the Jubilee year placed the empowering of basic ecclesial communities at the heart of their pastoral approach (KWI 2001:11-19). Earlier Episcopal guidelines in the Philippines were geared to accommodate Pentecostal-like groups that were mushrooming autonomously outside the parishes (Manila 1983). The bishops of the Philippines, India and Indonesia have thus responded in a relatively non-defensive way.

This means that the scattered Catholic congregations of Asia have to go beyond sectarian self-interest and a narrow concern for self-preservation and boldly venture into the surrounding society with an imaginative and pertinent programme to uphold human and transcendental values in this age of globalisation and consumerism.

### **3.] CHURCHES, SECTS, MOVEMENTS**

Before proceeding with the pastoral challenge (Part 4), it would be good to glance at the meaning of the terms 'church', 'sect' and 'movement' as they have developed in the social sciences.

Terms are important; we need to be clear in our thinking and talk with respect. I have replaced the term 'sects' in the proposed title with the expression 'Pentecostals' because Pentecostal movements in all their multifaceted variety constitute the fastest growing group of churches

within Christianity today and constitute perhaps a third of the Asian Christian population, a proportion that is steadily rising.<sup>43</sup> It is vital to understand what is happening to both Christianity and society at large for this 'religious mutation' is integral to, and perhaps determinative of, the massive social transformation that we are undergoing (Cox 1999:12).

### **The Sect-Church Continuum**

The term 'sect' is still used by social scientists who have long wrestled with ways of classifying religious groups. Western classical sociology came up with a 'church-sect' typology (Troeltsch 1911; Weber 1922; O'Dea 1966, Wilson 1969). Lists of contrasting attributes were drawn up, some applying to 'churches' others to 'sects'. However church-sect typology has been largely abandoned because attributes valid for 'sects' can sometimes be found in 'churches' and the characteristics of 'churches' are often discovered in 'sects'. Lists of sectarian properties may tend to go together, but not always. While sects tend to be authoritarian (Heredia 2004:30) so are some churches. Conservative evangelicals and Pentecostals cannot be covered by any single description of 'sect'.<sup>44</sup> In short, the range of 'sects' and 'churches' is simply too large to be neatly placed in separate categories.

We also face another conceptual problem. Sects are not inert bodies that can be easily slipped into neat boxes. They are fluid and dynamic, most passing through a process of social assimilation and adjustment to criticism resulting in an endless cycle of birth, transformation, schism and rebirth (Niebuhr 1929).<sup>45</sup> We are dealing with movements that expand and fragment rather than stable organisations, with an experience rather than a denomination. In less than a century the Pentecostal movement has split into nearly as many different divisions as it took the rest of the church a millennium to produce (Anderson 2004a:489). As Pentecostal theologian Terry Cross says, "we are Spirit-filled but are also schism-filled" (2006:13).

And yet sociologists of religion intuitively feel there is a distinction that has to be made. Retaining the terms 'sect' and 'church', Benton

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<sup>43</sup> For a succinct discussion on numbers, trends and definitions see Anderson 2004b:1-15; for Pentecostalism in Asia pp.123-143. Also Yong 2005:45-58.

<sup>44</sup> One common characteristic is, perhaps, that, in their intuitive (de-contextualised?) interpretations of scripture, they seemingly neglect the symbolic function of religious language which, according to Aquinas and the Catholic intellectual tradition, is metaphoric. Biblical interpretation will be looked at briefly at the beginning of part 3.

<sup>45</sup> For a critique of both Troeltsch and Niebuhr see Wilson 1995:20-32. Etymologically the word 'sect' derives not from the Latin term *secare* 'cut off' or *sectio* (cutting up) but rather *sequi* 'follow' and perhaps *secta* (pathway, party, school).



Johnson (1963:542) has opted for a single attribute to classify religious groups:

*“A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists. A sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists.”*

For Johnson, then, ‘sect’ is more an adjective (sectarian tendency) than a noun (a specific religious body). The more exclusive and self-reliant a religious movement is, the more sectarian its characteristics.

Johnson postulates a continuum representing the degree of tension a religious group has with its environment. At one extreme he places the ‘ideal sect’ whose members reject the world around them like certain bunker-mentality millennial groups who totally reject the present age. At the other end Johnson situates the ‘ideal church’ which lives in harmony with its environment, indeed is virtually identified with its milieu. This can happen when a local church merges with an ethnic identity as was previously the case in Protestant Batakland and Catholic Flores, both in Indonesia.

From a theological perspective, a sect is a movement that finds light and truth only within its own community and falsehood and darkness outside – *‘extra communitatem non est salus’*. It alone is pure; members are in the truth in so far as they belong to the group. Its nemesis is a church that sees itself as the backbone of a society, as the glue that holds a society together. Such an ‘establishment church’ cannot challenge society’s wrongs, for a cultural religion maintains society’s fabric unmolested.

### **Sect Formation**

Sects can also be identified by the manner of their birth. In this understanding, sects are schismatic groups that break away from a church or sect in order to re-establish the purity of the ‘old faith’ (Stark & Bainbridge 1985:99ff).<sup>46</sup> For instance the Lefebvre sect (Society of St. Pius X) claims to be the authentic, purged Catholic tradition from which the Second Vatican Council has deviated. It does not see itself as a new church but rather as the restored original (*ecclesia pura*). When a church no longer serves the needs of a substantial minority of its members, there is the possibility of a sect breaking away from the

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<sup>46</sup> Sociologists distinguish a sect which is a schismatic, high tension movement within a dominant religious tradition (Stark & Bainbridge 149) from a cult which is a wholly new movement, such as Rishō Kōseikai or Aum Shinrikyō in contemporary Japan. Many theologians and pastors do not make this distinction. E.g. O’Donnell 1984:73-76.

parent body or of some of the minority switching to another church. Defections from Catholicism in Asia are mostly in the latter category. Dedicated Catholics are leaving the church and joining Pentecostal groups in an effort to gain a higher tension faith.

### **Religious Fundamentalism**

Christian sectarian movements, as well as conservative evangelical churches, are often described as 'fundamentalist'. Because this term has quite different meanings it deserves a brief mention.

Fundamentalism<sup>47</sup> in Islam<sup>48</sup>, Hinduism<sup>49</sup> and Buddhism<sup>50</sup> are distinct from each other and from Christian fundamentalism; they display, however, a 'family resemblance' (Marty and Appleby 1991). The background is *theological* (reform movements within Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism), *cultural* (disjunctions with the values of modernity and post-modernity) and psychological (crumbling personalities in a rapidly changing world).

*Modernity and post-modernity:* Asia has been undergoing rapid social change, in particular since political independence and the globalising of the economy and communications. New religious movements arise, then, as both one-dimensional modernity and stagnant religious practice have lost their ability to provide a source of spiritual meaning (Cox 1995:300-301). Despite the rapid race to modernise, Asian societies have not found a guide to the quest for meaning in science, technology and rationalism (Michael 2004:410). The rise of new religious movements, such as the Pentecostal-like churches, responds to this quest for meaning, identity, power, dignity and self-esteem.

Pakistani anthropologist Akbar S. Ahmed has condensed and codified post-modern culture into four basic elements, namely eclecticism, syncretism, juxtapositions and irony (Michael 2004:411). In a fluid, multi-dimensional and transitory world any pursuit or claim to a unique truth is seen as a cover for domination. Religious

<sup>47</sup> Just as the term 'sect' has negative connotations, so does the term 'fundamentalism'. Today, this term has been largely replaced in Christian circles by '(conservative) evangelical'. Much of Pentecostalism has burst out of its fundamentalist beginnings.

<sup>48</sup> For a three-fold typology of Islamic revivals as 'reformist moderate', 'revolutionary militant' and 'military camp' see Ali 2000. For the revitalisation of Islam amidst rapid social change see Saïd Amir Arjomand 1987.

<sup>49</sup> For a classification of Hindu renewal movements as 'three orientations' see Ambrose 1982:367-371; for an alternative classification see Embree 1972:273-276. For neo-revivalist movements see Swamy 1990:135-147; for the psychological and sociological functions of new movements in Kerala see Radhika 2004:403-416.

<sup>50</sup> For an understanding of the 'Sinhala-Buddhist' movement in Sri Lanka see Fernando 1995:207-222.



fundamentalism by the majority religions of Asia is a reaction against the invasive, intrusive and threatening features of modernity.

*Rapid change:* Asian cultures and religions which stress the importance of family, community, traditions and social values find it extremely difficult to cope with high-speed change (Michael 2004:413). Heredia (2004:36-37) quoting Sudhir Kakar, suggests that religious fundamentalism holds up a crumbling personality the way a scaffolding holds up a collapsing building. Such a personality needs a hierarchical order wherein each one has someone to command and someone to obey. Fundamentalism provides stability, clarity and certainty.

*Political fundamentalism:* In Asia religion has never been simply a creed but a way of life. Its fundamentalist variety tends to be totalitarian encompassing all areas of private and public life. This has led a fundamentalist minority among the majority religions to politicise religion and 'religionise' politics. Threatened, fundamentalists use religion narrowly to obtain or retain power for themselves and marginalise those who think and live differently. They link up with political and economic interests of vested parties to maintain influence, power, wealth and status. In this way fundamentalism within the majority religions is changing the face of Asian political reality.<sup>51</sup>

*The Asian Catholic Churches Respond:* The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) through its various offices, colloquia and assemblies, has situated fundamentalist religious movements in the context of religious politics, nationalist movements and the rise of Islam (Wilfred 1986). The Office of Theological Concerns notes that the escalation of religious fundamentalism has given rise to, "a spirit of contention, a sense of superiority, of exclusivism, of intolerance, hate and destruction" (FABC-OTC 1997:41). Convinced that they are in complete possession of the truth, fundamentalists feel they can impose it by force.

In 1996 twenty-six bishops of South Asia gathered to reflect upon our Christian response to violence. Thomas Michel SJ gave a perceptive presentation on Christian and Muslim Fundamentalisms (1996:43-62). Michel draws clear distinctions between the two. Evangelical movements have placed five biblical fundamentals at the core of their faith while Muslim reform movements attempt to return to the more pure Islam of a former, supposedly golden age. Muslim presenters at an FABC colloquium pointed out that out of the 550 international militant

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<sup>51</sup> "Re-founding" is different from fundamentalism. Conciliar reform did not intend to go back to do what the founding apostolic generation once did and then repeat it today. Conciliar reform is, rather, picking up the charism and spirit of the apostolic generation and then do today what they might have done in our circumstances. (Arbuckle 2000:4, 131).

and terrorist networks in more than 60 countries listed by the UN, only 20 are Muslim organisations and that militants do not even constitute 1% of the total Muslim population of 1.4 billion worldwide (Basman 2005:49, 59).

As with Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalists, the Christian version is also seeking certainty and security. Unlike the majority communities, minority Christian sectarian bodies in Asia tend to be otherworldly, non-political and withdrawn into themselves. Marginalised by the majority, they proceed to marginalise themselves further by seeking sanctuary in ritual and devotion. This otherworldly, Christian movement, both within and without the Catholic community, is the topic of this paper. And as the majority of Asian Catholics leaving the church for other Christian bodies are joining Pentecostal-like congregations, I am concentrating on this new and rapidly expanding Christian tradition.

### **Sectarian Tendencies**

Leaving the church to join a Pentecostal denomination is not the only option for a disaffected minority. Many find an agreeable space within Catholicism. All large religious organisations such as the Catholic Church contain a host of sub-groups, from devotional and charismatic movements to social activist and political advocacy networks.

Movements within the Catholic Church are sometimes considered sectarian because they are 'extra-parochial' neither fully integrated into parish nor diocese. However they avoid sectarianism through their loyalty to the hierarchy and their promotion by Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Movements can be capable of extreme convictions without the least sectarian spirit.

Where social stratification exists in society the social network will tend to segment. The greater the social cleavage the more awkward will be the relationships between the stratified groups. This is reflected in church communities. Within a single parish or diocese rich employers and poor workers move in separate social circles. Where there is substantial economic or political inequality among parishioners, sub-networks will tend to detach parish groups from each other. To the degree that members differ in power and privilege they will tend to form sub-networks, each having distinctive and conflicting religious needs. More powerful parishioners will want to reduce tension with the environment, the less powerful will want to raise it. The advantaged group may well be devotional, while the disadvantaged party may grow to be biblically radical.



Many parishes and dioceses are caught up in an attempt to be simultaneously in both low and high tension with their environment. In practice, though, to serve one constituency entails failing the other. It is difficult to support both otherworldly prayer groups and politically engaged basic communities at the same time. In this situation internal sectarian sub-networks are probable within the parish, possibly leading also to a haemorrhaging both to other more agreeable parishes (if transport and alternative parishes are available) and to religious bodies outside Catholicism. No monochrome or monolithic religious organisation can adequately cater for the whole spectrum of religious needs and desires in multi-cultural and sharply stratified societies.

Here we must note an important caveat. If membership of a church entails a very distinctive ethnic or racial marker, as with certain Chinese-Indonesian Pentecostal churches, the Batak Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church in Flores, then defection becomes rare.

### **Absorbing Sectarian Tendencies**

There are many sectarian groups and networks within the Asian Catholic and Protestant churches. Traditionally, the Catholic Church has absorbed sectarian tendencies through the birth of energetic religious orders and lay sodalities and movements. Francis of Assisi in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Ignatius of Loyola in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and Escrivá de Balaguer in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century recruited from the most active and fervently religious persons from their respective generations. Such religious orders and lay sodalities usually begin with sharp sectarian tendencies but these soften as the groups mature.<sup>52</sup> In this way sectarian impulses are channelled into cutting-edge apostolates. Such sodalities attract non-conformists who are looking for originality and total commitment. Unsurprisingly, when religious orders and lay movements form intensely integrated social networks, they live in tension with the wider church.

The fact that significant numbers of Asian Catholics are joining Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like churches suggests that contemporary orders, sodalities and movements are not providing sufficient space within the church for the practical concerns of many and so these Catholics are finding their answer elsewhere. These movements mark a cultural crisis in meaning; dominant societal and ecclesial norms are being challenged.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For the softening of Opus Dei from a sectarian past to a more benign present see, John Allen, *Opus Dei: An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Reality of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 2005.

<sup>53</sup> For a selection of social science studies of new religious movements see Wilson 1992 and 1999.

#### 4.] THE PASTORAL CHALLENGE

*“The Catholic Church has opted for the poor while the poor has opted for Pentecostalism.”*

The challenge of the ‘pentecostalisation’ of Asian Christianity is crucial for at the grassroots, religion is possibly the most powerful force in the creation both of community life and communal strife. The challenge, then, is not simply to copy the externals of the Pentecostal-like movements (although this is not prohibited!) but to answer the underlying issues to which the Pentecostal surge is responding.

##### **A Multi-Polar Christianity**

In the startling words of Felix Wilfred of Chennai, we are facing a “crisis in world Christianity” (Wilfred 2000, 2004). The globalising world is forging a multi-polar Christianity in a multi-religious world, where a major role is being played by religious movements that are naturally pluralistic. Religious and cultural boundaries are being redrawn. The rapidly changing kaleidoscopic culture of Christianity is largely coming about from the margin, from Pentecostal/charismatic movements. But as Chinese hieroglyphics inform us, crisis is both danger and opportunity.<sup>54</sup>

##### *Towards a More Adequate Response*

As seen in Part 2, the FABC has already identified elements for a Catholic response. This approach is unmistakable and has been spelt out in detail over the past 35 years. We respond not by distancing ourselves from social upheaval or by withdrawing from the threatening multi-religious and multi-cultural landscape but by encountering it in faith. In the language of John Paul II, our step-by-step approach is one of cultural respect and religious freedom, rooted in right relationships and informed by an appreciation of history; our basic attitude is cosmic in scope (c.f. *Ecclesia in Asia* 20).

The pastoral issue is: how should we respond to the need of perplexed Catholics for certainty and stability? How can we maximise lay participation, nurture warm fellowship and proclaim a gospel of hope and empowerment to the bewildered and the marginalised? How can we acknowledge the world of spirits, shamans and miracles, the felt need for physical and psychological healing, while also responding to the real need for societal and cosmic healing? How can we proclaim the gospel in all simplicity without being simplistic? How can we read the

<sup>54</sup> Ganoczy (2003:89) maintains that chaos theory can be applied to present day religious upheaval; as in physics, chaos is a turbulent phase from which new possibilities of order can arise.



bible critically without emptying it of its supernatural power? How can we develop non-authoritarian team-leadership? How can we encourage fellowships to move beyond the personal and familial cares of their members to live out the social gospel?

This pastoral style should ripple through the local churches via our solidarity with the marginalised, inter-faith dialogue, inculturation and liturgical renewal. This style should commence at the grassroots through the fostering of basic ecclesial communities (BECs) as 'a new way of being church', a local church, "incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated... a church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions – in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own." (FABC I Taipei 1974)<sup>55</sup>

### *Pentecostal Renewal and Basic Ecclesial Communities*

Despite the FABC's conciliar vision, the Pentecostal movement is continuing to spread rapidly among Catholics. That is why the final part of this essay takes a look at the phenomenon of basic ecclesial communities (BECs) and compares them with Asian Pentecostal/charismatic movements (CM) within the Catholic Church.

Rephrasing a statement from a Latin American study that compared Pentecostalism with BECs (Martin 1990), we might ask: while Pentecostalism is truly a faith *of* the poor, has the FABC simply produced a vision *for* the poor? While neither Pentecostalism nor BECs are limited to Asia's poor, it may well be that some Pentecostal communities are practising what Catholic bishops and pastoral workers are theologising about. While BECs are being actively promoted by the FABC, the CM has arisen on its own. BECs are implementing the vision of the FABC while the CM is answering felt needs.

To a large extent charismatic or Pentecostal Catholics embody one type of Christianity, the BECs another. The CM tends to be indifferent to the world, while BECs ought to be actively engaged with it. Much of the CM tends towards cultural conformism, while some BECs are inclined to be culturally dissident. Both the CM and BECs among the economically prosperous usually accept or even legitimise the existing social order, while BECs among the urban poor and rural neglected are expected to critique the status quo and work for social, cultural and religious transformation. While the CM eagerly awaits for Christ to come again in glory, BECs are expected to witness to the coming of

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<sup>55</sup> The expression 'A New Way of Being Church' is found in FABC documents since the 1990 Bandung General Assembly. Basic Ecclesial Communities are being fostered through the Office for Laity's Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIpa) workshops.

God's Reign on earth in the here and now (c.f. Mat 6:9-10).

In line, then, with the FABC approach, three key criteria for evaluating and responding to both Pentecostal/charismatic movements and basic ecclesial communities are 1) their rootedness in culture, 2) their openness to other faith-traditions and 3) their solidarity with the marginalised. All this has been spelt out lucidly in numerous assemblies and workshops. The question is: how much of this vision has reached the grassroots, for it is at the grassroots we are facing the pastoral challenge.

In order to bring together the *Gaudium et spes* vision and the dynamic insights of the Pentecostal movement, we need to keep in mind three crucial issues, namely: 1) How adequately are basic ecclesial communities embodying the engaged *Gaudium et spes* vision of the church, and how far are the Charismatic movements distanced from, or supportive of, this conciliar vision? 2) How can BECs embody the *Gaudium et spes* vision and at the same time answer the felt needs of bewildered, powerless persons at the edge of society? 3) What sort of culture in parish and diocese do we have to nurture to make space for both movements, not in parallel but in a dynamic and creative tension? It will be helpful, therefore, to concentrate upon convergences between CMs and BECs as well as on their well-known disparities.<sup>56</sup>

### **The CM and BECs: Convergence and Disparity**

#### ***The Spiritual Challenge***

The CM embraces the mystery of the supernatural which imbues hope. Healing is central, but not just miraculous healing. Pentecostal-like groups engage intensely in counselling where the pained unburden themselves. There is a spiritually potent community, a spiritual experience that transforms.

Both movements experience God as gracious and holy, merciful and just, as members turn away from selfishness and commit their lives to serving one another. God's 'power' and 'sovereignty' are disclosed when believers choose to live under the cross, suffering for justice and love. There is much scope for common action for compassionate justice and practical love (Self 1992: 71).

Both BECs & the CM emphasise the renewal of their adherents' lives. Both encourage their members to put their religious beliefs into practice. The CM stresses an experience of personal conversion and

<sup>56</sup> This analysis has been greatly assisted by that of Cecília Mariz (1992), although there are striking differences between Catholic Brazil and multi-faith Asia.



stresses a change of individual life style and morality; members are expected to interpret the bible piously and apply it to their individual lives. By way of contrast, BECs are encouraged to read the bible in the light of the signs of the time which should lead to social commitment. In practice the link or non-link between faith and life in BECs and the CM may be somewhat similar.

For some participants involvement in the CM is but a phase in their faith journey (Indonesia & India). The CM tends to endure in Pentecostal groups that open up the world of the supernatural in daily life where psychological, and to some extent physical, healing is central. Many BECs are also ephemeral communities active for only a certain time. Where BECs are firmly rooted in the cultural and social traditions of popular culture, as in Eastern Indonesia and the Philippines, they have a considerable potential to endure and prosper over the long haul. There seems to be little if any emphasis upon healing in BECs. What seems to endure in both movements is personal family-based religious practice and belief which remains Catholic where it is accompanied by regular sacramental celebrations.

Nonetheless, due to rapid social change, Catholics now feel relatively free to forge new meanings and networks in CMs and BECs that are often only loosely connected with the parish. There is a plurality of models in contemporary Catholicism (Pace 2003:67-79). As in Latin America, Catholic loyalties are shifting from parish to movements, groups and organisations (Smith 1994).

### *The Social Challenge*

In large, diverse and increasingly anonymous cities, both the CM and BECs offer warm fellowship where everyone is recognised and made to feel at home. Both movements answer the psychological need to be part of pastoral planning, decision making and implementation. In both movements members feel significant, relaxed and good. In the CM there is total involvement. The larger gatherings are complemented by cell groups for bible study and support. These smaller groups in both movements support egalitarian gender relationships. The CM often spawns interest groups for self improvement, self renewal or devotion.

Both the CM and BECs offer a support network centred on the duty of mutual assistance. They offer psychological support by praying, talking, listening and advising each other. CM members tend to help one another individually; the movement enhances the individual in line with post-modern urban society. BEC members help themselves by working together and finding collective solutions to shared problems, running credit unions, taking on local economic projects, engaging in

local political, legal and human rights advocacy and the like. Some BEC members might on occasion fight publicly for the interests of the poor whereas the CM is primarily concerned with its own membership and way of life.

As examples from China, Korea, the Philippines and India show, the CM is open to continuities with indigenous religious styles. In affirming the central role of healing and spirit possession, the CM is interacting with vital areas of Asian culture so far neglected by the more formal process of inculturation. The movement is considerably more adaptable to grassroots religious experience and spontaneity than the traditional parish. In Asia, as elsewhere, Pentecostal religion shows a remarkable likeness to the social and cultural experience of the urban working classes. For many BECs, and not just the Pentecostal movement, are rooted in oral, 'pre-literary' culture and so both movements are challenging us to re-root our theology, spirituality and pastoral practice in experience (narrative and testimony) rather than in abstract concepts or top-down planning.

### *The Prophetic Challenge*

At its dynamic best the CM is a transformative movement from below that has sprung up answering felt needs of laity and religious, a movement which the hierarchies of Asia have come to acknowledge. In contrast BECs have usually been initiated by diocesan pastoral programmes. Understandably where diocesan programming has engendered BECs and the ongoing nurturing of the small communities is neglected, many evolve into little more than administrative units within a conventional parish. Potentially both the CM and BECs could be empowering movements rooted in people's lives but this is not the case everywhere.

Both the CM and BECs are potentially prophetic. Despite its otherworldliness and its respect for constituted authority, the CM fosters new hope and so a critical, non-fatalistic outlook on life. 'Baptism in the Spirit' involves a dramatic shaking-up of the taken-for-granted world and members embrace of a new way of seeing reality itself. Meanwhile BEC members discover new horizons through sharing life issues in the light of the scriptures. Both the CM and BECs, therefore, counteract a fatalistic outlook by encouraging people to disagree with reality as conventionally defined and so lead to transformation (c.f. Mariz 1992). Also, BECs and the CM are not that far apart when it comes to their practical goals for the common good: both movements confront the destructive forces of power, repression, collusion and corruption with the gospel message of servanthood, liberation and community sharing (Self 1992:72).



Nevertheless, the CM approach to social change is individualistic; one changes society by converting the individual. The stress on personal sanctification and changes in personal morality are cast in a rational mould. Spiritual introspection, methodical self-discipline, the application of faith to everyday experience, all engender an ethos of rational individualism (Smith 1994). This responds to the stresses of modern society on the individual. And yet although fundamentally conservative, politically withdrawn and structurally authoritarian, CM members avoid lying, corruption and injustice and some steer clear of a blatantly consumerist lifestyle. In contrast, BECs occasionally mobilise political participation, as in the people power movement in the Philippines in the 1980s and the democracy and human rights movement in South Korea during the same decade. Potentially, BECs can provide a power base for organised influence on NGOs and political parties.

### *The Leadership Challenge*

Neither the CM nor BEC movements place much emphasis upon the parish or parish councils, although the CM is guided by a number of prominent clergy and religious. Participants of both movements are inspired directly by God in prayer and bible sharing. Everybody is deemed competent to reflect upon and interpret the bible.

CM leaders, and in some cases those of the BECs, are not primarily functionaries or administrators but spiritual leaders. Successful CM leaders are acknowledged as prophets, healers and counsellors. Pentecostal-like groups have myriad ministries and ordinary members lay claim to spiritual maturity and gifts and minister in the church. This tends to bridge the lay-leader divide of the conventional parish.

Many, though by no means all, BECs have evolved collective leadership and decision making. These create open spaces for thinking and articulating which fosters an attitude of engaged criticism while developing their members' organisational, communication and leadership skills. Team leadership and common deliberation on life issues cultivate a sense of responsibility for the condition of society.<sup>57</sup> Where BECs are little more than parish wards, leadership tends to be in the hands of one person only. Leadership in the CM may also revert to a single, powerful charismatic individual as in the KTM of Indonesia. In these cases authoritarianism is the norm.

The growth of these two movements is challenging us to find an appropriate balance between personal, entrepreneurial ministerial

<sup>57</sup> One crucial issue not considered here is the incongruity of a participatory and egalitarian ecclesiology in the BECs within the larger context of a hierarchical church.

charismatic leadership and ordered, constitutional, differentiated roles within the church (Gros 2006:40).

### *The Ecumenical Challenge*

For thirty-four years the official conversation between the Catholic Church and Classical Pentecostals has to be the greatest secret of the ecumenical movement! It is an extraordinary, even prophetic dialogue between the largest Christian church and the fastest growing Christian movement. Catholic/Pentecostal understanding has deepened and mutual respect fostered. I am not aware of any echoes in Asia nor am I aware that any of the documentation has been published in Asia. The reports of the Five Phases should inspire conversations at the local level between Catholic charismatics, classical and indigenous Pentecostals together with activists in basic Christian communities. Without in any way neglecting ongoing contact with mainline churches, thirty-four years after Pentecostals and Catholics engaged in dialogue it is not too soon for the Catholic Churches of Asia to open up to indigenous Pentecostal communities. To my knowledge only one bishops' conference has commissioned a survey, namely India.<sup>58</sup> The FABC, national conferences of bishops and theological/pastoral academies could all help to initiate such conversations. This would necessitate our looking anew at the oral, indigenous cultures of Asia from which the majority of Catholics spring.

### **The Challenge to Parish and Diocese**

As we have seen, where a substantial minority feel that their religious needs are not being met they may join a new religious movement either within or without the church. We have, then, to identify religious and pastoral needs. And if we wish to answer the needs of Asian Pentecostals, then we must replace the hegemonic culture of the conventional parish.<sup>59</sup>

The Johannine Council (1962-1965) provoked cultural pluralism within Catholicism on a broad scale. This led to the rise of many new movements including the CM and BECs. Some of the new movements interpret the council as a call to engage the world and take up social

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<sup>58</sup> For the Indian survey see Part 2 above. The Indonesian Conference commissioned a study of the charismatic movement (Subangun 1993).

<sup>59</sup> I am leaving doctrinal issues aside and concentrating on cultural and pastoral concerns. I concur with Walter Hollenweger that Pentecostalism has a Catholic root and this explains why comparatively few Catholic charismatics leave the church (Hollenweger 1997:144-180). "One could say that Pentecostalism is a way of being Catholic without accepting the juridical structures of the Catholic Church." (Hollenweger 1999:166).



justice issues (a *Gaudium et spes* church) while others read the council as calling for a more devotional church (a ritualistic church). Often, but by no means always, basic ecclesial communities take the former line, while charismatic groups take the latter. The conventional parish is not coping with these contradictory trends. In many cases parishes have evolved into a *complexio oppositorum* of different organisations which live side by side without any meaningful reciprocal enrichment. “The whole of Catholicism... has to decide whether... the development of its identity must be that of a great network of sites (each) reserved for a registered clientele, or of an open ‘sanctuary’, humanising, hospitable (where)... ‘each one has their gift, each one their burden’ (Melloni 2003:19).

### *The Conventional Parish*

It is not sufficient to make liturgical, catechetical and pastoral suggestions for giving new life to the parish.<sup>60</sup> The conventional parish is culturally monotone and limited to a commonsense view of life. It depends upon the ordained pastor and his pastoral council where top-down authority is centralised through controlled channels. This ideal of comprehensive organic integration reflects a stable, rural society with its well-ordered, organic community. All components are synchronised by the central authority in order to achieve accord. Such a parish or diocese does not see the need to balance divergent movements through complementarity, but integrates or eliminates them in the name of harmony. In this conventional ecclesiastical culture there is little room for particular interests, social diversity, cultural pluralism or religious non-conformity, let alone for questioning authority. These are viewed as detrimental to the common good.

Unsurprisingly this conventional Catholic culture was marked by authoritarianism, elitism and patriarchalism. Such a parish culture conforms closely to that of the rural Asia of yesteryear or the conformist cultures of authoritarian Asian governments today. Without a radical change in parish culture and pastoral care, Pentecostal churches will continue to absorb Catholics who no longer find a place in the church.

### *A Shift in Parochial Cultures*

Neither BECs nor the CM can breathe in a staid, homogenous religious culture. For if BECs are absorbed into the institutional structure of the conventional parish they tend to be reduced to little more than parish wards. In that case Catholic activists move out into

<sup>60</sup> This seems to be the approach of various Episcopal conferences (e.g. Philippines, India, Indonesia) and also theologians such as Jesús-Angel Barreda (1998:358-360).

extra-ecclesial networks. Similarly, when charismatics are brought under the control of the conventional parish, and clear demarcations are insisted upon between liturgical rites and charismatic celebrations,<sup>61</sup> then understandably many move on to the freer Pentecostal churches.

When left to mature according to their own dynamic, both movements advance social pluralism, foster participation in the wider society and promote an expectation and practice of both church and societal accountability. The CM and BECs express a process of social differentiation in the direction of personal choice and greater participation.

In both BECs and the CM women experience independence and self-esteem. Both movements encourage individual choice and therefore free will. The emphasis is on achieved rather than ascribed status which contrasts sharply with the conventional parish.

We need, then, to shift from an authoritarian to a collegial culture; from a commando ethos to one of listening; from a religiosity that inculcates acceptance to that which inspires faith-in-action; from a church culture over-adaptive to local and global cultural norms to a church culture embedded in the values and norms of the Scriptures; from a church centred on its members to a church focused on its mission to society.

### *Towards a Communion of Communities*

If we are to take up the pertinent suggestion that the charismatic movements and basic ecclesial communities should learn from each other (De Los Reyes 2000), then the culture of the conventional parish needs to be replaced by an open, networking culture. We need to develop the parish into a flexible poly-centred web where BECs and the CM can mutually enrich rather than studiously avoid one another. If these two powerful movements were somehow to combine their strengths in the coming decades the result would be extraordinarily potent. If the CM absorbs, and is transformed by, the social justice vision of the BECs while the BECs take up the emotional, communal, narrational, hopeful and radically embodied 'experientialism' of the CM, the offspring could be more powerful than either parent (Cox 1995:319).

The central threads converging in the 'nucleus' of this poly-centred web would consist of Catholic activists and their families in both movements. This core would take part in ongoing training that would require the concentrated energy of the parish pastoral team.

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<sup>61</sup> While the disciplinary norms of the Instruction on Healing (art. 1 - 10) are theoretically plausible, I am not aware of their implementation which, if carried out, might well drive even more Catholics into the Pentecostal churches.



Lay leaders from both charismatic cells and BECs could be trained together with ordained pastors according to the reflection-action-reflection (see-judge-act) model of reading life in the light of the scriptures and then acting upon it. This would assist both the CM and BECs in uncovering the social roots and religious implications of the problems of life. Both groups could learn to read the bible in a way that links Christian symbols, events and teachings to the life of Asia's poor. Then, as long as the ordained leadership does not feel threatened by developments but continues to work collegially in bold-humility, the open parochial culture would cultivate a communion of communities.<sup>62</sup>

### *Nurturing a Culture of Sacramentality*

Asian Catholics are found in widely-scattered communities most of whom receive only occasional ministry by an ordained pastor. A sacramental community is nurtured by a sacramental ministry. By restricting the ordained priesthood to university-educated, celibate members of the community and making the vocation full-time and life-long we are preventing our communities from becoming Eucharistic by denying them regular sacramental celebrations. One or other of these restrictions could be lifted. There will be no enduring Catholic response to the rise of Pentecostalism as long as we fail to ordain an adequate number of presbyters to serve Eucharistic communities in the context of rethinking the whole issue of ministry (Burrows 1980, 2006;<sup>63</sup> Lobinger 1998). As long as we neglect to do so Catholics will continue to look to Pentecostal movements for their spiritual and personal nourishment.

## 5.] POSTSCRIPT

### **A Culture of Prophetic Dialogue**

The church of *Gaudium et spes* is a church in dialogue with the world. For John Paul II, 'dialogue' is the key word that encapsulates the spirit of the entire corpus of conciliar documents (*Ut unum sint* par. 28).<sup>64</sup> The 'world' and 'church' consciously and constantly

<sup>62</sup> For an appreciative yet critical look at *Gaudium et spes* 40 years down the road see Wilfred 2006. Felix Wilfred argues for a broad sociological-political-economic-cultural analysis of society rather than a narrower cultural-anthropological one.

<sup>63</sup> Burrows laid the theological groundwork for a rethink of ministry in the Catholic Church in his 1980 book. More recently, quoting the *Annuario Statisticum* (Burrows 2006:5), he gives the following data: from 1978 to 2003 the number of Catholics in the world grew from 757 million to 1.07 billion. To serve 300 million more Catholics in 2003 there were 15 thousand fewer priests. For rethinking grassroots team ministry see Lobinger 1998.

<sup>64</sup> Despite no reference to the charismatic renewal, *Ut unum sint* is strongly aware of the centrality of repentance (par. 15-17; 33-35) of prayer (par. 21-27) and of the role of the Holy Spirit (par. 82-85; 102).

influence each other. Where religious and cultural values converge this is a mutually enriching encounter; where their respective values fundamentally differ, 'world' and 'church' offer alternative visions.

To avoid sectarianism, a Christian community that claims to witness to the truth must point not to itself but to Jesus who is the way to the Father. Such a church will not be content with its own beliefs, statements and liturgies but demand authentic witness in a community of faith. The most fundamental demand of faith is for an encounter with the Risen Lord, and through him and his Spirit with the Father (c.f. Rensberger 1988:135-152).

Christians who stake all on their confession of Jesus as the way, the truth and the life will tend to be sectarian unless they look beyond themselves. Faith in Jesus the Christ is nothing less than an uncompromising claim that demands a decision, insists upon the validity and necessity of an individual and communal relationship with God through Jesus in the Spirit. Our specific claim is that Jesus, as God's Son, confronts the world with its own darkness. We respond publicly through integration into a community of light and love.

Christian communities exist for mission, for others, for the multitudes, for the world which Jesus came not to judge but save and recall to obedience to God. Our response to a world of confusion, division and pain is to point to the One who has made the world whole: "It is all God's work... God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone's faults against them, but entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:18-19) Exclusive in our allegiance to Christ, and as a creative minority, we challenge the world on the basis of the love and the word of God.

We confront a confused and wounded world not merely with a doctrine but with an alternative society, a counter-culture. We seek to draw people into the gospel community by being that community. A common life expressing love, equality and openness to God's power in daily life challenges the world's violence and injustice, its upheavals and uprootedness, its confusion and immorality. A witnessing community dissolves the idolatrous chauvinisms of hegemonic cultures and sectarian creeds. The community itself becomes the gospel. Where authentic witness to life in Christ is uppermost, doctrine is directed at the inner transformation of the individual while ethics works for the reformation of society, the healing of relationships, the creation of more equitable, compassionate and gender-just communities. While primacy is given to an intimate experience of God communicated in the language of feelings and rooted in indigenous culture, the challenge is to integrate the dogmatic and the ethical, the personal, social and cosmic



dimensions of the gospel into a single whole (Rensberger 1988:152). We are being challenged to bring together two grassroots movements: the dynamic experiential faith of Pentecostals and the just-society thrust of basic ecclesial communities.

“The Good News coming from God through Jesus Christ is the mystery of salvation which confronts all three dimensions of evil’s mysterious power. It confronts the personal dimension by allowing individuals to enter into the Paschal Mystery... The gospel confronts the social dimension by proclaiming Good News to the poor, a message of liberation, life and morality that manifests itself in effective action... Finally, the gospel of the light of the Word and the Spirit of grace is manifest in the cosmic reconciliation brought about by Christ by which God may be all in all.”<sup>65</sup> (Bevans & Schroeder 2001:197).

### **Increase our Faith**

The title of this presentation opens with the biblical phrase: “*Increase our faith.*” (Lk 17:5) Hearing Jesus’ word on the scandal of causing others to abandon the Christian journey and on the need to forgive without limit (Lk 17:1-4), the apostles ask for an increase in faith. Jesus responds indirectly by speaking about how faith as small as a mustard seed can accomplish totally unexpected things. As the remainder of the paragraph shows (Lk 17:6-10) faith has more to do with plodding on responsibly (ploughing, pasturing) than with working wonders. Faith is the total personal redirection of life to the God of Jesus Christ and his new values, a commitment that touches the depth of one’s being and personality. For Jesus what counts is not the quantity of faith so much as its strength and faith is strengthened through practice. Faith cannot deepen independently from its practice for without good deeds faith is dead (cf. Jm 2:17).

The path to faith is discipleship, discipleship amidst Asia’s excessive wealth and inhuman poverty, vast migrations and unstable politics, enormous cultural resources and yet systemic corruption. Asian Catholic communities are small and scattered amidst Buddhist, Confucian, Muslim, Hindu and indigenous societies. And yet the gracious gift of a speck of faith is sufficient to break down sectarian ghettos and commission us anew as light, salt and leaven. The Lukan paragraph ends with the assurance: “*Your faith is your salvation.*” (Lk 17:19)

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<sup>65</sup> Excerpt from the final statement of an international meeting of missiologists and mission practitioners at Techny, Chicago in the Jubilee year.

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*Spektrum* (Jakarta)  
*Vidyajyoti* (Delhi)



## **APPENDIX :**

### **QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. In the face of rapid social change and the resurgence of Asian religions:  
How can we best respond to the quest for security being made by perplexed Catholics without our becoming literalistic/ simplistic or by creating Christian ghettos?
2. In the face of the need for close, warm fellowship by quite divergent social groups (from charismatic movements to basic ecclesial communities):  
How can we encourage an open culture in both parish and diocese that makes space for as many diverse groups as possible while ensuring that they network with, and learn from, each other?
3. In the face of the felt need for direct religious experience:  
How can we open up our liturgical, devotional and mystical traditions within the context of Asia's majority and indigenous religious cultures?

*Note: The author would gladly receive personal experiences, comments, corrections and other sources. Email address: johnotomo46@gmail.com*

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