

**A Position Paper on the Pentecostal Theology of Compassion**

**Submitted to the WAGF Executive Council**

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## **1. The Issue: Pentecostal Practice of Social Responsibility Not Always Supported by Theology**

Pentecostals, like their Evangelical predecessors,<sup>1</sup> have from their outset been deeply involved in works of compassion. In spite of the fact that charity has remained one of their characteristic features, they hardly articulated this element in their creeds or statements of faith. This is now changing and the publication of this study confirms the emancipation process in this area. Before a theology of compassion is presented, we will first reflect on the omission of the same in the past in spite of the fact that acts of compassion were always part of our core business.

There were several reasons why social action was not on the theological radar of Pentecostals:

- The millennial perspective. The imminent return of Christ and the shift towards a pre-millennial position left little room for social work and shifted the focus to evangelism and mission. Salvation of the soul was given priority over feeding the poor.
- The rise of old liberalism and the social gospel tended to taint Holiness, Pentecostal and Evangelical involvement with issues of social justice.<sup>2</sup>
- Politics was usually regarded as secular or worldly. Their Holiness background made Pentecostals reluctant to get involved with the social issues, which had a political connotation.<sup>3</sup>
- Compassion was usually viewed as an inseparable part of evangelism. For this reason there seemed no need to develop a distinct theology for it.

## **2. Historical Antecedent: from the Outset, Pentecostalism in Azusa and Elsewhere a Socially Transforming Spirituality**

Nevertheless, many of the early Pentecostal pioneers were involved in social transformation and works of compassion. Charles F. Parham (1873-1929) founded the Bethel Healing Home in 1898 in Topeka, Kansas and enlarged his activities to include rescue missions for prostitutes and the homeless, an employment bureau and an orphanage service.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Two classics on this topic: Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1957 – Harper & Row, 1965. Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, Harper & Row, 1976 – Reprint edition by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., (Editorial), “Pentecostals and Social Ethics,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 9:2. Fall 1987, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Harold D. Hunter, *Pentecostal Social Engagement: Excerpts from around the World*, paper presented at international conference held on June 12-13, 2009 in preparation of Edinburgh 2010, [www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/christian-communities-in-contemporary-contexts/theme-7-work.html](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes/main-study-themes/christian-communities-in-contemporary-contexts/theme-7-work.html).

<sup>4</sup> Gary B. McGee, “Tongues, The Bible Evidence: The Revival Legacy of Charles F. Parham,” *Enrichment*, Summer 1999.

The Mukti revival in Kedgaon, near Pune in India, led by the famous social reformer Pandita Sarasvati Ramabai (1858-1922), became a center of pilgrimage for propagating the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism as early as 1905. Hundreds of young Indian women in her center were baptized by the Spirit, saw visions, fell into trances and spoke in tongues.<sup>5</sup> Most of these women were outcaste child-widows, who had come to Ramabai's ashram to find shelter. The Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission is still active today.

For William J. Seymour (1870-1922) Spirit baptism was the power to draw all people into one Church, irrespective of racial, ethnic or social diversity.<sup>6</sup>

Similar cases could be made for early Pentecostal pioneers like Stanley H. Frodsham (1882-1869), Carrie (Judd) Montgomery (1858-1946), Ambrose J. Tomlinson (1865-1943)<sup>7</sup>, John G. Lake (1870-1935) and Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947).<sup>8</sup>

Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944) was known for her so-called 'Temple Commissary,' which provided food for thousands, especially during the years of depression. In the Declaration of Faith she drew up, there is a remarkable article 17 on Civil Government, but no mention of the need of works of compassion. This illustrates the fact that the early Pentecostals seemed reluctant to articulate their social concerns in their doctrinal statements. In their core values the Foursquare Church now has an interesting article on "Social Conscience" which states: *We prioritize the Gospel of Jesus Christ as God's power unto salvation for all, begetting works of compassion, justice and human aid (Matthew 5:13-16).*<sup>9</sup>

The Elim Pentecostal Church in the UK also refers to this element as well in their article on "The Commission:"

*We believe that the Gospel embraces the needs of the whole man and that the Church is therefore commissioned to preach the Gospel to the world and to fulfill a ministry of healing and deliverance to the spiritual and physical needs of mankind.*<sup>10</sup>

In their General Council in August 2009, the Assemblies of God in the USA made a rare change in their Statement of Fundamental Truths by adding to the mission of the church (article 10): *To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Psalms 112:9;*

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<sup>5</sup> Allan Anderson, "Spreading Fires: The Globalization of Pentecostalism in the Twentieth Century," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January 1, 2007, p. 9. See also Allan Anderson, "Pandita Ramabai, the Mukti Revival and Global Pentecostalism," *Transformation*, 23/1 January 2006, p. 37-48.

<sup>6</sup> Ian MacRobert, "The Black Roots of Pentecostalism," *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays on Intercultural Theology* 75 (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang GmbH, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., p. 105-106.

<sup>8</sup> Johannes Lilik Susanto and Jacques Theron, "Compassion on people as a stimulus for the development of the church's healing ministry: lessons from the lives of two Pentecostal pioneers," *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae* 34, no. 2 (December 1, 2008): 169-184.

<sup>9</sup> The Foursquare Church, Core Values, [http://www.foursquare.org/landing\\_pages/5,3.html](http://www.foursquare.org/landing_pages/5,3.html).

<sup>10</sup> Elim Pentecostal Churches, What we believe, [http://elim.org.uk/Groups/112249/What\\_we\\_believe.aspx](http://elim.org.uk/Groups/112249/What_we_believe.aspx).

*Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27*), and adding to the ministry (article 11): *Meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion.*<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the world today Pentecostals are involved in practical ways caring for the poor and the destitute, those often ‘unwanted’ by the larger society.<sup>12</sup> As the Pentecostal movement grew significantly over the past century, its social impact became more and more evident. Even outsiders observe that, *Pentecostals seek a balanced approach to evangelism and social action that is modeled after Jesus’ example of not only preaching about the coming kingdom of God, but also ministering to the physical needs of the people He encountered.*<sup>13</sup> This cornerstone on which we build our theology of compassion has strong biblical foundations.

### **3. Theological Foundations Grounded in a Biblical Theology of Mission and the Kingdom of God: the Good News of the Gospel as an All-Out Attack on Evil.**

#### **The Kingdom of God**

The central theme of the preaching and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God, is firmly rooted in the developing theme of the Old Testament – the Lord reigns. While the Old Testament is clear that the Lord reigns now, there is also a growing eschatological expectation that the time would come when the Lord exerts His Kingly power over all evil powers in the world of men and nature, and by so doing establishes shalom in the whole cosmos.<sup>14</sup>

The expectation of the coming of the eschatological Kingdom of God grew during the inter-testamental period. When John the Baptist and Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, they did so without explanation of the term because it was commonly understood as the coming rule of God.

When Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, He meant the Kingdom had come and He is the King who will end the rule of evil powers in the lives of people and over the whole creation. His preaching and all His miracles demonstrate His power over Satan's power in both nature and people. Peter spoke of *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him* (Acts 10:38). In nature, even the storm was dealt with like a demon – *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm* (Mk 4:39). The devil seeks to destroy lives through nature, but Jesus drives him out, bringing peace, making nature a welcome place for life.

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<sup>11</sup> Our 16 fundamental truths, [ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement\\_of\\_Fundamental\\_Truths/sft\\_full.cfm#10](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Statement_of_Fundamental_Truths/sft_full.cfm#10).

<sup>12</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 276-277.

<sup>13</sup> Donald E. Miller, *Pentecostalism and Social Reformation*, in Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006, p. 335. Donald Miller is Episcopalian.

<sup>14</sup> A. König, *Systematic Theology: B.Th. Module STH 304, Guide 1*, Pretoria, South Africa: UNISA, 1975, p. 36-39.

All the miracles of Jesus – healing, casting out demons, raising the dead, feeding the multitude – all give us an insight into the Kingly rule of Jesus and His uncompromising opposition to evil. In every area of human existence and within the world of nature, Jesus shows His Kingly power to destroy chaos and establish shalom. The miracles of provision and His concern for the poor, widows and the marginalized, show His attack on poverty and should be read in the Kingdom context.

Poverty is a contradiction of the primary intention of God that there be provision for the life of all that He created. Genesis 1 describes the creation of all things and humankind. Genesis 1:28 describes the first encounter between God on the one hand and Adam and Eve on the other; He addressed them and in so doing, He blessed their existence and defined their role in creation. In Genesis 1:29 & 30 He provided for them and all living creatures. This means that God's first word to human beings is a word of direction; the second word is a word of provision. It is God's primary intention that we, in our journey of life, are provided for – the two words belong together. Poverty contradicts God's primary intention of providence. There are many places in both Old and New Testaments that support the point that God intends all to be provided for (e.g. Ps. 104; Ex.16; Matt. 6:32-33; Acts 14:17). Poverty is not a blessing.

The Church's mission to preach the Kingdom of God and to demonstrate the Kingdom must be informed by the whole Bible, and supremely by the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. From the evidence one can say: the presence of the church amongst the poor should be like the dawn of a new day of hope and blessing. But, how shall the Church go about this?

A crucial question that frequently comes up in regards to the mission venture of the Church is the question of priority: which should take precedence, evangelism or social responsibility? In terms of logical priority, there can be no doubt that since social concern presupposes a Christian social conscience and discipleship and is a consequence and aim of evangelism, evangelism must take priority. Evangelism must take priority also because it relates to the supreme and ultimate need of all humankind for the saving grace of Jesus Christ, acceptance of which will determine a person's eternal destiny. We should, however, never have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person. In practice, as in the public ministry of Jesus, the two are inseparable and can mutually support and strengthen each other.<sup>15</sup>

Why is it important to prioritise evangelism and conversion?

The powers of darkness that are present in poverty can only be broken when God *has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves...* (Col. 1:13). If we see poverty as an evil destruction worked in human lives by the power of darkness, then we

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<sup>15</sup> Ivan Satyavrata, Hogan Lectures. Data provided through email correspondence, 1 February 2011. The complex relationship between evangelism and social responsibility is also elaborated in the Lausanne Occasional Paper Report on Evangelism and Social Responsibility of Grand Rapids, 1982.

shall certainly view an attack on poverty as requiring the power of the Kingdom in our preaching and our action.

### **Definitions of Poverty**

‘Poor’ is more than an economic term; it is an experience, a history and a condition. If these factors are included in a definition of poverty, their relevance will help us describe poverty in human rather than purely economic terms. This will in turn throw light on the peculiar genius of Pentecostalism’s success among the poor. It will also give an insight into the Pentecostal understanding of ‘salvation’ and should provide the beginnings of a challenge to Pentecostals to consider whether the poor are still in focus as a ‘target group’ for their ministry.

Historically, poverty has affected every ethnic and race group. The causes of poverty are complex and many-faceted – war, drought, stock diseases, racial policies, land distribution, industrialization or lack of education. Such events put access to wealth out of reach to millions of people.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Structures and Characteristics of Poverty**

One can say that:

- Poverty is color-blind. It afflicts people of all race groups.
- ‘Poor’ is an economic concept. The poor possess little or nothing and have no hope of acquiring wealth. They live from hand to mouth. Their necessary provision for life is a constant uncertainty.
- ‘Poor’ is also a euphemism which conceals the inner condition of those so described. There exists within the poor an inner collapse that reinforces the process of degradation in which they are enmeshed. They are unable to fight back because they lack the inner emotional resources to do so. They appear to be apathetic and lazy. They are defenseless. They are therefore vulnerable to ‘demonic’ powers - ‘demonic’ because they are so destructive.
- The poor are often the ‘forgotten’ people - the people ‘just below your line of sight’. They have little or no access to life support systems such as education and health care. If the State is able to provide some social safety net, it does not adequately cope with their situation. They remain rootless and unable to establish themselves.
- The situation of the poor is aggravated and perpetuated by large families.
- The domestic situation of the poor is unstable and not infrequently morally degrading. Families are exposed to brutalizing experiences. Children are at the same time the most dependent and defenseless in such situations.
- The economic, social and cultural forces that send some ‘up the ladder’ work negatively in the case of the poor and force them ‘down the ladder’, thus widening the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots.’

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<sup>16</sup> D. Oakes, ed., *Illustrated History of South Africa – the Real Story*, Cape Town: Readers Digest, 1988, p. 129-332.

- The poor are often exposed to ruthless superstitions and ignorance.
- The poor often live in overcrowded conditions and squalor.
- The poor have an impoverished experience of things. Unlike the children of those who are better off, the children of the poor have little or no contact with things mechanical, electrical or technological. This puts them at a permanent disadvantage.
- Feelings of inferiority and loss of self-respect cripple the poor.

### **A Revised Ecclesiology and the Poor**

The evangelical ecclesiologies that Pentecostal churches inherited underwent a pneumatological revision resulting in a Pentecostal ecclesiology and liturgy that ennobled the lives of the poor and the powerless. It happened for the following reasons:

- **The Idea of Power**

The theme of the power of the Holy Spirit or ‘enablement’ has always been at the heart of Pentecostal belief. *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...* Acts 1:8.

Pentecostals have always understood the empowering of the Holy Spirit as the power ‘to be’ – and the power ‘to do.’ It was liberating to those existing in the shadows, far removed from the economic and social center of society, to those whose experience of poverty had been disempowering. Terrifyingly destructive and powerful (demonic) forces that held the poor in their captivity gave way to the power of the Holy Spirit.

The negative experience of power as an inescapable descending spiral was replaced by the idea and liberating experience of the power of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit empowered their recipients ‘to do’ and ‘to be,’ and so relegated to a lower rank the importance of the usual prerequisites to power, education, wealth and other status symbols. What was highly valued among Pentecostals was giftedness and spiritual power. Those who were of no consequence outside of the Church found themselves to be part of a rapidly growing alternative society in which, because of their giftedness, they were held in esteem and appreciation. This experience of empowerment became the basis for the upward mobility of Pentecostals in society.

- **Pentecostal Structure and Expression of Worship**

Associated with the idea of power in the previous paragraph is the positive effect of the power of the shared experience of the Spirit. The liturgical structure of Pentecostal churches represents a revision of Protestant liturgies and so mediates the ennobling, dignifying and liberating effects of salvation by enabling everybody to be a contributor to the well-being of the worshipping community. P. Savage, amongst other models, typifies Protestant traditions as a ‘lecture hall’ where the congregation is defined as the gathering of people who sit and listen to an address.<sup>17</sup> Pentecostal congregations could

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<sup>17</sup> P. Savage, The church and evangelism, in Padilla, C.R. ed., *The new face of evangelicalism*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, p. 103-125.

be typified as a 'playing field' where teams play; everyone in the congregation has a part to play in worship. In the following discussion we will try to show why Pentecostal liturgy lifts the poor and powerless.

A Pentecostal meeting has a strong sense of 'event;' it is 'event-full.' The Pentecostal experience could be described as an experience existing as an ellipse around two poles. The first pole is the pole of personal experience of the Spirit; the second is the inter-personal or shared-experience of the Spirit.

The first pole, the baptism of the Spirit, was for many an intense, often life-changing personal experience. The second pole of the Pentecostal experience is the inter-personal one, the shared experience. Pentecostal pneumatology deepens the importance of the gathering of believers because the individual member is empowered by his/her experience of the Holy Spirit to be a contributing member of a meeting in terms of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The charismata make each member a potential contributor to the life of the church. It is at this point that the model of 'the lecture hall' no longer fits Pentecostals. Those whose model of congregational life is the 'lecture hall' may have a **personal** experience of God, but it is possible for it to be a **private experience**. The reason is because there is no great demand in the praxis of the congregation-in-worship to share the experience as there is in Pentecostal congregations. Pentecostal pneumatology imposes the necessity of the **shared experience** upon the congregation-in-worship. It is this dimension of Pentecostalism that modifies the intensely personal, individualistic and even private aspects of the experience of Spirit-baptized believers, and turns them 'inside out' to other believers and to the world.

While Pentecostals had their 'pulpit heroes', there was always interplay between the 'platform' and the 'pew.' Classical Pentecostal meetings required the participation of all in the congregation in a variety of ways, as they believed themselves to be directed by the Holy Spirit. While there was some liturgical structure to meetings, the spontaneous participation by individuals was expected. In this way the process and development of the meeting is passed around the gathering, the lead being taken first by this one, and then by that one, and then by another. While the unplanned content of the liturgy unfolded, the leader of the congregation maintained a light hand on the developing process.

The openness of the meeting to spontaneous participation and uninhibited expressions of worship made for noise and enthusiasm. Meetings were demonstrative, with varying expressions of emotion, tears, hope, conviction, an inner sense of nourishment, challenge and inspiration; participants felt they had given and received a blessing. Meetings like this left people with the belief they had encountered God.

Pentecostal pneumatology made a living truth of the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of believers, finding expression in the witness and worship of the congregation. The 'lecture hall' became 'a playing field', and the gathering of Christians changed from 'solo' to 'symphony'. The word 'together' became very important to Pentecostalism. Pentecostal pneumatology makes meeting together essential to the Pentecostal experience. It has an inner requirement that changes the possibility of 'Christianity-in-isolation' to the necessity of 'Christianity-together.' The individual's experience is deeply influenced and enriched by the shared experience of the Spirit. We could even

say that much of the personal experience of the Spirit happens in the shared experience when the individual reaches outward to others. Spiritual experiences like these had powerful sociological and psychological benefits. The shared experience mediates the force and uplifting power of sharing in Christ's resurrection.

The poor are still with us in growing numbers of desperation. The liturgy of the Classical Pentecostal church has changed to a more platform driven model. As representatives of the Kingdom of God, perhaps our model of mission among the poor should be more 'classical.' The explanation for the change to a newer model in so many of our Pentecostal churches today is another discussion.

#### **4. The Fourfold Gospel and Social Responsibility**

The Fourfold Gospel has its origin in the 1890s with A.B. Simpson.<sup>18</sup> Simpson used the 'slogan,' 'Jesus Christ: Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Soon Coming King.' The Pentecostals, perhaps initially Aimee Semple Macpherson, replaced 'Sanctifier' with 'Baptizer' and the Fourfold Gospel became 'Jesus Christ: Savior, Baptizer, Healer and Soon Coming King.' The Pentecostals pursued their mission across the world, almost always on the fringes of society, among the marginalized and their message was 'The Fourfold Gospel.'

Some view the Fourfold Gospel as a simple, undeveloped Christology. Surprisingly, Professor Adrio König, a Reformed Systematic Theologian, views it as a most inclusive Christology, dealing with soteriology, pneumatology, biblical anthropology and eschatology. And he connects it directly with Jesus' ministry of compassion to the poor because the Lord spent most of His ministry in Galilee, which from a religious perspective was the most unimportant part of Israel.<sup>19</sup> König also speaks of the 'earthiness' of the compassion of Jesus to the poor seen most clearly in His miracles of healing, and that the Pentecostals likewise changed the lives and living conditions of the poor by means of the Fourfold Gospel.<sup>20</sup>

The Fourfold Gospel has biblical foundation in Jesus' own understanding of His mission as described in Luke 4:18-19: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

#### **Identifying the 'Poor'**

D. J. Bosch writes that while it is true that the 'poor' includes 'the devout, the humble, those who live in utter dependence on God' (i.e. the spiritually poor), it is often a collective term for all the disadvantaged.<sup>21</sup> Green agrees that 'poor' is a comprehensive term including those who are economically deprived and all who suffer 'diminished status honor' – those of low status, the

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<sup>18</sup> A. Anderson, Email exchange on Fourfold Gospel, 18 January 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Adrio König, Telephone conversation, 22 January 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991, p. 99.

excluded.<sup>22</sup> In the Gospels, Jesus clearly gives time, attention and help to those of low status and the excluded – e.g. the leper, a Samaritan woman at a well, a Canaanite mother of a demonized girl, a distraught father of a dying daughter, even His choice of apostles – all these stand as examples of Mary's words in Luke 1:52-53, *He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.*

We would suggest the use of other terms such as 'the strong' and 'the weak' to draw the distinction between the 'rich' and 'poor' because we always attach economic meaning to them. It is clear from the whole Bible that God placed a spiritual and moral obligation of care for the weak upon the strong – in Israel the widow, the orphan, the poor and the alien – the weak – were meant to be sustained by a society expressing the lovingkindness (*hesed*) of God. God's judgments of Israel were not only for idolatry but also for neglect and oppression of the weak. Jesus in His ministry brought the lovingkindness of God to the weak. His presence in Galilee was experienced as the dawn of a new day dispelling the shadows of death (Matthew 4:15-16).

### **The Fourfold Gospel and Luke 4:18-19**

**Savior – Soteriology:** Clearly, Jesus announced Himself in terms of Isaiah 61:1-2 to be the Savior of the 'poor,' empowered for that purpose by His baptism in the Spirit. The good news to the poor includes freedom for captives, sight for the blind and release for the oppressed. He drops the mention of the day of vengeance and adds from Isaiah 58:6 a reference to Jubilee – *to set the oppressed free and break every yoke.* This was music to the ears of His hearers – the poor of Nazareth – that is until He made it clear that He was removing all exclusions and that even the Gentiles, those beyond the boundaries of Israel, were to be embraced by the salvation of God as His own people.

The good news Jesus announced had both social and spiritual consequences. The word 'release' carries the idea of forgiveness of sins and re-entry to the community of God's people, which has challenging social implications.<sup>23</sup> It is a well-established fact that the Azusa Street congregation was multi-racial; that salvation and the presence of the Spirit transcended prior prejudice and brought people together across the race barrier of that time. This aspect of the fourfold Gospel, Jesus as Savior, emphasizes the offer of salvation through forgiveness of sins and integration into the believing community.

**Baptizer – Pneumatology:** Reference to the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus for His mission introduces us to an important theme in Luke/Acts. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers, initiates, guides and universalizes mission. The work of the Spirit in the church of Acts 2 brought about a growing fellowship where *all the believers were together and had everything in*

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<sup>22</sup> J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke: New International Commentary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997, p. 211.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

*common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need* (Acts 2:44-45). Jesus as the bearer of the Spirit brings the marginalized poor to a place of belonging among God's people.

Prejudice tells us who is worthy and who may belong to our church. Prejudice in Peter made it quite clear that Gentiles were excluded. The work of the Spirit overwhelmed the religious barriers so deeply entrenched in him to make him go to the Gentiles (Acts 10) – a revolution in the New Testament church. The Spirit who empowered Jesus transcending all status barriers works in the church, not only to equip with charismata but also to create the eschatological people of God drawn *from every nation, tribe, people and language* (Rev. 7:9). The Holy Spirit creates the church. It is a miracle, not a political agenda.

**Healer – Biblical Anthropology:** *Recovery of sight for the blind* (Lk. 4:18) can be understood both spiritually and literally. It can mean 'revelation and salvation'<sup>24</sup> or healing of blindness. Jesus healed blindness on a number of occasions as recorded by Luke.

Biblical anthropology takes the human being and his/her existence seriously. The biblical perspective of our physical and spiritual existence, unlike the Greek view of humankind, is holistic. Life in this world is God's good gift to us. Jesus healing the sick, casting out demons, restoring the maimed, deaf and blind meant He restored them to normal life in this world. It is for this reason that König speaks of the 'earthiness' of the ministry of Jesus.<sup>25</sup> His ministry of salvation is not only about the world to come, but also very much about life here and now. He restored people to normality of existence as human beings. This implies much for our Pentecostal mission. For instance, the healing of the blind Bartimaeus plunged him into a crisis. He could no longer beg; his reason for doing so was gone. What was he to do? What is the church to do in such a case? James, the brother of the Lord, says we cannot, not even with pneumatological fervor, say *be warmed and filled* (James 2:16 KJV), as we say 'be healed.' We must help in practical ways; the Spirit will require us to do something about a person's physical needs. Healing implies wholeness – freedom from demonic and social restriction. Preaching Jesus as Healer will bring that about, both as a work of the Spirit and as the church's practical intervention.

**Soon Coming King – Eschatology:** *To set the oppressed free* (Is. 58:6) and *the year of the Lord's favor* (Is 61:2) both refer to the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25). God's intention by this legislation was that slaves be freed, debts forgiven and that land be freely restored to the family to whom it had been allocated. Whether Israel ever practiced this legislation is beside the point; God intended it to be so, and if it were practiced it would have profound social and economic implications.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>25</sup> König.

The language of Jubilee can be read as belonging to eschatology. When Jesus comes again all wrongs will be righted and all will be free from the oppressions of evil – the world, the flesh and the devil. The universe will be renewed and there will be no evil, no sorrow or death.

However, Jesus was proclaiming the arrival of Jubilee in His person and ministry – He is called '*ho eschatos*', 'the Last One' in Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 22:13. He said, *Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing* (Lk. 4:21). The year of Jubilee has arrived in Him. While the future coming of Jesus is our future hope, His first coming is the basis for faith for freedom from oppression and evil. Jesus sets the prisoner free!

It seems that the intention of the Lord with Jubilee legislation is that no family be permanently locked into the downward spiral of poverty. At worst, a struggling family could regain access to their land, the primary means to the production of wealth. Even to this day access to land for the poor remains an issue.

It would be a wonderful thing if the intention of Jubilee could be put into modern form and legislated by governments – a way to give the poor, the weak, a chance to get their foot on the ladder to some kind of prosperity – e.g. free education.

## **5. Conclusion**

As light passing through a prism refracts and appears as a rainbow – all the colors are there. If a color were missing, it would not be a rainbow. So with the mission of Jesus, all the aspects of His mission must be there in our mission – if not, we are not representing the mission of Jesus adequately. The fourfold Gospel, as König said, is truly an inclusive Christology with an inherent social responsibility.

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