

## Pluscarden Pentecost Lectures for 2004

### **THE EVANGELICAL CHALLENGE: THREAT OR GRACE?**

**Talk 1: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2004**

#### **The Changing Scene in World Evangelicalism**

Speaking globally, the Christian world today is made up of four main blocs: (1) the Catholic Church, (2) the Orthodox Church, (3) liberal Protestantism, and (4) the Evangelicals in a broad sense. Why do I not list in third place the historic Protestant denominations and in fourth place the newer and more sectarian groups? Because in the Protestant world, a classification by denominations is misleading, for the real distinction today is between the liberal, who are in decline, and the Evangelical and charismatic, who are growing. Much of the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia are charismatic, and in growing tension with their more liberal colleagues in Europe and North America. The focus of these lectures is on the fourth category, Evangelical Christianity, with particular attention to the Pentecostals and the various brands of charismatic, who now represent the majority of Evangelical Christians. In the last lecture I will address more directly the challenges the Evangelical explosion poses to the Catholic Church.

In the first lecture, I will limit myself as far as possible to description of what has been developing and to provide as up to date an account as it is possible for a Europe-based observer to give. In the second lecture, I will begin the process of evaluation and assessment. I am following this method, because I see a danger in moving too quickly into evaluation, before one has really examined the data. This mistake is particularly easy to make when prejudices with strong emotional components fuel the judgments being made.

#### **Present-Day Statistics**

All serious observers of world Christianity agree that there has been an astonishing explosion in the Evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic constituencies. Some observers are predicting that the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the century of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. The editors of the *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, David Barrett and Todd Johnson, provide up-to-date statistics each year for the Christian population. Many observers consider their figures to be on the high side, but there are no other statisticians providing the same degree of global coverage.

However, since their methods have some consistency, their figures for the growth rates are more likely to be accurate. Barrett and Johnson's figures for 2004 show<sup>1</sup>:

Table 1

| Category                      | 1970             | mid-2000                      | mid-2004                      |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Global Church Membership      | 1, 128, 708, 000 | 1, 894, 502, 000<br>x 167.85% | 1, 984, 098, 000<br>x 104.73% |
| Global Church Attendance      | 885, 777, 000    | 1, 359, 420, 000<br>x 153.47% | 1, 416, 842, 000<br>x 104.22% |
| Evangelicals                  | 98, 375, 000     | 225, 733, 000<br>x 229.46%    | 242, 697, 000<br>x 107.52%    |
| Pentecostals,<br>Charismatics | 167, 220, 000    | 532, 917, 000<br>x 318.69%    | 570, 806, 000<br>x 107.11%    |

The Pentecostals belong to denominations professing faith in a post-conversion reception of the Holy Spirit, known as baptism in, with or of the Spirit, that opens the door to the reception of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and gifts of healing. In the most common parlance, the charismatic Christians have similar beliefs and experience to the Pentecostals, though they are generally less dogmatic in their formulations, not having to subscribe to any Pentecostal or charismatic declarations of faith. They are either those who still belong to older denominations and churches as renewal groups in their midst (the so-called “mainline charismatics”) or those who belong to new groupings different from the Pentecostal denominations. In the language of our statisticians, the latter are called “Neo-Charismatics”, with an over-all breakdown between the three groups as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Table 2

|              | 1970         | 2000         | Growth Rate |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Pentecostals | 15, 382, 330 | 65, 832, 970 | 427.98%     |

<sup>1</sup> *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28/1 (Jan. 2004), p. 25. The figures Barrett and Johnson give for the Catholic population worldwide are 665, 477, 000 (1970); 1, 056, 189, 000 (mid-2000); and 1, 101, 930, 000 (mid-2004). These figures obviously refer to Global Church Membership.

<sup>2</sup> “Global Statistics” in NIDPCM, pp. 286 – 287.

|                  |              |               |          |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|
| Charismatics     | 3, 349, 400  | 114, 029, 250 | 3404.47% |
| Neo-Charismatics | 53, 490, 560 | 295, 405, 240 | 552.26%  |

The first two are the more clear-cut categories. The figures for Charismatics include Catholics active in Catholic charismatic renewal, as well as charismatic Christians in the Protestant denominations. In these statistics, the third category of the neo-charismatics is really a creation of the authors. Many would make a distinct category of independent charismatics of the over 50 million belonging to the new independent charismatic networks, whom Barrett and Johnson term “White-led Independent Postdenominationalists”, about whom I will speak later. Between 30 and 50 million come from the Chinese “house church” movement. An advantage of this broad classification is that it brings together all the remaining groupings that believe in Holy Spirit – revelation and empowerment, healing and deliverance, and thus it indicates the fuller extent of an experiential Holy Spirit power-oriented Christianity. So it includes the older African Indigenous Churches, whom scholars like Walter Hollenweger and Allan Anderson regard as “Pentecostal”, a classification disputed by the African Pentecostal denominations and the new African Charismatic churches. But a disadvantage is that it departs too much from every-day descriptive terminology<sup>3</sup>.

In general, the differences between Pentecostals and independent charismatics can be described as follows. The Pentecostals are organized in denominations following the widespread pattern in the Protestant world, i.e. on a national basis. Their ordained ministries normally follow the pattern of Protestant free churches. They have denominational Declarations of Faith, and they take part in the Pentecostal World Conference. They mostly have their origins in more working-class

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<sup>3</sup> Hence the high figures for “neo-charismatics” in Africa (with African Instituted Churches). The Asian figures include the Chinese house church movement, which is not a controversial inclusion but whose real size is very difficult to determine. The figures for each continent are as follows:

Table 4

| Continent     | %age Pentecostal | %age Charismatic | %age Neocharismatic |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Africa        | 12%              | 25%              | 63%                 |
| Asia          | 5%               | 16%              | 79%                 |
| Europe        | 8%               | 56%              | 36%                 |
| Latin America | 23%              | 52%              | 24%                 |
| North America | 7%               | 28%              | 65%                 |
| Oceania       | 14%              | 63%              | 24%                 |

milieux. The independent charismatics generally regard denominational patterns negatively, and want to avoid becoming new denominations. They seek to preserve more flexibility in their structures, though their main leaders typically have more effective authority than denominational leaders. They mostly believe in the restoration of the Ephesians 4: 11 ministries, especially of apostle and prophet, generally rejected by the Pentecostals, which means in practice oversight ministries transcending local and national boundaries. Their origins are mostly middle-class.

The rapid growth in the number of Pentecostal-charismatic believers has been taking place globally, though much more rapidly in the Third World, as the following chart illustrates:

Table 3

| Continent     | 1970         | 2000          | %age Increase |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Europe        | 37, 568, 700 | 126, 010, 200 | 335.41        |
| North America | 24, 151, 910 | 79, 600, 160  | 329.58        |
| Africa        | 17, 049, 020 | 126, 010, 200 | 739.11        |
| Asia          | 10, 144, 120 | 134, 889, 530 | 1329.73       |
| Latin America | 12, 621, 450 | 141, 432, 880 | 1120.58       |
| Oceania       | 238, 240     | 4, 265, 520   | 1790.43       |
| Total         | 72, 223, 000 | 523, 767, 400 | 725.21        |

To get a clearer picture of what is happening on the ground is not always easy. Here it has to be confessed that church leaders and theologians have generally paid little attention to these developments. In the Third World, they are mostly perceived as a problem of “sects” involved in “proselytism” and “sheep-stealing”. Such a reaction does not lend itself to serious study and research. Most of the detailed study is coming from social scientists, both sociologists and anthropologists, who more easily recognize when significant changes are taking place in society. For some years there have been important studies on Latin American Pentecostalism by such scholars, many in English, and more recently a growing number of studies on the situation in Africa and in Asia. In the Third World, Pentecostal scholarship itself is most developed in Asia,

with significant work coming from Korea, the Philippines and Singapore<sup>4</sup>.

### Striking Points

Let us note some of the more striking points from these statistics before making some more detailed comments.

- (1) By far the fastest-growth is occurring in the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with Asia leading the way.
- (2) In Africa and Asia, there has been a dramatic increase in new believers, though during the 1990s many Protestant churches are becoming increasingly charismatic. I was in Ethiopia three weeks ago, and there I was told that 90% of the Protestants are Pentecostal or charismatic. The only full-scale study of charismatic renewal in a nation comes from Ghana, where the author notes “the unprecedented integration of charismatic features in the ethos of the mainline churches in Ghana.”<sup>5</sup>
- (3) In Latin America, but also in the Philippines, the situation is different because the majority of the population were at least nominally Catholic. It should not be assumed that Pentecostal growth equates Catholic loss. The leading Catholic student of Latin American Pentecostalism writes: “In my own studies, I found a general religious awakening taking place, for Catholics and Pentecostals alike.”<sup>6</sup>
- (4) There has been a major swing to Pentecostal – charismatic Christianity among the black immigrant populations of Europe, whether from the Caribbean or from Africa. The older-established of the black Pentecostal churches are much more open to

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<sup>4</sup> There is an *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, an *Asian Journal of Mission*, whose editor is a Pentecostal (both from the Philippines), and a magazine called *Spirit and Church* (from Korea).

<sup>5</sup> Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism* (Zoetermeer: Boekenzenentrum, 2002), p. 297. He gives an example of a major Methodist rally, with the Presiding Bishop, adopting Pentecostal-style advertising “Come Let’s Celebrate Jesus ... For Your Miracle” (p. 298).

<sup>6</sup> Edward L. Cleary, OP “Latin American Pentecostalism” in Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (eds.) *The Globalization of Pentecostalism* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), p. 135. Fr Cleary also notes: “In three countries where Pentecostal growth is most prominent, Catholic seminary students increased dramatically. From 1972 to 1991, there was an 874 per cent increase in Guatemala, 709 per cent in Chile, and 522 per cent in Brazil. Also, in Brazil, sales of Bibles have exploded. In the last four years 4.5 million complete Bibles were sold, 36 per cent by Catholic publishers.” (*art. cit.*, p. 135).

ecumenical involvement than white Pentecostals, as is seen in their participation in bodies such as Churches Together.

- (5) There are clear signs of inter-continental missionary movements arising in the Third World including the sending of missionaries back to Europe, particularly from Brazil, Nigeria and Korea.
- (6) Something particularly remarkable is happening in China under conditions of constant oppression and where outside influences have been rendered virtually impossible. One figure is that in 1970 only 10% of Chinese Christians were Pentecostal or charismatic, but by 1995, this figure had reached nearly 65%. Recent information from China reports on a remarkable missionary project of all the house church networks to take the gospel back towards Jerusalem by foot along the old “Silk Road”<sup>7</sup>. This vision was first received as long ago as the 1920s, but they are now convinced that the time has come. They are training 100,000 missionaries to be sent out in the coming years. They say the persecution, imprisonment and torture they have experienced has precisely prepared them for this missionary task in lands, where it is forbidden to preach publicly.
- (7) In the last twenty-five years, there has been a remarkable increase in prayer, particularly intercessory prayer, in the wider Evangelical realm, often accompanied by fasting. National and International Prayer Centres have been formed, houses of prayer opened, and round-the-clock prayer established in many places. These developments have been much facilitated by the internet and electronic technology.

### A Closer Look

#### The Pentecostal Movement

I want to mention two places where the growth of the Pentecostal movement has been particularly remarkable. These are Latin America, and South Korea. The Latin American movement has been strong in Brazil, where it has also been more studied. In Brazil, there have been three clear phases in Pentecostal growth. The first stage from 1910 to 1940 came out of missionary activity and was characterized by an

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<sup>7</sup> “Today, the nations along the ancient Silk Road are the most unevangelised in the world. The three great religious strongholds that have refused to yield to the advance of the gospel – Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism – have their heart here.” (*Back to Jerusalem*, p. 95).

emphasis on baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The second stage from the 1940s to the 1960s saw the first indigenous denominations emerge. There is an emphasis on the mass media and on divine healing. The third stage begins in 1977 when Edir Macedo founded the Universal Church of the Reign of God (IURD) as a result of a vision or dream in 1977. The IURD now has at least four million members with 2,014 churches in Brazil and 236 in 65 other countries, including Britain. It has acquired huge assets, including a major-market TV channel in Sao Paulo and an AM frequency in Rio de Janeiro. Also in this category belongs Deus é Amor with about two million members. These groups are characterized by an aggressive evangelism and a rigid exclusivism (no cooperation or fellowship with other Pentecostals) as well as by an emphasis on prosperity and spiritual warfare<sup>8</sup>.

Contrary to the opinions of unsympathetic critics, including many Latin American Catholics, the rapid growth of Latin American Pentecostalism owes little to North American money and influence. With each of the phases, Pentecostalism has reached deeper into the poorer strata of society, and with this social descent the North American influence has sharply decreased. The deepest Pentecostal inroads have been made among the poorest people through the impact of indigenous leaders without professional training. Another common Catholic allegation, that Latin American Pentecostalism is a cultural import alien to authentic Latin American culture, is also wide of the mark, since many studies point to the distinctively Latin American quality of Pentecostal worship, no doubt made possible through the indigenous leadership. However, the two earlier phases continue to expand, even as the third shows the most explosive growth of all, particularly impacting the urban underclass. In Latin American Pentecostalism the older strata have a high moral character. "Holiness, humility and a strict moral code stand out as characteristics of Pentecostalism" throughout countries studied by Cleary in Latin America<sup>9</sup>.

Of all the Latin American countries, the one with the best-known celebrity-preachers is Argentina. The growth of Pentecostalism in Argentina has occurred during the period of greatest national humiliation, in the aftermath of the Falklands War and the collapse of the economy. Among these pastors with an international ministry are Carlos

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<sup>8</sup> This summary is adapted from Ari Pedro Oro and Pablo Semán "Brazilian Pentecostalism Crosses National Borders" in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, eds. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 137.

Annacondia (b. 1944), Omar Cabrera (b. 1936), Hector Aníbal Gimenez (b. 1957) and Claudio Friedzon, probably the best-known Argentinians in the world apart from Diego Maradona. Annacondia, a former business man, held months-long evangelistic crusades in major cities, insisting that each crusade be supported by all the Evangelical churches of the city before he would agree to come. One effect was to draw the Evangelicals into the Pentecostal-charismatic camp. “What ‘interested’ the churches were the fruits that Annacondia’s campaigns were leaving behind: 50,000 ‘decision cards’ in La Plata.”<sup>10</sup>

The claim to be the largest local church in the world is made by the Yoido Full Gospel Church of Seoul, Korea, led by David Yonggi Cho, that is part of the Assemblies of God, and said in a recent book to have over 760,000 members<sup>11</sup>. This number is made possible by the construction of subordinate sanctuaries in the suburbs of Seoul, which remain under the authority of Cho. But not only is this Pentecostal congregation the largest in the world, but it has had immense impact elsewhere through Cho’s teaching, which focuses on the Holy Spirit as person, prayer, healing and the formation of cell groups. A study from 1995 mentions 19,704 women’s cell groups, 3,612 men’s cell groups and 569 for children<sup>12</sup>. Of 700 full-time staff in 1997, 474 or about 70% are directly connected to the cell ministry<sup>13</sup>. Yoido has a very different ethos and feel from the Latin American Pentecostals, much more prosperous, more professional, and more highly organized.

### New Church Charismatic

This again is a world-wide phenomenon, though the distinction between the new charismatic churches and the Pentecostals is clearer in the white Western world than in the Third World. Here I want to focus on Britain, and merely to present a few vignettes from the rest of the world.

- Some of the fastest-growing and most inter-racial churches in South Africa are new charismatic assemblies, such as Rhema in Johannesburg, led by Ray McCauley; His People, led by Paul Daniel from Cape Town; Hatfield Community Church, founded

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Marostica, “The Defeat of Denominational Culture in the Argentine Evangelical Movement” in Christian Smith & Joshua Prokopy (eds.), *Latin American Religion in Motion* (New York & London, 1999), p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> *Charis and Charisma: David Yonggi Cho and the Growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church*, eds. Sung-Hoon Myung and Young-Gi Hong (Carlisle: Regnum Books & Paternoster, 2003), p. vii.

<sup>12</sup> Cited by Comiskey in op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>13</sup> Comiskey, p. 148.



by the late Ed Roebert; and the Durban Christian Centre, led by Fred and Nellie Roberts;

- The Hope churches in Thailand, begun with the Hope of Bangkok in 1981, had by 1997 developed into more than 800 Hope of God churches in a country traditionally resistant to Christian missionary efforts;
- On the European continent, some countries where the free churches have never succeeded in making an impact, new charismatic churches are flourishing. In Germany, several major cities now have a large charismatic church in the city centre.
- The Association of Vineyard Churches, established by John Wimber in 1985, had by spring 1996 406 new churches in the USA and 173 in other nations;

In Britain this category was originally known as the “house church movement”, even after they outgrew their original home meeting-places. They have recently taken to calling themselves “the new churches”. The new charismatics in Britain have in fact made a significant contribution to the wider movement, both in Europe and further afield.

For their impact, consider the following news items:

- March for Jesus, begun by four new charismatic leaders in Britain in 1987, had by 1994 involved 9 million believers in 178 nations<sup>14</sup>;
- The biggest contribution of new worship songs comes from the new charismatic churches – several from the Vineyard churches and many from other networks, e.g. in Britain Graham Kendrick (Ichthus), Noel Richards (Pioneer), Chris Bowater (Grapevine) and Dave Fellingham (New Frontiers); other important sources of charismatic songs are the Vineyard movement, Hillsong in Sydney, Australia; and Dale Garrett in Auckland, New Zealand;
- The Jesus Army in England, that has given rise to the Multiply network, has three hundred members committed to a life of celibacy within a community framework, all of which is unusual for a group that came out of a Baptist background; the Jesus

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<sup>14</sup> The four leaders were Gerald Coates (Pioneer); Lynn Green (YWAM); Roger Forster and Graham Kendrick (Ichthus).

Army is also atypical in being very much a “blue collar” movement;

- Dr Patrick Dixon, a medical doctor and leader in the Pioneer network in England, founded ACET, which has become the largest charity working for AIDS victims in Britain;

The story of the new charismatic groupings outside the established churches and denominations is better documented for Britain than for any other country, thanks largely to the research of Dr Andrew Walker of Kings College, London, whose book *Restoring the Kingdom* (4<sup>th</sup> edition 1998) remains the primary source. It is a rapidly-changing scene. There are at least ten new church networks in Britain, of which the largest is undoubtedly New Frontiers International (NFI), led by Terry Virgo of Brighton. Others to note are Pioneer (Gerald Coates from Cobham, Surrey); Cornerstone (Tony Morton, Southampton), Ground Level (Stuart Bell, Lincoln); Salt and Light (Barney Coombs, Basingstoke and Vancouver); Ichthus (Roger Forster, London); Multiply (Noel Stanton, Northampton).

What distinguishes the neo-charismatics from the Pentecostals? Above all, four things: (1) opposition to denominationalism; (2) flexible patterns of organisation in which networking is prominent; (3) belief in the restoration of the fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4: 11, especially those of apostle and prophet; (4) a different social background and culture.

First, perhaps the most obvious feature of the new church groupings is their opposition to “denominationalism” and to “institutional Christianity”. It is for this reason that in the 1970s they were generally classified as “non-denominational” churches. The change, particularly in Britain, to the language of “new churches” probably reflects to some degree a major change in their attitudes to the Churches. Which have become less confrontational and more cooperative.

The new charismatics typically regard inherited church structures as an obstacle to evangelism, to vigorous church life and to dynamic church growth. Their opposition to formalised structures affects everything: worship, teaching, ministry, mission. No fixed structure for worship means openness for the Spirit to lead and to shape the worship. In teaching, there is a reluctance to draw up credal statements and to distinguish a ministry or a network on doctrinal grounds<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> An exception here is Germany, where several of the new churches have produced statements of faith.

The new church attitude is vividly illustrated in this quotation from a magazine interview: “Q: **How are you going to keep all this going?** A: We’re not! It’s vital we don’t keep it going. So often, initiatives which start with God soon become part of an institution. We’ve got to keep God central to all that is happening. He has started this and He must continue to inspire it. We don’t want to become an organisation, but keep as a movement.”<sup>16</sup>

The new charismatics belong to the post-Thatcher enterprise culture. They have in general more educational qualifications than the Pentecostals, but more often in business studies than in theology. Their attitudes to the historic Churches are based above all on life and fruit, not on tradition and truth. So whereas older-style Evangelicals saw the Catholic Church as apostate, the new charismatics tend to see it as moribund or dead. But where they see new life, they revise their judgments. Thus they are very success-oriented. Pastors are evaluated in terms of growth, much more like business managers.

Terry Virgo has written an unusually honest autobiography *No Well-Worn Paths*<sup>17</sup>. While Virgo communicates the distinctive restorationist ethos and spirit of NFI, he also reveals much about the development of the new churches. He demonstrates how the preference for associational “networking” without centralised authority and an initial refusal to invest in new buildings have developed over the last fifteen years in NFI into more coherent structures and the purchase or construction of large new buildings in many towns and cities (Brighton, Bracknell, Eastbourne, Hastings, Newcastle, Norwich, Sheffield, Winchester). New Frontiers is the British network with the greatest international outreach, with churches in France, Romania, India, South Africa, Kenya and Mexico.

In NFI, a new pattern is emerging for what is increasingly looking like a new denomination, a label they would not accept in line with their anti-denominational ideology. But unlike the vast majority of denominations, this is being developed internationally, with apostolic (episcopal-type) oversight from Britain and without any national structures. The nearest parallel from Christian history may be the Methodist movement in John Wesley’s life-time, though with an emphasis on an apostolic team assisting the recognized leader.

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<sup>16</sup> “Talking to Pete Greig” *Jesus Life* 60 (2002), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Terry Virgo, *No Well-Worn Paths* (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 2001).

## Faith Churches and the “Prosperity Gospel”

Within the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, there has been a growing attraction towards what is known as Prosperity or “Health and Wealth” teaching. An overview of these movements cannot avoid this controversial dimension.

How widespread is this? First of all, there are a group of new churches that identify themselves with a prosperity message; or to be more accurate, they call themselves Faith churches, but here faith is to be understood as faith in a God who provides health and material prosperity if not always wealth. Mark 11: 23 is one of their favourite faith passages<sup>18</sup>. The father of the Faith teaching was undoubtedly Kenneth Hagin of Tulsa, Oklahoma (1917 – 2003). The origins of the Faith movement in the USA were in Pentecostal circles, but Hagin and others opted for a “charismatic” label, as their message was rejected by the Pentecostal churches. The option for “charismatic” was clearly strategic and not theological, and represented a move into an unregulated area.

In fact, the largest new charismatic churches in Europe are Faith churches. In Kiev, Ukraine, a church only founded in 1994 and pastored by an African, Sunday Adelaya, has over 20,000 members. In Budapest, the Faith (Hid) Church in Budapest, led by Sandor Nemeth, has 9,000 members, with another 30,000 in branch churches throughout the Hungarian nation and diaspora. In Uppsala, Sweden, the Word of Life church, founded by Ulf Ekman in 1983, is unusual in being the subject of a detailed scholarly study by a British anthropologist, Simon Coleman, a confessedly agnostic social scientist<sup>19</sup>. Word of Life has about 2,000 members who together with the many visitors now fill most of the places each Sunday in the 4,000-seater auditorium opened in 1987. “Formally, the Word of Life is an independent ministry with no ties to any overarching organisation. In practice, it is at the centre of a network of similar but smaller groups in (mostly urban areas of) Sweden and Scandinavia as a whole.”<sup>20</sup> Word of Life started its own secondary and high schools, very unusual in Sweden, and also a Bible School, claiming

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<sup>18</sup> “Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.”

<sup>19</sup> Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Coleman, p. 97.

to be the largest in Europe with over 6,000 graduates in 15 years<sup>21</sup>. By 1991, Coleman found around 45 Faith groups in Norway, involving perhaps 7,000 people, with a major role being played by the Oslo Christian Centre with its own Bible school and almost 2,000 members<sup>22</sup>.

The American influence is certainly greater in the Faith-type churches, though it is also clear that the local spiritual entrepreneurs have adapted the American product to other cultures and contexts. It is interesting that one long-time student of the church situation in Africa, Paul Gifford, for many years a strong proponent of the view that the Pentecostal-charismatic influences were all “made in the USA” is now recognizing the extent of African indigenous adaptation, arguing that “in Africa it is obvious that the faith gospel builds on traditional preoccupations. Africa’s traditional religions were focused on material realities.”<sup>23</sup> When I was at a symposium on Asian Pentecostalism at Birmingham University in 2001, it was interesting that the Asian scholars present judged the “prosperity gospel” much less harshly than their European counterparts. The Asians were saying that in places where the Christians don’t know where their next meal is coming from, the faith message has a very different resonance from Tulsa, Oklahoma. All the studies I have read on African Pentecostal expansion, hugely increased in the last twenty years, point to one factor being the bringing of hope to situations of great insecurity and the direst need.

I have noticed in my studies of these movements how there seems always to be a double movement. Just as earlier Spirit movements such as the Pentecostals are being taken more seriously and are becoming more respectable, perhaps even entering into ecumenical relationships, new and wilder currents arise that arouse all the fears and concerns originally raised by the movements now seen as more mature.

The IURD in Brazil is clearly one of the more shocking and in traditional terms disreputable of the new developments. This is where the prosperity message clearly has a Pentecostal label. A respected British sociologist,

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<sup>21</sup> Since 1996, it can offer internationally recognised qualifications through a partnership with Oral Roberts University in the USA. (Coleman, p. 93).

<sup>22</sup> Coleman, p. 100, note 21. Coleman also mentions a faith congregation of nearly 300 people at Trondheim, Norway - the Trondheim Christian Centre, which seems to have close links with Word of Life. (p. 99).

<sup>23</sup> P. Gifford, “The Complex Provenance of African Pentecostal Theology” in André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (eds.) *Between Babel and Pentecost*, p. 64.

David Martin writing about Latin America and particularly Brazil writes: “Since the late 1970s, a number of groups have emerged on the fissile Pentecostal scene which both address and mirror cultural strains of post-modern capitalism. From the wrong side of the tracks or from the criminal underbelly of the megacities, ‘consumer’ capitalism must sometimes look more like ‘casino’ capitalism, with fortunes to be won and lost in an instant – a feature strongly echoed in the prosperity gospel of these newer groups.”<sup>24</sup> Martin notes that “the Universal Church attracts the underworld sector of the underclass”, citing a senior IURD pastor’s statement that “up to half the young pastorate has been drawn out of the lower reaches of narcocapitalism”<sup>25</sup>. Thus its “style is that of salespeople promoting spiritual assurance and converting the skills of the illicit economy to licit advantage”<sup>26</sup>

Finally, it should not be thought that the Catholic Church is exempt from this pattern. The tendency for less respectable forms of charismatic faith to arise is also found in the Philippines, where the largest and most controversial element in the Catholic charismatic renewal is the El Shaddai movement. Founded in 1984 and still led by a converted businessman, Mariano Z. Velarde, known as “Brother Mike”, El Shaddai has a following in the Philippines of some six million members, and by 1997 had sixty-two overseas chapters formed by Filipinos working abroad. Their Metro Manila weekly gathering every Saturday gathers a hundred thousand people or more for a celebration that promotes popular participation with dramatic preaching, normally by Brother Mike. In the last two presidential elections in the Philippines, Velarde has supported candidates about whom the leading church spokesmen had major reservations. El Shaddai is in some ways a Catholic version of the prosperity gospel: as a priest observer has written: “El Shaddai scratches where it itches. It responds to the needs of its followers. The followers of El Shaddai normally come from the lower class. Where poverty exists, as in the Philippines, the main concerns naturally are income and health.”<sup>27</sup>

As mentioned at the outset, I have tried to make this first presentation as descriptive as possible. I have tried to provide samples from widely differing milieux to present both the flavour and the extent of what is

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<sup>24</sup> Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002) p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>27</sup> Mercado, *El Shaddai*, p. 14.

happening across the world. In the next lecture, I will begin the necessary task of reflection and assessment.