Spreading Fires: The Globalization of Pentecostalism in the Twentieth Century

Allan Anderson

The rapidly spreading "fires" that characterized the growth of global Pentecostalism are directly attributable to the efforts and visions of its pioneers, who were by no means always Westerners. The early years of Pentecostalism represent more than just its infancy—this period was also the decisive heart of the movement, the formative time when precedents were set for posterity. Whatever happened later was because of the founders who blazed the way. This article considers five of the main features of global Pentecostalism, illustrated by historical narrative from its early years.

The Role of Premillennialism

The first feature of global Pentecostalism is the role of premillennial eschatology. One of the convictions of early Pentecostals was that their experience of Spirit baptism was a "fire" that would spread all over the world, a last-days universal revival to precede the return of Jesus Christ. This conviction was part and parcel of the prevalent premillennialism that pervaded the radical fringes of Protestantism—a belief in the imminent return of Christ to set up a thousand-year reign on earth. Not only were those from the English-speaking world motivated by "Great Commission" texts in the King James Version of the Bible like Matthew 28:19 ("Go ye therefore, and teach all nations") and Mark 16:15 ("Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"), but they were even more often fired up by the eschatological text of Matthew 24:14 ("This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"). These texts were both the motivation and the justification for their evangelistic activities. The newsletters from Pentecostal missionaries in the periodicals were filled with one overriding concern: to evangelize the nations of the world before the imminent return of Christ. This focus permeated the activities of the missionaries and their converts almost to the exclusion of all other activities.

Although this "second coming" did not materialize during

Allan Anderson, former Pentecostal minister in South Africa, is now Professor of Global Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England. *This article forms the substance of his inaugural lecture given on March 2, 2006, and is amplified in his forthcoming book* Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism *(SCM Press, 2007).*

their lifetime, the Pentecostals were not altogether wrong about the global fires. By 1960 these Spirit manifestations were spreading to the older Protestant and Anglican churches, and by 1967 to the Catholic Church itself. By 1980 what had become known as the charismatic movement in almost all forms of Christianity was well established, and new forms of independent charismatic churches were beginning to emerge, now proliferating all over the world. By the end of the twentieth century, Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in all its diversity had expanded into almost every country on earth. It had become an extremely significant movement within global Christianity, affecting Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, evangelicals, and especially the independent churches in China, India, Africa, and Latin America. It is probably the fastest expanding religious movement in the world ever, certainly the fastest within Christianity.

Intercultural Origins

A second main feature of global Pentecostalism is that it, by all accounts, had interracial and intercultural beginnings. The first decade of the twentieth century was one of unprecedented revival activity in the evangelical world. One century ago, in April 1906, one of these revivals broke out in a ramshackle church on Azusa Street in inner-city Los Angeles. Several manifestations of ecstasy came upon a group of African-Americans at the time in the Holiness, Methodist, and Baptist churches. But the most unusual and distinctive sign of this religious enthusiasm was an experience called baptism in the Spirit, usually accompanied by speaking in tongues. Led by William Seymour (1870–1922), a son of former slaves, the Azusa Street revival became a catalyst in the emergence of a new kind of Christianity that would transform the global religious landscape in the twentieth century. The revival movement's monthly periodical, the *Apostolic Faith*, declared six months later that "the fire is spreading" and that they "expected to see a wave of salvation go over this world."[1]

Pentecostalism is probably the fastest expanding religious movement ever.

The racial integration in the Azusa Street meetings was unique for that time, and people from ethnic minorities discovered "the sense of dignity and community denied them in the larger urban culture."[2] The *Apostolic Faith* exulted:

> We prayed that the Pentecost might come to the city of Los Angeles. We wanted it to start in the First Methodist Church, but God did not start it there. I bless God that it did not start in any church in this city, but out in the barn, so that we might all come and take part in it. If it had started in a fine church, poor colored people and Spanish people would not have got it, but praise God it started here. God Almighty says He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. This is just what is happening here. . . . Tell the people wherever you go that Pentecost has come to Los Angeles. . . . It is noticeable how free all nationalities feel. . . . No instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education. This is why God has so built up the work.[3]

Back in those days of enforced segregation and Jim Crow laws, the Azusa Street Mission saw its interracial and intercultural nature as one of the reasons for its success. This feature also facilitated Pentecostalism's remarkable expansion across the globe. The mission and purpose of this new movement was clear: to stand for "the restoration of Apostolic faith, power and practice, Christian unity, the evangelization of the whole world preparatory to the Lord's return, and for all of the unfolding will and word of God." The followers of this new movement were convinced that they had "the simple but effective Scriptural Plan for evangelizing the world."[4] The going out from Azusa Street was immediate, in ever-widening circles.

Azusa Street was a place of pilgrimage for returning missionaries as word spread about the revival there. Frank Bartleman recollected that "it seemed that everybody had to go to 'Azusa.'" He recorded that "missionaries were gathered there from Africa, India, and the islands of the sea . . . an irresistible drawing to Los Angeles."[5] By October 1906 there were eight missionaries from Azusa Street going out to "the foreign field," and thirty workers to various parts of the United States. A party of missionaries to Africa met up with Norwegian Methodist T. B. Barrett in New York and helped lead him into Spirit baptism. He then traveled on the same ship with them to Liverpool in December 1906 and began the Pentecostal movement in Europe. He pastored a large congregation in Christiania (now Oslo) and gave oversight to the establishment of Pentecostal centers in many parts of Europe, including Sunderland, England, where he introduced Pentecostalism to Anglican vicar Alexander Boddy and his All Saints' Church. Some of the Azusa Street missionaries sailed from Liverpool to Monrovia, Liberia, while others left on another ship bound for Benguela, Angola, but the latter were never heard of again.

Contemporaneously in western India, a similar revival was taking place in the Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, near Pune. Led by the famous social reformer Pandita Sarasvati Ramabai (1858–1922) and commencing in 1905, a year before the events in Los Angeles, hundreds of young Indian women said to be "baptized by the Spirit" in prayer meetings saw visions, fell into trances, and spoke in tongues. The Mukti revival was as much a center of pilgrimage for propagating the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism as Azusa Street was. It resulted in 1,100 baptisms and the going out of some 700 young women into the surrounding areas, about 100 going out daily, sometimes for as long as a month at a time. Ramabai formed what she called a Bible school of 200 girls to pray in groups called praying bands and to be trained in witnessing to their faith. These praying bands spread the revival wherever they went. Minnie Abrams indicated that Mukti operated as a center for the spread of Pentecostalism—much as Los Angeles or Oslo did in the United States and in Europe. She said that many Indians had "received the Pentecostal blessing with tongues and other gifts of the Spirit" and that visitors from all over India had come to Mukti and had "received this Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire."[6]

Both the Mukti and Azusa Street revivals had far-reaching consequences for global Christianity in the twentieth century. Pentecostals from all over the world came to Mukti, and its missionaries were directly involved in evangelistic efforts that created churches in several parts of India. Missionaries from Azusa Street were circling the globe by 1907 with their new message of spiritual power. It has been estimated that this revival movement reached twenty-five nations within two years. Seymour and the writers of the *Apostolic Faith* saw the Indian revival, like the Welsh Revival of 1904–5, as a precedent to what happened at Azusa Street, a sort of prototypical, earlier Pentecostal revival that they thought became full-grown in Los Angeles. But it is more likely that these were simultaneous rather than sequential

events in a general period of revival in the evangelical world at the turn of the century.

Women played a prominent role in the Mukti and Azusa Street revivals, bucking the trend that excluded women from church leadership at that time. African-Americans Lucy Farrow, Julia Hutchins, and Jenny Moore Seymour (and other Azusa leaders Florence Crawford and Clara Lum) were leaders in both the Azusa Street revival and the missionary movement that issued from it. And in India, Ramabai resisted both patriarchal oppression and Western domination in Christianity, being attracted to what a recent biographer called "the gender-egalitarian impulse of Christianity."[7] The Mukti revival was preeminently a revival among young women and led by women, motivating and empowering those who had really been marginalized and cast out by society. Pentecostalism's ability to empower the marginalized and oppressed for service and to bestow dignity on disadvantaged women was evidence of its early social activism, despite its otherworldly orientation. The Mukti revival resulted in an unprecedented missionary outreach of Indian Christians into surrounding areas and further abroad. As one periodical observed, Ramabai's praying bands of young women were going "in every direction to scatter the fire that has filled their own souls." The result, it declared, was that "many parts of India are hearing of the true and living God."[8]

Ramabai's assistant, the former American Methodist Minnie Abrams, wrote the first theological defense of Spirit baptism and influenced the commencement of Pentecostalism in Chile through her contact with Methodist missionaries in Valparaiso, Willis and Mary Louise Hoover. Abrams's report of the Mukti revival caused the Methodist churches in Valparaiso and Santiago to expect and pray for a similar revival, which began in 1909. Many ecstatic manifestations occurred. There was a hostile reaction from the authorities, the local press, and eventually the Methodist Church itself. In 1910 the Methodist Conference, which met in Hoover's own Valparaiso church building and in the presence of his members, charged Hoover with conduct that was "scandalous" and "imprudent," and with propagating teachings that were "false and anti-Methodist . . . contrary to the Scriptures and irrational." The manifestations of this revival were derided as being "offensive to decency and morals" and involving "hypnotism."[9] Inevitably, Willis Hoover was forced to resign, and he became the leader of the new Iglesia Metodista Pentecostal, today the largest Protestant church in Chile. Chilean Pentecostalism thus has its roots in the Indian revival rather than in the North American one. The various international revival movements were the soil in which a locally contextual Pentecostalism was able to grow and thrive.

Pentecostalism's ability to empower and to bestow dignity on disadvantaged women was evidence of its early social activism.

Spirit-Centered Mission

The third feature of the mission that proceeded out of Pentecostal revival movements is that it was based on the common experience of the Spirit. One of the reasons for the rapid spread of Pentecostalism was the general expectation of revival accompanied by manifestations of the coming of the Spirit that pervaded radical evangelical circles at the beginning of the twentieth century—especially among their missionaries, their most devoted servants. By 1910 it was said that revivals called "outpourings of the Holy Spirit" had occurred in several countries. The revivals were sometimes (but not always) connected, and in all cases they were accompanied by unusual and ecstatic manifestations held to be the work of the Spirit. From its beginnings, Pentecostalism placed emphasis on missions as a result of the experience of Spirit baptism. People came to Pentecostal centers from other countries and went back with the baptism. From Azusa Street and other centers (including those on other continents), "apostolic faith" missionaries were sent out to places as far away and diverse as China, India, Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Palestine, Egypt, Somaliland, Liberia, Angola, and South Africa—all within two years.[10] This was no mean achievement and was the beginning of what is arguably the most significant global expansion of a Christian movement in the entire history of Christianity.

In some cases these early missionaries had no fixed plans for their arrival—for they were led to their destinations by the Spirit, and the Spirit would show them what to do when they got there. As one of them put it, speaking of her team in Hong Kong: "Three young women, and one of mature years, left their homes of wealth, and comfort . . . and their beautiful native State of Washington, for dark S. China."[11] Two of these three young women died there soon after from tropical diseases—and this was the tragic fate of many of these unprepared missionaries, who refused to take medicines, not wanting to show lack of faith in divine healing. Some of them went to these faraway places leaving behind their wives, husbands, and in a few cases their children, and sometimes they took their families with them only for them to perish from smallpox or malaria soon after arriving. The sacrifices made by these missionaries were, in some cases, quite startling. G. S. Brelsford's account of his departure was not atypical: "We bade the children good-bye with tears streaming down our faces, and a week later we sailed for Egypt. We did as well as we could for the children, divided what was on hand, and went third-class over to Egypt, but I cannot recommend that way of traveling."[12]

The Brelsfords arrived in Alexandria with two dollars in their pockets and were able to continue only with the help of two Egyptian Christians and a twenty-dollar donation from home that arrived soon afterward. Such was the plight of many of these faith missionaries. Many of them were independent, without financial or organizational backing, and they related only loosely to fledgling Pentecostal congregations in their home country. After all, the Spirit had set them free from human ecclesiastical institutions. Pentecostal pioneer in South Africa John G. Lake wrote an exasperated letter home in 1909 about sending missionaries without funds, for one of them had arrived in Cape Town without the necessary minimum of a hundred dollars and a guarantee of support. To get him through to Johannesburg had cost them "a great deal of trouble and expense," Lake complained.[13]

The rapid scattering of missionaries to all points of the compass occurred because the first American Pentecostals were convinced that they had been given "missionary tongues" through the baptism of the Spirit, and that when they reached their destinations they would be able to speak miraculously to the local people without having to undergo the arduous task of language learning. Apart from some instances in which it was claimed that such a miracle had actually happened, most admitted that they were unable to speak in the tongues of the nations they traveled

to, and they persevered to learn these languages, although some returned to the United States disillusioned.

The early twentieth-century migrants who carried the Pentecostal message all over the world were most often poor, untrained, and unprepared for what awaited them. Many did not return, having died on the field. Some missionaries went out "by faith," without any income, which was sometimes referred to as "on the faith line"—going out with very little and trusting God to supply the necessary finances, usually through home contacts and the support of the periodicals. In return, the missionaries provided long and regular newsletters that were reproduced in order to raise funds back in the homeland.

These Pentecostal migrants needed to remain in regular contact with their home countries and sending churches for their own survival. Letters went back and forth between missionaries and home churches, the latter producing periodicals that were often issued free of charge to these missionaries, keeping them abreast of the developing movement both at home and around the world. Often their only link with any form of organization was through these periodicals, which served a threefold function: to act as home bases for missionaries, to disseminate information about them, and to raise funds for their support. Many of the periodicals saw the promotion of Pentecostal missions as one of the main reasons for their existence. The periodicals were also important vehicles for internationalizing and creating norms for Pentecostal beliefs and values. They were perceived by the missionaries as being the primary sources of both their own identity and that of their converts.

Alfred G. and Lillian Garr, pastors in a Holiness church, were baptized in the Spirit at Azusa Street and were reported to have received "the gift of tongues, especially the language of India and dialects." The Garrs were both supposedly able to speak Bengali, and Lillian also Tibetan and Chinese. They left Los Angeles in July 1906 for India, arriving in Calcutta in December 1906 with an African-American domestic helper named Maria Gardener and their baby daughter, Virginia. Although disillusioned with their language abilities, they persevered and were invited to conduct services in William Carey's old Baptist church. Lillian Garr wrote her first report to Azusa Street in March 1907, saying that thirteen or fourteen "missionaries and other workers" had received Spirit baptism.[14] The Garrs continued to work in the Indian subcontinent amid controversy arising from their dogmatic stance on Spirit baptism, and by September 1907 they were in Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The focus of their ministry was on reaching missionaries with their message. This was a strategy for many of the expatriate Pentecostals in foreign countries who could not speak local languages, and it resulted in a rapidly developing network of interconnected missionaries who spread their message throughout the world with astonishing rapidity. Most of these missionaries came from evangelical faith missions like the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the China Inland Mission, but sometimes missionaries from the older denominational missions were also affected.

The controversial Garrs continued their journey from Ceylon, arriving in Hong Kong in October 1907. They began services in the American Board (Congregational) mission with the aid of a capable Chinese interpreter, Mok Lai Chi, an English teacher and former government interpreter. Here, the *Apostolic Faith* reported, "a glorious revival" broke out.[15] The first Pentecostal services were attended by between 400 and 700 people, but opposition from other missionaries mounted, and the Garrs were ejected from the American Board building. Within six months some 100 people in South China had become Pentecostal. In Hong Kong about thirty people met regularly at Mok Lai Chi's school building, known as the Morrison English School. In 1908 the Garrs lost both their domestic helper and their three-year-old daughter to smallpox. After this tragedy they returned to North America for fifteen months, where they did itinerant ministry on behalf of the Chinese church. They returned to Hong Kong in late 1909 to open a missionary home, and apart from nine months spent in India in 1910, they remained in Hong Kong until 1912, when they returned permanently to the United States to pastor a church. The Garrs lived together with other workers in their mission, and they did not learn Chinese or any other language during the time they spent in Asia.

Personal Inflexibility and Adaptability

The fourth characteristic feature of Pentecostal mission is that, like other foreign missions, it was not always conducted with much sensitivity to the local people. Recent movement toward a postcolonial reading of Pentecostal history places questions of identity and representation at the top of the agenda and helps us see the history of Pentecostalism in its proper perspective. The bias present in much of contemporary Pentecostal historiography is due partly to the exoticization and marginalization of "the other" that has been so prevalent in Western literature. The marginalization of women and national workers took place because most of the sources used in the writing of these histories (the early periodicals, reports of missionaries, and missionary letters) were originally written for home consumption and fund-raising. If national workers were mentioned, it was usually as anonymous "native workers" or "Bible women." These documents were usually loaded with information that would bolster financial and prayer support in North America and Europe. They were also full of assumptions of power and privilege. So the reports mostly talked about the activities of the missionaries themselves and not those of their so-called native workers. The reports were, at best, fragments of information given in a very different era and context, and so we do not know the whole story and cannot retrieve all of it now. But formulation of a fully postcolonial reading of Pentecostal history calls for turning attention again to primary sources and for much further painstaking research. I have consistently sought to distance myself from a theory of Pentecostal origins and identity that is centered on the Western missionary, because unless we revise this approach by widening our sources we will fail to represent Pentecostalism adequately.

Many early Pentecostals focused on reaching missionaries with their message.

The Western missionaries saw themselves as called by God to their work, and I do not intend to cast aspersions on their motives and integrity. That being said, there is little doubt that many of the secessions that took place among converts early in Western Pentecostal mission efforts in Africa, China, India, and elsewhere were at least partly the result of cultural and social insensitivities on the part of the missionaries and, in some cases, blatant racism and ethical failure. It is true that missionaries may not have been sensitized to these issues in the ways that we

are today, and equally true that we now have the hindsight of history. Nevertheless, early Pentecostal missionaries were often obsessed with a campaigning mentality that saw their task as bringing "light" to "darkness"; they frequently referred in their newsletters to the subjects of their mission as "the heathen," and they were often slow to recognize national leadership when it arose with creative alternatives to Western forms. Missionary paternalism was widely practiced, perhaps universally so. In country after country, white Pentecostals followed the example of other expatriate missionaries and kept tight control of churches and their national founders, especially of the finances they raised in western Europe and North America. Most wrote home as if they were mainly (if not solely) responsible for the progress of the work in the countries to which they had gone. These actions were often prompted by an unconsciously imperialist culture that believed in the innate superiority of European and Euro-American "civilization." The truth was often that the national churches grew in spite of, and not because of, these missionaries, who were actually denying their converts' gifts of leadership. But the Holy Spirit was anointing ordinary people to "spread the fire" to their friends, relatives, and neighbors, and even to other communities, peoples, and nations.

This revival took the power and control out of the hands of the privileged Western missionaries.

There were, of course, many exceptions to these insensitivities. One was Thomas Junk, a German early convert of Azusa Street, and his wife, Helen, who went to Tsao-Hsien, Shantung, China, in July 1908. There they discovered poverty of such dimensions that they were determined to do something about it. Junk wrote of the "self-righteous" missionaries who lived "in fine houses with every comfort, but allow no Chinese around them but their servants."[16] After less than six months, Helen Junk died, and Thomas continued alone. An elderly Chinese preacher, Lee Wang, worked with Junk at his mission and appears to have done most of the preaching. They operated a home where children were rescued from starvation, and by October 1910 it had fifty-five residents, of which twenty-five were children, whom Junk personally cared for. Fascinating letters from Junk describe his ability to identify with the people, to "be a Chinaman," as he put it, and not conform to common "missionary" behavior. His letters sometimes contain searing criticisms, as he wrote, for example, of the disadvantages of several missionaries "flocking" together (in mission homes), "having what they call a good time together, but caring very little for the Chinese."[17] He also reported remarkable healings and casting out of demons. He began ministry in prisons three times a week, where he described the most awful and dehumanizing, life-threatening conditions meted out to men whose crimes were sometimes very petty. In one of his reports from 1910, he mentioned preaching visits to fifty-two different towns and villages, and all but seven of these places had never heard the Christian message. The measure of this missionary's commitment to China is poignantly expressed in these words from a letter he wrote in 1910: "One brother asked if I would not come over to the home land and tell personally of the work and the need here if he, the brother, paid the expenses. No, dear brother, no, I cannot afford to waste the time and money that way. My work is here till Jesus comes or I am called home. I never shall see the home land again till I see it from the clouds."[18] Thomas Junk probably died in China soon after these words were written, for we do not hear of him again.

Responsive to Local Contexts

The fifth and perhaps most significant feature of Pentecostal mission is that it was inherently flexible, responding creatively to different religio-cultural contexts. Ramabai understood the Mukti revival to be the means by which the Holy Spirit was creating a contextual form of Indian Christianity. She penned these significant words in 1905: "Let the revival come to Indians so as to suit their nature and feelings, [as] God has made them. He knows their nature, and He will work out His purpose in them in a way which may not conform with the ways of Western people and their lifelong training. Let the English and other Western Missionaries begin to study the Indian nature, I mean the religious inclinations, the emotional side of the Indian mind. Let them not try to conduct revival meetings and devotional exercises altogether in Western ways and conform with Western etiquette. If our Western teachers and foreignised Indian leaders want the work of God to be carried on among us in their own way, they are sure to stop or spoil it."[19] This movement both absorbed and transformed the religio-cultural context wherever it went.

To some extent these revivalists represented the democratization of Christianity. Their "full gospel" was not preached by and to an educated elite who had been to mission schools and colleges, but instead the Spirit came upon ordinary, poor, and disadvantaged women and men, who thereby received empowerment for ministry and leadership. Their only qualification was that the Spirit had come and had called them for service. In effect, this revival took the power and control out of the hands of the privileged Western missionaries and functionary clerics and passed it on to ordinary local people. These early Pentecostal missions were rather chaotic.[20] Based on the whims of the Spirit, early Pentecostal missionaries scattered themselves within a remarkably short space of time to spread their "fires" wherever they went, and these fires were somewhat unpredictable, out-of-control wildfires. When human organizations attempted to quench the flames, as they often did, more often than not this futile effort resulted in new fires breaking out in other places and the further proliferation of new churches.

Although little or no memory survives of the national workers in the Majority World, it is important to attempt to correct the biases of historiography. This is made more difficult by Pentecostalism's greater dependence on national workers than other missions at the time, which can be explained by its emphasis on the empowering ability of the Spirit to equip ordinary believers for missionary service without requiring prior academic qualifications. Because of the emphasis in the periodicals about the missionaries going out from the North Atlantic to other parts of the world, we do not read much in them of how the Pentecostal message spread to the thousands of local people through these so-called native workers. Now and then, however, we do get a glimpse, even in the rather chaotic beginnings.

As an example, Mok Lai Chi, until his illness in 1923, led the Hong Kong Pentecostal Mission, the first Pentecostal church in China and a thriving church that still exists today. Mok published the first Pentecostal periodical outside the Western world, a four-page Chinese broadsheet with the back page in English, the first issue appearing in January 1908. Mok's influence and that of his

periodical extended far beyond the borders of Hong Kong, and he was instrumental in laying the foundations for many of the Chinese "old three-self" independent churches that emerged before the Communist revolution.

Albert Norton, Ramabai's coworker in Dhond, India, wrote of some young Indian men and women who had been rescued from famine seven years previously and who were now "filled with the Holy Spirit, and being greatly used in the extension of Christ's kingdom."[21] Both Norton and Ramabai made the training of Indian Christian workers one of the chief objectives of their missions. In 1910 there were 125 young women training in the Mukti Bible school to become Christian workers. Norton describes the young men at his mission, who had all married young women from Ramabai's mission, and writes that "a good number of the ablest and most heaven-blest workers for Christ in India, were once famine orphans."[22] One of them, Vihala Shankar, left with his wife for Gujarat in 1910 to preach to his own people in an area that had never heard the Christian message. We must not underestimate the enormous impact these sometimes anonymous Indian workers and the Mukti Mission had on the spread of Pentecostalism in India.

In Africa Pentecostalism was the catalyst for the emergence of hundreds of "churches of the Spirit."

An evangelist from Ceylon, Charles Hettiaratchy, who received Spirit baptism on his own through reading about the revival in Los Angeles, visited the United States in 1910, wrote articles that were published in Pentecostal papers, and was featured as a speaker in conferences in New York and Chicago. Shorat Chuckerbutty, a Bengali with a graduate degree and the founder of an orphanage in Allahabad, became Pentecostal in early 1910 with her fellow worker Dorothea Chundra, and people visiting this center received Spirit baptism, which further contributed to the spread of Pentecostalism.

The early twentieth century in Africa was also a time of unprecedented opportunity for Christian mission in the wake of rampant colonization by European powers. Mass conversions to Christianity in the 1910s and 1920s under the ministries of African preachers William Wadé Harris in Côte d'Ivoire, Garrick Sokari Braide in Nigeria, Simon Kimbangu in the Congo, Alfayo Mango in Kenya, Engenas Lekganyane in South Africa, and many others resulted in the formation of what became enormous, independent African churches. There, Pentecostalism was the catalyst for the emergence of hundreds of these new "churches of the Spirit," which exhibited a sensitivity to African religious and cultural values unmatched by the older European-founded missions.

These are just a few examples of the pulse of missionary fervor that followed the beginnings of Pentecostalism. There were other missionaries in many parts of the world, unnamed and unremembered, perhaps because they were not supported by or did not write to the Pentecostal periodicals. But the stage was set for a much greater expansion in the years to come.

The Globalization of Pentecostalism

The tremendous diversity in Pentecostalism amounted to a twentieth-century reformation of Christianity that has precipitated a resurgent interest in pneumatology and spirituality. Whereas older Protestant churches bemoan their ever-decreasing membership and possible demise in the West in the early twenty-first century, a most dramatic expansion continues to take place in Pentecostal and independent Pentecostal-like churches, especially outside the Western world. Classic Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God, the world's largest Pentecostal denomination, have probably only some 8 percent of their world associate membership in North America, with at least 80 percent in the Majority World.[23] Half the world's Christians today live in developing, poor countries, where forms of Christianity are very different from what Westerners often assume they must be. These Christians have been profoundly affected by several factors, including the desire to have a more contextual and culturally relevant form of Christianity, the rise of nationalism, the challenge of living as minorities in religiously pluralistic nations, a reaction to what are perceived as colonial and foreign forms of Christianity, and the burgeoning Pentecostal and charismatic renewal. Global Christianity today cannot be fully understood without making a serious study of its Pentecostal and charismatic varieties.

Notes

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3. *Apostolic Faith* 3 (November 1906): 1.
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5. Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (S. Plainfield, N.J.: Bridge Publishing, 1925, 1980), p. 53.
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13. *Pentecost* 1, no. 7 (June 1909): 3.
14. *Apostolic Faith* 7 (April 1907): 1; *Word and Work* 29, no. 6 (June 1907): 184.
15. *Apostolic Faith* 11 (January 1908): 1.
16. *Bridegroom's Messenger* 26 (November 15, 1908): 4; *Upper Room*, January 1911, p. 7.
17. *Bridegroom's Messenger* 57 (March 1, 1910): 1.
18. Ibid. 59 (April 1, 1910): 2.
19. Pandita Ramabai, "Stray Thoughts on the Revival," *Bombay Guardian and Banner of Asia*, November 7, 1905, p. 9.
20. Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 213–22.
21. *Bridegroom's Messenger* 5 (January 1, 1908): 2.
22. Ibid. 18 (July 15, 1908): 1.
23. Everett A. Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide, 1960–1990* (Carlisle, Eng.: Regnum Books, 1997), pp. 3, 107, 183.