

VINSON SYNAN & BILLY WILSON

A S T H E  
WATERS  
COVER  
THE SEA

THE STORY OF EMPOWERED21  
AND THE MOVEMENT IT SERVES



# AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA

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AND THE MOVEMENT IT SERVES

VINSON SYNAN AND BILLY WILSON

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*As the Waters Cover the Sea: The Story of Empowered21 and the Movement It Serves*

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# DEDICATION



***Harold Vinson Synan***

December 1, 1934 – March 15, 2020

This book is dedicated to my co-author, Dr. Vinson Synan, who was without equal in the Spirit-empowered movement. He had a brilliant mind, insatiable desire to learn, exceptional personality, supernatural anointing and far-reaching vision. He was respected in both the academy and the Church and received by both Pentecostals and Charismatics. He was a bridge-builder, excellent preacher, teacher extraordinaire, exceptional writer, historian for a movement, faithful administrator, loving husband, great father and my good friend. This volume contains what may be the final published work of Dr. Synan. He pushed me to do this project so he could help tell the story of Empowered21. He was ahead of me in getting Part I completed and cheered me on as I finished Part II. During the editorial process, Vinson left the shores of earth and landed in the presence of our King. The loss to the Spirit-empowered movement represented by his passing is inestimable. Thank you, Vinson, for your amazingly fruitful life. You will be missed and always loved within the Spirit-empowered movement.

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# FOREWORD

AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA is the sweeping story of the work of the Holy Spirit over the past 120 years, beginning with what happened in a small Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, in the early morning hours of the first day of the twentieth century. From there, the action moves to 1906, and the subsequent three-year Azusa Revival in Los Angeles, followed by the formation of Pentecostal denominations, the Charismatic Renewal, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the growth of the Spirit-empowered movement across the globe.

What is the spiritual DNA of this movement? Travel back in time with me to the Azusa Revival. You'll find the answer there, a DNA that is replicated from then until now.

***AT AZUSA, THERE WAS A GREAT HUNGER FOR AN INTIMATE AND VITAL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.***

People came to the Mission on Azusa Street expecting an encounter with God Himself. That expectancy and the reality of God's presence made them oblivious to things that seem to matter so much today: well-appointed sanctuaries, neatly packaged and on-time services, the hype of star-quality speakers and singers, homogeneity and upward mobility in the members of the congregation, social recognition, and ecclesiastical power.

The Mission itself stood in prophetic contrast against all that the world represents as wise, powerful and wealthy. The saints there knew only the wisdom, power, and wealth of God. I am not suggesting that God's presence cannot also fill a cathedral or well-built sanctuary; but such edifices are worthless if the Spirit is absent, the poor are excluded, and the gospel is not proclaimed in its fullness.

Arthur Osterberg visited Azusa when he was a young man pastoring a small church at 68th and Denver in Los Angeles. He wrote this about his own experience:

*Suddenly the Spirit would fall upon the congregation. God Himself would give the altar call. Men would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle, or rush from the altar en masse, to seek God. The scene often resembled a forest of fallen trees. Such a scene could not be imitated. I never saw an altar call given in those early days. God Himself would call them. And the preacher knew when to quit. When He spoke we all obeyed. It seemed a fearful thing to hinder or grieve the Spirit. The whole place was steeped in prayer. God was in His holy people. It was for man to keep silent. The shekinah glory rested there . . . I have stopped more than once within two blocks of the place and prayed for strength before I dared go on. The presence of the Lord was so real.*

From then until now, Spirit-empowered people cherish the Lord's presence. Knowing about God was never enough. Knowing Him and experiencing the personal infilling and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is what matters. So long as any of us consider ourselves full and in need of nothing, we will block God from working in and through us. He sends the rich empty, away. But to the poor, those who hunger for Him, who like Moses long to see God face to face – to them, He grants His presence.

#### **AT AZUSA, THERE WAS A GREAT LOVE FOR OTHERS.**

The Azusa Revival witnessed the breakdown of barriers that normally divide people from one another: race, class, gender, wealth, language, education, church affiliation, and culture.

None of the thirteen issues of *The Apostolic Faith* – the only publication from the Azusa Mission itself that survived – lists the publisher or the editor, preferring instead that the Lord get the credit. However, most of the issues contain a small inset setting forth some of the important principles Azusa stood for. Several of the insets contain this statement:

*We are not fighting men or churches, but seeking to displace dead forms and creeds or wild fanaticisms with living, practical Christianity. "Love, faith, unity" is our watchword, and "Victory through the Atoning Blood" our battle cry.*

Vinson Synan, a co-author in the chapters that follow this preface, also wrote a history of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in which he tells how that denomination became part of the Spirit-empowered movement through the instrumentality of G. B. Cashwell's ministry. He came to the Azusa Street Mission in 1907 from North Carolina. Synan writes:

*One of the major problems necessary for him to overcome was his ingrained . . . racial prejudice. It was unsettling to this tarheel visitor to sit under the preaching of the black minister Seymour; but to have blacks lay hands on his head and pray for his baptism was almost more than he could bear. Rather than receive the baptism he admitted this caused 'chills to go down my spine.' Nevertheless, he sought*



*for five days and nights in the mission's upper room before the baptism came. During the latter part of his seeking, he discarded his racial problem and invited Seymour and several Negro [men] to lay hands on him in supplication. Finally, in early December 1906, the 'power fell' and Cashwell received his Pentecost.*

Is it any wonder that, with this love for God's family regardless of race or ethnicity, the roots of the major Pentecostal denominations and the Charismatic Renewal can be traced back to Azusa Street?

Unfortunately, this inclusiveness of Azusa soon caved to culture with its racism, Jim Crow laws, and segregation. For decades following, the multiracial, multicultural DNA of the Azusa Revival was not lived out. In a remarkable meeting in Memphis in October 1994, Pentecostal Anglo and Black leaders washed one another's feet. Grown men wept and went to their knees in prayer, then rose to embrace one another – without regard to color. One of the African American leaders turned to his Anglo counterpart and said that after Azusa, “we went our separate ways. But God has brought us together again.” I saw that happen. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

The fact is that the Spirit-empowered movement initially failed to keep the Holy Spirit's ideal as represented by Azusa. Through Empowered21, the Spirit has brought us together again no matter our race, gender, denomination or non-denomination; whether Reformed or Arminian, Catholic or Protestant, with fixed eschatological views or fluid. What matters is that the world will know Him when they witness our love for one another.

### ***AT AZUSA, THERE WAS COMMITMENT TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD.***

Spirit-empowered persons have never been seeking experiences for experience sake. At Azusa, the quest for a subjective and personal experience with the Lord was within the boundaries of God's objective written Word. They believed the Spirit does not go where His Word does not permit. That's not to say they had everything right, any more than any of us today has everything right.

The Azusa Revival unabashedly proclaimed that the sure plumb line of truth was God's revealed and written Word. Elder William J. Seymour and others were sharply criticized for their insistence on “checking out everything with the Word.” But they were unashamed. In fact, Seymour responded to these criticisms in the September 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*.

*We are measuring everything by the Word, every experience must measure up with the Bible. Some say that is going too far, but if we have lived too close to the Word, we will settle that with the Lord when we meet Him in the air.*

Sometimes elements of the Spirit-empowered movement have not followed the Azusa example; but in the main, there has always been and is an insistence that experience be substantiated by Scripture.

***AT AZUSA, THERE WAS DEDICATION TO EVANGELISM AND MISSION.***

The baptism and fullness of the Spirit, as understood at Azusa, was not simply for personal blessing; its central purpose was empowerment.

*The Apostolic Faith's* first issue, page one, September 1906, took up the cause of missions and sending missionaries. Missions did not develop later – it was front and center to their existence. And, they didn't wait until they became big; they started missions' emphasis and giving in their first hours.

They took no offerings – there was a collection box in the back – but that did not mean giving was absent. Here's what they said on that first page:

*When Pentecostal lines are struck, Pentecostal giving commences. Hundreds of dollars have been laid down for the sending of missionaries and thousands will be laid down. No collections will be taken for rent, no begging for money. No man's silver or gold is coveted. The silver and the gold are His own to carry on His work.*

From Azusa came a stream of missionaries, ministers, and Christian workers. They did not regard the Great Commission as the "Great Suggestion." From the missionary-mindedness of Azusa came a movement of foot soldiers in the army of the Lord to the nations of mankind. Indeed, the greatest evangelism in today's world is being done through their spiritual descendants. Azusa Street made a critical difference in attaining giant strides toward completion of the unfinished task.

Today's Empowered21 seeks to complete that task so that by 2033, the 2,000th anniversary of the initial giving of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, every person on earth will have an authentic encounter with Jesus Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

***AT AZUSA, THERE WAS COMMITMENT TO THE RESTORATION***

### **OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.**

What did the first Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus believe? How did they behave? Those were the concerns at Azusa. They wanted the restoration of apostolic doctrine and practice. A chronicler of the Azusa Revival, Frank Bartleman, put it this way:

*Los Angeles seems to be the place, and this the time, in the mind of God, for the restoration of the church to her former place, favor and power. The fullness of time seems to have come for the church's complete restoration.*

The promise of Joel 2:28, quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:17, is “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.”

This pouring forth may be likened to the rain from heaven. Prior to the experience of Pentecost, it is as though the Church was in Egypt where the watering was by human effort, the foot on the irrigation treadle; but Pentecost became the spiritual land of Canaan where the inhabitants “drink rain from heaven” (Deuteronomy 11:10–11).

The rains God sent to Canaan were both early and latter rains (Joel 2:23). The autumn or early rains of October and November were to soften the parched ground so that seed could be sown. Then came the heavy rains of winter in December, January, and February. Finally, the latter rains of April — the most highly appreciated because they ripened the fruit and stayed the drought of the long, dry summer. The latter rain was directly related to the ripening of the harvest.

The Azusa experience forces us to ask the question: What is our water source spiritually, for this last day? Is it our own efforts to build a church? Our “smart” church growth strategies, well-laid plans, or methodologies?

Or, is there a better water source? An outpouring of God’s Spirit on all human flesh?

In the last century, Azusa Street was the early rain. It infused the Body of Christ with a restored sense of biblical identity and mission. It insisted on empowerment for witness. It compelled believers to desist from a passive mode of Christianity, and personally seek a continued and vital experience with the living God.

Now, we are over one hundred years down river. Is it not time for a latter rain, the rain which ripens the final harvest?

The second issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, October 1906, printed a message entitled “This Same Jesus.” Its salient observation of the modern Spirit-empowered movement’s relationship to God’s prophetic purpose is even more relevant today than when the words were first given:

*When the Holy Ghost fell on the one hundred and twenty it was in the morning of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Today we are living down in the evening of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. As it was in the morning, so shall it be in the evening. This is the last evangelistic call of the day.*

The book you are about to read tells the thrilling story of the past, present, and preferred future of the Spirit-empowered movement. If ever this world needed Spirit-empowered people, it is now! May what Vinson Synan and Billy Wilson have written stir your heart to go deeper into the life of the Spirit so that the mission of Jesus for you can go higher and wider than ever before in your life and ministry!

**Dr. George O. Wood**

Chairman, World Assemblies of God Fellowship  
Co-chair, Empowered21 Global Council

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED MOVEMENT is an overwhelmingly diverse Christian family, and I have been honored to travel among them for my entire life. They have collectively shaped me and therefore, the contents of this book. It would be impossible to name the thousands of saints who have shared their influence in my life, but without them, this book would have never happened. Their love, advice, prayers, encouragement, and even rebukes have pushed me to higher heights and deeper depths. From the pulpits of some of the smallest Pentecostal churches in my home state to the stages of the largest Spirit-empowered churches in the world, I have seen this movement firsthand, and it is AMAZING!

Special thanks to our Empowered21 Global Council and all of those serving on regional cabinets and E21 initiatives. Thank you, Dr. George Wood, who serves as co-chair of the Global Council, for sharing the foreword of this book. You are one of the great leaders for our movement in the twenty-first century. Caleb Wehrli, our Executive Director for E21, our Assistant Director, Ashley Wilson, and Robin Cole, our Administrative Coordinator have all been a huge assistance in carrying forth the network, given my myriad of responsibilities at ORU. Hundreds of leaders have engaged with the Empowered21 vision and are working together to reach our world for Jesus until every person on earth has an opportunity to know Him. The Spirit-empowered movement has been made possible by millions and millions of sacrificing saints who in their love for Jesus have given all. Their blood, sweat, and perseverance have paved the way for new generations to experience the power of the Holy Spirit. These relatively unknown servants on every continent and in every nation are why we can talk about the future of Spirit-empowered Christianity. May we never take their sacrifice for granted.

I deeply appreciate my team at Oral Roberts University for assisting me with this volume. Andrea Kabela has been especially helpful as our point person on this project. Lisa Bowman and Eric Peter-

son, my assistants, are my right and left hand most days, and Adreanne Cates faithfully serves the Pentecostal World Fellowship along with the ORU Board of Trustees. I simply could not do what I do without their great service. Dr. Wonsuk Ma and Dr. Mark E. Roberts are to be congratulated on their vision for ORU Press. Their faithful commitment to produce quality material for this movement is to be highly commended.

A couple of years ago, Vinson Synan spoke to me about the idea of doing a book together, as he wanted people to know the story of Empowered21. He pushed to include some material regarding me personally in the book, which to be honest, was and is uncomfortable for me. However, since he wrote it, declared it must be in Part I of this volume, and then passed away before I could win the argument, I am honoring his wishes by allowing this to be published. Vinson completed his section of the book before me and was cheering me on to the finish line shortly before his death. This book would not have happened without Vinson's persistence and drive. Special gratitude also goes to Carol Synan, Vinson's wife of over forty-nine years. Carol's graciousness in allowing us to publish following Vinson's passing is deeply appreciated. Carol, you are special to my wife and me.

Over forty-two years ago, I entered into the absolute best partnership any man could enjoy. My wife Lisa has been the woman of my dreams all of these years. Her unwavering support, relational grace, faithful love, and daily prayers have sustained me over and over again. She is an amazing mother to our two children and an extraordinary Nana to our six grandchildren. Thank you, Lisa, for allowing me to take the focused time needed to finish this.

At the age of sixteen, I knelt at a youth camp altar and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I could never have dreamed as I quietly prayed in tongues that night the path that God would chart for me. Over these last forty-five years, the Holy Spirit has walked with me through it all. In heartache and in triumph, His comforting presence and empowering grace have enabled me thus far. My prayer is that as you read these pages, He, the Holy Spirit, will touch you and inspire you to join Him in filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA!

# [PART I]

BY DR. VINSON SYNAN

# [1]

## WHAT IS EMPOWERED CHRISTIANITY?

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, a spiritual revolution began that was destined to transform Christianity in what has become known as the “Century of the Holy Spirit.” Although there had been sporadic outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the nineteenth century, a veritable flood tide of Pentecostal revival broke out around the world that began about 1900 and has continued to this day with increasing force. A foreshadowing of what was to come was the revival of the gifts of the Spirit in Edward Irving’s Presbyterian Church in Regent Square in London in 1830. Other outpourings occurred in Rhode Island in 1874 and North Carolina in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

Around 1900, there were outbreaks of the gifts of the Spirit in many parts of the world. Well-known Pentecostal-type revivals were documented in India in 1905 and in Korea and the United States in 1906 and in Chile in 1909. These are now seen as the global origins of Pentecostalism in addition to the important roots in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup>. Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901–2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001). Eddie Hyatt, *Two Thousand Years of Charismatic Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002). David W. Dorries, ed., *Edward Irving’s Holy Spirit Writings* (North Charleston, SC: Create Space, 2011).



What is now referred to as “Classical Pentecostalism” began in Topeka, Kansas, on the first day of the new century, January 1, 1901, in Charles Fox Parham’s Bethel Bible School when a student, Agnes Ozman, spoke in tongues to the amazement of her teacher and classmates. After this, Parham began to teach that speaking in tongues was the “Bible evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that came after the experiences of conversion and sanctification as taught by the Methodists. He further taught that missionaries need not learn foreign languages, but could preach in miraculous tongues on the mission fields.<sup>2</sup>

But it was Parham’s student from Houston, Texas, William Joseph Seymour, who led the explosive Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles from 1906 to 1909 that spread the movement to the ends of the earth. In short order, “missionaries of the one-way ticket” left America and brought the Pentecostal Revival to Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean islands, and Africa. Although tongues and divine healing were strongly emphasized, all the gifts of the Spirit were poured out in profusion in Pentecostal gatherings throughout the world.<sup>3</sup>

## **BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE**

Even though they were not trained theologians, Parham and Seymour created a persuasive biblical case for the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the “Bible evidence” of speaking in tongues. The following scriptures were cited to support their new theology:

### **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**Matthew 3:11:** *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* (NKJV)

### **JESUS**

**Mark 16:17:** *“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues...”* (NKJV)

**John 14:16-17:** *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”* (NKJV)

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2. Vinson Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition* (Grand Rapids: W. E. Eerdmans, 1971), 84–106.  
3. Frank Bartleman, *How “Pentecost” Came to Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: 1925).

**Luke 24:49:** “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (NKJV)

## LUKE

### THE JEWISH PENTECOST

**Acts 2:1-4:** “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (NKJV)

### THE ROMAN GENTILE PENTECOST

**Acts 10:44-47:** “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’” (NKJV)

### THE GREEK PENTECOST

**Acts 19:4-6:** “Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” (NKJV)

### THE APOSTLE PAUL

**I Corinthians 14:18; 22; 27-28:** “I thank my God that I speak in tongues more than you all...Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe...If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.” (NKJV)

**I Corinthians 14:39:** “Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.” (NKJV)

Thus, it seems from the biblical record that whenever the gospel came to new people groups in the world such as the Romans and the Greeks, the gift of tongues appeared as a marvelous sign that the gospel is indeed true. Of course, Parham and Seymour cited many other scriptures to support their

teaching that speaking in tongues was the “Bible evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In later years, Pentecostal theologians spoke of tongues as the “initial evidence,” implying that all the other gifts are also evidences of the Pentecostal experience.

### **PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES ORGANIZED**

Although the first Pentecostals saw their revival as a renewal for all the churches, they soon suffered rejection and even persecution from the mainline churches who objected to their theology and boisterous worship. The new Pentecostals had no alternative but to start new Spirit-empowered denominations to enjoy their new Holy Spirit experiences. The first Pentecostal churches formed in the United States were from holiness movements that accepted the Pentecostal experience and were forced out of their churches. These groups accepted the “five-fold gospel” as taught by Parham and Seymour, i.e., salvation, second blessing sanctification, the baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues as the “Bible evidence,” divine healing as in the atonement, and the premillennial second coming of Christ. Among these were the Church of God in Christ, a Black church led by Charles H. Mason, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, led by A. B. Crumpler, and the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, led by A. J. Tomlinson. These churches strongly emphasized personal holiness as well as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

A second group of Pentecostal denominations was formed after 1914 that were more “Baptistic” and less Wesleyan than the first denominations. They included: the Assemblies of God, led by E. N. Bell, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, led by Aimee Semple McPherson, and the Pentecostal Church of God, led by John Sinclair. A third group of Pentecostal denominations started later in 1916, which were known as the “Oneness Pentecostals.” These churches denied the Trinity and taught that Jesus was at one and the same time Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Among these were the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, led by G. T. Haywood, and the United Pentecostal Church, led by Howard A. Goss.<sup>5</sup>

### **POST-WORLD WAR II EXPANSION**

During the Depression years, the Pentecostal churches grew slowly but surely in the United States and around the world. Missionaries spread the movement to practically every nation on earth despite their limited resources. It was only after World War II that the movement experienced growth.

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4. Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 107–128.

5. Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 129–143.

There were several reasons for this spurt of growth. First, the prosperity that followed the war gave the Pentecostals more resources to fund missionaries around the world. Second, there was a turn to spirituality by millions of people after the devastation of the war. Third, the Pentecostals learned to use the mass media to spread their revival, especially through radio and the new television stations that came to cover the nation.

Perhaps the greatest cause of this growth came through the growing popularity of a new crop of healing evangelists who brought Pentecostalism to the attention of the world. One of the first to conduct mass healing crusades overseas that attracted multitudes to become Pentecostals was T. L. Osborn from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He drew massive crowds where he and his wife Daisy saw many miracles of healing in many third world countries. Another Oklahoman, Oral Roberts, was a pioneer of tent evangelism in the United States who eventually drew crowds that rivaled those of Billy Graham. Roberts used radio effectively in the 1940s but impacted the nation enormously through his television ministry that began in 1953. Roberts went on to found Oral Roberts University in 1965, which became a worldwide center for educating young Pentecostals.<sup>6</sup>

Another important factor was the strong laymen's movement that paralleled the rise of the healing evangelists. The leader in this movement was Demos Shakarian, who founded the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) in 1953. A dairyman from California, Shakarian founded thousands of FGBMFI chapters around the world that led millions of laymen from all denominations into the Pentecostal experience. This demonstrated the rise of Pentecostals into the middle class with wealth to support growing Pentecostal churches and television evangelists.<sup>7</sup>

By the 1970s, Christian television programs and networks proliferated throughout the nation. Among these were the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), founded by Paul Crouch in California, and the Praise the Lord (PTL) network, founded by Jim Bakker in North Carolina. Added to these networks was the popular TV preaching of Pentecostal evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart from Louisiana. Through these ministries, the American people were immersed in scenes of Pentecostal fervor and worship that attracted huge numbers of Americans to visit and join Pentecostal churches.<sup>8</sup>

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6. See David Harrell, *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Resvivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1975). Also see Harrell's *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985).

7. Vinson Synan, *Under His Banner: History of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International* (Costa Mesa, CA: Gift Publications, 1992).

8. Stan Burgess and Eduard van der Maas, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1118–1120.

A final factor leading to Pentecostal growth was that the church world awakened to the fact that the Pentecostals were the fastest-growing part of worldwide Christianity. While many mainline churches were losing members, the Pentecostals were growing exponentially, both in the United States and around the world. Many wished to know what was attracting millions to the movement, especially in the developing world.

### **THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL OR CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

Much of the growth mentioned above was due to the migration of people from mainline denominations to the Pentecostal churches. If mainline pastors or laypersons spoke in tongues, they were usually asked to leave. Their only options were to remain silent or depart and join a Pentecostal church. This posed a dilemma for many spiritual people who spoke in tongues, but loved their churches and wished to bring Pentecostal Renewal to their own people. This suddenly began to change in 1960 when Father Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal priest from Van Nuys, California, spoke in tongues and openly told about it to his wealthy parish at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

This experience made headline news in both the secular and religious press. When the church leaders rejected his new experience, Bennett was invited to pastor St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, Washington. His new church members wholeheartedly accepted their Spirit-filled priest, and soon St. Luke's became a West Coast mecca for Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Roman Catholics, and others to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many of these felt that it was now acceptable to speak in tongues and remain in their churches. Bennett's story began a new movement in the mainline churches that was dubbed "Neo-Pentecostalism." Up to this point, the empowered movements were entirely a Protestant phenomenon. But this was about to change.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

It is hard to imagine a Pentecostal movement entering the Roman Catholic Church before 1965. This ancient church was noted for its resistance to change and was largely unaffected by the great awakenings and revival movements that often come to the Protestant churches. The great breakthrough that made Pentecostalism possible in the Roman Catholic Church was the Vatican II council that met from 1962 to 1965. This council was called by Pope John XXIII who called on Catholics to pray daily, "Lord renew the Church in our day as by a new Pentecost." This would open the windows of the Church to the renewing winds of the Spirit. In the debates on the gifts of the Spirit, the bishops rejected the

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9. Dennis Bennett, *Nine O'clock in the Morning* (Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing Co., 1970).

old “cessation theory,” which held that the gifts had ceased with the death of the last apostles. Leading in this debate was Leo Joseph Cardinal Suenens of Belgium who affirmed the gifts to be active in modern times.<sup>10</sup>

The effect of Vatican II was to make major changes in the liturgy and open dialogue with Protestants whom the Pope now called “Separated Brethren.” Only two years after the end of Vatican II, the Pentecostal movement broke out among graduate students on the campus of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1967. After two professors told a class about the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the growing Pentecostal movement, a weekend retreat was convened in the rural Chi Rho center to pray for the Holy Spirit to move in the Catholic Church. In this first Catholic Charismatic prayer meeting, the students prayed in an upper room chapel where the Holy Spirit fell upon them and several students spoke in tongues.<sup>11</sup>

From Duquesne, the movement spread rapidly to Notre Dame University and the University of Michigan. As news of these events spread abroad, a veritable tidal wave of Pentecostal Renewal swept the American church and in time, spread to many other nations. At first the renewed Catholics called themselves “Catholic Pentecostals” and were led by young people such as Kevin Ranaghan, Patti Gallagher, David Mangan, and Ralph Martin. To spread the word, these youth published a magazine called *New Covenant* that went to thousands of subscribers. In 1969, the American bishops gave tentative approval to the movement, and by 1975, Catholic Pentecostalism was approved by Pope Paul VI himself in Rome. The early days of the movement saw mass gatherings of Catholics who were hopeful of renewing their church. In 1973, more than 30,000 met in the Notre Dame football stadium where shouts of praise filled the air.<sup>12</sup>

In future years, the Catholic Charismatic movement spread to the Catholic world and gained the warm support of Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis. Through the years, Catholic theologians created a new theology designed to fit the movement to the Catholic system. As an official liaison to the Popes, Fr. Kilian McDonnell became the acknowledged theological guide to the movement. His research and publications did much to make the movement acceptable in the Catholic world.<sup>13</sup> The Catholics differed from the Pentecostals in that they did not agree that tongues was the “initial evidence,” but that all the gifts of the Spirit were evidences. They also affirmed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit came in

<sup>10.</sup> Peter Hocken, “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal” in Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 209–232.

<sup>11.</sup> Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals* (New York, Paulist Press, 1969). Patti Gallagher Mansfield, *As By a New Pentecost: The Dramatic Beginning of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (Steubenville, OH: Steubenville Press, 1992).

<sup>12.</sup> Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 234–252.

<sup>13.</sup> See Kilian McDonnell, *Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation* (Pecos, NM: Dove Publications, 1970).

the rites of initiation and that what Pentecostals called the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” was a “release of the Spirit” that one had already received at baptism and confirmation.

In 2017, Charismatic Catholics celebrated their golden jubilee in Rome at the invitation of Pope Francis who chose the Circus Maximus for the massive gathering. Over 50,000 attended from all parts of the world. Pope Francis spoke to the crowd in glowing terms in support of the Renewal. He called it a “Current of Grace” for the whole Church. It was reported that after 50 years, the movement had reached 120 nations and numbered some 120,000,000 Catholics in the world.<sup>14</sup>

### **EMPOWERED EVANGELICALS AND NEO-CHARISMATICS**

Looking back at the twentieth century, scholars such as Peter Wagner began to speak of three waves of renewal. The first wave was the classical Pentecostal movement while the second wave included the Protestant and Roman Catholic Charismatic movements. In 1983, Wagner identified what he called a “third wave” among “straightline evangelicals” who manifested the gifts of the Spirit but preferred not to be identified as Pentecostals or Charismatics.<sup>15</sup>

Doctrinally, the third wavers differed from their Pentecostal friends in several ways. According to Wagner, they believed that baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred at conversion and not as a separate post-conversion experience. Furthermore, they did not accept the idea that speaking in tongues was “validation of the believer having reached some higher spiritual plane.”<sup>16</sup> The move of the Holy Spirit among evangelicals permeated many denominational churches and independent congregations around the world.

By the 1980s, scholars such as David Barrett, editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, began to survey the whole world of the Pentecostal Charismatic Renewal and found that there were huge movements with vast numbers worldwide that did not fit in any of the previous categories. These groups often exhibited “Pentecostal-like” experiences without clear doctrinal statements like the Classical Pentecostals. Barrett called these groups “Neo-Charismatics” and claimed that they had become the fastest-growing parts of the empowered movement. Prominent among these were the huge prophetic African independent churches, the Chinese house churches, and huge independent movements in

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14. This story appears in Vinson Synan’s autobiography, *Where He Leads Me: The Vinson Synan Story* (Franklin Springs, GA: LifeSprings Resources, 2019), 209–211.

15. Wagner, “A Third Wave?” *Pastoral Renewal*/8 no. 1 (July-Aug. 1983), 1–5.

16. C. Peter Wagner, “Power of the Spirit: The Third Wave” *AD2000 Together*, 1988, 6–7.

Brazil and Portugal. By the year 2000, it was estimated that the Neo-Charismatics had grown to be larger than all the historic Pentecostal and Charismatic movements combined.<sup>17</sup>

## **THE CENTURY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

After one century of Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal, it was obvious that Spirit-empowered Christianity had become the fastest-growing movement in centuries. During the first half of the twentieth century, growth was slow but solid due to the heroic sacrifices of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries who spread Pentecostalism to the far corners of the earth. In 1948, David du Plessis gave the first-ever estimate of the number of Pentecostals in the world. The number of 12,000,000 in the world was astounding at the time but was only a foretaste of things to come.<sup>18</sup>

In 2006, the Pentecostals celebrated the centennial year of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in the Los Angeles Convention Center, Sports Arena, and Coliseum. Leading this celebration was Billy Wilson, who was a rising young leader from the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee. Some 50,000 persons flocked to Los Angeles to remember the past. For the occasion, a tent was erected on the site where the Azusa Street Mission once stood. The growth of the movement worldwide was celebrated by the people who came from all over the world.

The growth of the movement could be seen in the startling statistics that documented the unparalleled growth over the century. To make a long story short, on January 1, 1901, there was one empowered Pentecostal in the world, Agnes Ozman in Topeka, Kansas. A century later on January 1, 2001, the number of Pentecostals and Charismatics numbered five hundred thirty million, and they were found in every nation of the world.

## **EMPOWERED CHRISTIANITY**

During the century of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit renewal of the church has been known by many names. Among these were the Pentecostal Movement, Full Gospel Churches, Neo-Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Neo-Charismatics. All of them referred to Christian believers who believed in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. They were all names of the various movements that have come to permeate Christianity in modern times.

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<sup>17</sup>. David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2000 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Burgess and van der Maas, *International Dictionary*, 928.

<sup>18</sup>. David du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (1970).



The term “Spirit-empowered Christianity” encompasses all of these movements in one concise form. It is thought that this term is more acceptable to a younger generation than the older names. Coined after research by leaders of Oral Roberts University, it is hoped that future generations will find the term useful in understanding the move of the Holy Spirit in the twenty-first century.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>. See Vinson Synan, ed., *Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2011). Also see Vinson Synan and Amos Yong, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014), xiii–xvii.

## [2]

# EMPOWERED SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

SCHOLARS OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY have been challenged to understand or explain the rise of empowered Christianity from a tiny, despised and persecuted movement to one spread across the Christian world after only a century. Some people have offered socioeconomic reasons for the success of the movement. Beginning among poor Blacks and Whites in America, the Pentecostal churches became a “haven for the masses” where churches offered upward mobility from poverty to the middle class. Typical of this genre is Robert Mapes Anderson’s *Vision of the Disinherited*, which offered a Marxist view of Pentecostal history. Counter to this view is the one offered by Vinson Synan in *Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, which traces the religious and doctrinal roots of the movement. Beyond this, the movement also offered ministry opportunities for multitudes of largely uneducated early pastors and evangelists.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Christian Lalive d’Epinay *Haven of the Masses: A Study of the Pentecostal Movement in Chile* (University of California: Lutterworth Press, 1969). Also see Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) and Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 1–21.

Although such factors may have aided the growth of the movement, they do not explain the central attraction of the Pentecostals. Although they are by definition social institutions, empowered churches are religious institutions with core beliefs and practices that are central factors in explaining their growth. Essential to understanding the power of the movement is that the central attraction was not arcane theological arguments, but a dynamic experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit with tongues speech as the “initial evidence.” Flowing from this experience was a stream of the gifts of the Spirit including healing and prophecy. Looking back, most recent scholars agree on several factors that were primary reasons for the growth of the movement.

## **I. SUCCESSES**

### ***A STRONG BIBLICAL BASE***

The Pentecostals had no other text but the Bible. There was nothing like the *Book of Mormon* or any other non-biblical texts. The movement rose or fell solely on the Scripture. Countering the Pentecostals were the Fundamentalists whose dispensational theology ruled out the gifts of the Spirit in modern times. Called “cessationism,” this view held that the gifts (charisms) had ceased with the death of the last apostle. This view had permeated the Catholic and Protestant churches for centuries. Now the Pentecostals were manifesting the gifts anew in a very attractive way.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, the movement began with a Bible study in Charles Parham’s Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, in the closing days of 1900. Before leaving on a preaching trip, he asked his students to study the Scripture to identify the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When he returned, the answer was unanimous: It was speaking in tongues as portrayed in the book of Acts. With this discovery, a student by the name of Agnes Ozman spoke in tongues on the first day of the twentieth century. A movement was born. When the Neo-Pentecostal movement began in the mainline churches after 1960, many leaders were attracted because of the strong biblical base of the movement.<sup>22</sup>

### ***MISSIONARY SUCCESS***

Although early Pentecostals were sarcastically dismissed as the “tongues movement,” it was far more than that. It was essentially a missionary movement. Many who attended the Azusa Street Mission soon felt to go to the ends of the earth to tell the world, “The Comforter has come.” They were moti-

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<sup>21.</sup> Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993; Tulsa, Ok: Word & Spirit Press, 2010).

<sup>22.</sup> Among these were Dennis Bennett (Episcopal), Larry Christenson (Lutheran), and Howard Ervin (Baptist).

vated by their strong belief that Jesus might come at any minute and that time was short. In fact, in England, the first Pentecostals were called “second comers.”

Many missionaries went out without any support from a denomination or mission board. Usually they had one-way tickets with no idea how they would return home. That is why they were dubbed the “missionaries of the one-way ticket.”<sup>23</sup> In addition to missionaries from America, the movement saw its greatest growth where Pentecostalism broke out as indigenous movements with national leaders who never went to America. These included the Pentecostal Methodists in Chile under the leadership of Methodist missionary Willis C. Hoover; the Scandinavian Pentecostals, founded by Thomas Ball Barratt of Norway; the Assemblies of God of Brazil, founded by Daniel Berg and Gunnar Vingren; and the several Italian Pentecostal denominations in the United States, Italy, and South America, founded by Luigi Franciscon.<sup>24</sup>

By the 1950s, the church world became aware that the Pentecostals were vastly outgrowing the mainline churches on the mission fields. Missiologists began to study the movement anew to find out the secrets of their missionary success. In 1958, *Life Magazine* published an article by Henry Van Dusen called “The Third Force in Christendom” – i.e., Pentecostalism. At that time, he estimated that there were some 8.5 million Pentecostals in the world. For the rest of the century, Pentecostal churches from America, England, Sweden, and other nations sent a flood of missionaries to the farthest corners of the globe.<sup>25</sup>

### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

From the beginning, Pentecostalism appealed strongly to people of many cultures. Azusa Street is a prime example. Here, the Black pastor William Seymour ministered to Mexicans, Blacks, Whites, and others, some even from foreign nations. Famously, Frank Bartleman said “the color line was washed away in the blood.” The first part of the world where Pentecostalism grew rapidly was the American South, which is where the first Pentecostal denominations were born. The buoyant worship style of the Pentecostals was attractive to Blacks and Whites alike.

When missionaries founded churches on other continents, they, unlike the mainline missionaries, allowed the people to worship with their own native music. They did not try to force strange west-

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23. Vinson Synan, *The Spirit Said Grow: The Astounding Worldwide Expansion of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches* (Monrovia, CA: MARC (World Vision), 1992).

24. All of these can be found in articles in Burgess, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*.

25. Henry Van Dusen, “The Third Force in Christendom,” *Life*, 44 (June 9, 1958), 13. He also included other churches in the article, but the Pentecostals were the largest.

ern liturgies on their communities. Common people all over the world felt that they were culturally at home in Pentecostal churches.

### ***ECCLESIASTICAL DIVERSITY***

As Pentecostal churches developed around the world, they adopted a wide variety of church governance. Influenced by the Methodist-Holiness tradition, some early southern churches developed episcopal-type governments with strong apostolic leadership from the top. The Church of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the Church of God in Christ are prime examples. Later, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel was formed with a strong, centralized government.

At the same time, thousands of independent Pentecostal churches were planted with no denominational affiliation. By 1914, a large number of these churches joined together to form the Assemblies of God. This church adopted a Baptist congregational type of government in which each congregation was sovereign but joined together to promote foreign missions and education. Many of the pastors who formed the Assemblies of God had been ordained by Charles H. Mason, head of the mostly Black Church of God in Christ. In a way, this was a racial as well as theological division.

As the movement spread abroad, many churches were tightly controlled by their Charismatic founders. Many of these had no ties to western missionaries and were indigenous national denominations with very strong personal control from the top. As time went by, newer Charismatic churches adopted bewildering forms of government. But through the twentieth century, in America there continued to be one independent congregation for every denominational congregation.

### ***A HOLINESS LIFESTYLE***

Since American Pentecostalism was born in a Methodist-Holiness cradle, most of the first wave taught a “second blessing” of entire sanctification as taught by John Wesley. At Azusa Street, Seymour taught that the “Holy Spirit falls on a sanctified life.” These empowered people promised not to use tobacco, alcohol, foul language, or attend places of “worldly amusement.” A holiness lifestyle became the goal of these sanctified folk. Some of these rules were codified in “holiness codes” pertaining to dress and outward behavior.

The holiness lifestyle followed the movement as it spread around the world. Although they were often accused of legalism and phariseism, these people were determined to live holy lives “separated from the world.” As the movement grew, society learned that these people were honest, were not drunkards, and did not steal. In Chile, the Pentecostals were so respected that signs

were placed on store windows: “Help Wanted. Only Pentecostals Need Apply.” This drew even more people to the churches.

In Argentina, the reputation for honesty and hard work was not lost on the people of that nation. Although the movement in Argentina was not as large as the huge churches in Chile and Brazil, their influence in society was amazing. One most important person to learn this was Cardinal Bergoglio, Primate of Argentina, and the future Pope Francis I. In an interview with Charismatic leaders meeting in his palace in Buenos Aires in 2006, Bergoglio confessed that he would only hire Pentecostals to work in his palace. He explained, “They do not steal, they do not get drunk and miss work from hangovers, and they are honest and faithful.” This might prove that their very sincere lives were their greatest attraction.<sup>26</sup>

### ***RISE INTO THE MIDDLE CLASS***

While it is true that in the beginning most Pentecostals were from the poorest of the society, there were always a few who did well financially and helped build the movement. But all of this changed after World War II when all Americans benefitted from the post-war economic boom. Soon Pentecostals were succeeding in business and other professions. In the words of missiologist Donald McGavran, “redemption and lift” worked in the case of the Pentecostals.<sup>27</sup>

Symbolic of this new prosperity was the organizing of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI) in 1953. Founded by Demos Shakarian in Los Angeles, this group was made up of Spirit-filled laymen who shared their faith with their friends in restaurants rather than churches. Ministers and women could attend but could not be full members. This organization attracted men from all denominations.<sup>28</sup>

Helping Shakarian found the FGBMFI was evangelist Oral Roberts, whose teachings on prosperity found a home in the organization. At their meetings, thousands of people from mainline churches were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Many were also healed in answer to prayer. Probably hundreds of thousands of Full Gospel Business Men joined Pentecostal churches in the United States and many other nations.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26.</sup> Cardinal Bergoglio, personal interview with the author. Buenos Aires, 2006.

<sup>27.</sup> Donald McGavran, *Bridges of God: A Strategy of Missions* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955).

<sup>28.</sup> Vinson Synan, *Under His Banner: A History of the FGBMFI*, First Edition (Costa Mesa, CA: Gift Publications, 1992).

<sup>29.</sup> David Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life*, 153–155, 288–289.

## **THE HEALING CRUSADERS**

Perhaps the most explosive growth of the Spirit-empowered movement in the United States came in the 1950s with the advent of the healing evangelists who brought Pentecostalism to the attention of the world. The first of these was William Branham from Indiana. A short, soft-spoken man, he mystified his huge audiences with his gifts of healing and discernment. Following his lead, Oral Roberts from Oklahoma soon became the leader of the movement in the United States. His huge tent crusades drew crowds that rivaled those of Billy Graham. By 1954, Roberts began to televise his meetings featuring his dynamic sermons and his healing lines. This brought Pentecostalism right into the living rooms of the American people. In over 300 crusades, Roberts laid hands on over 1,000,000 people. Other evangelists such as Jack Coe were also drawing multitudes to their meetings.<sup>30</sup>

Another healing crusader was T. L. Osborn who took his meetings overseas, pioneering mass healing crusades in many nations of the world. He and his wife Daisy ministered to huge crowds in the open air where multitudes came either to be healed or to witness miracles. In the years to come, mass healing crusades in many nations would bring millions of people into the burgeoning Pentecostal churches. Following in Osborn's footsteps, later evangelists such as Reinhard Bonnke from Germany and Benny Hinn from the United States preached to the masses. Perhaps Bonnke was the greatest mass evangelist of all time. Most of his crusades were in Africa. In his Millennial Crusade in Lagos, Nigeria in 2000, he saw over 1,000,000 converts in one service. These men brought Pentecostalism to the masses, and the masses liked it.<sup>31</sup>

## **II. CHALLENGES**

Like all new religious movements, there were many challenges to the new Spirit-empowered movement that were springing up everywhere. With no central headquarters and no individual acknowledged leader, the movement fragmented into a bewildering kaleidoscope of churches and denominations. It was not a case of church splits, but the fact that Pentecostal movements had origins in different locations and were never joined in one body. Later on, there were church splits, but not in the earliest days. That the movement survived at all was perhaps a great miracle. Below are some of the challenges that had to be overcome for the movement to survive and grow.

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<sup>30</sup>. David Harrell, *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975).

<sup>31</sup>. T. L. Osborn, "My Life Story and Call to the Healing Ministry," *Voice of Healing* (Sept. 1949; Oct. 1949). Reinhard Bonnke, *Living a Life of Fire: An Autobiography* (Dartford, Kent: United Kingdom), E-R Productions, 1st Edition (October 2009).

## PERSECUTION

The greatest challenge in the beginning was the scorn and persecution that was heaped on the Pentecostals. These included scorn from mainline pulpits, books that rejected Pentecostal theology and practice, and actual violence. The most common pejorative term was “holy rollers.” But this was mild compared to what some critics said. In 1912, H. A. Ironsides charged that Pentecostals were “disgusting—delusions and insanities” and that their services were “worthy of a madhouse.” Probably the most stinging criticism came from the highly esteemed pastor G. Campbell Morgan, who once said that the movement was “The last vomit of Satan.”<sup>32</sup>

Even worse was the actual violence that was sometimes wreaked on the poor Pentecostals. The records show that some preachers were “beaten, gagged, and shot with shotguns.” It was not uncommon for religious ruffians to threaten preachers in the pulpit with a pistol. The fearless George W. Stanley, a Pentecostal Holiness evangelist and grandfather of Atlanta First Baptist Church pastor Charles Stanley, once faced an armed mob with guns at the ready as he left his tent. He walked bravely right through them, untouched.<sup>33</sup>

While it is true that Pentecostal worship was noisy and at times overemotional, the Pentecostals did not deserve this treatment. The Russian Pentecostal pioneer Ivan Voronaev paid the ultimate price for his beliefs. Arrested and cast into prison, he was shot in the back while attempting to escape a communist prison in the Gulag Archipelago. This shameful record of persecution led David Barrett to state in 1988 that “Pentecostal members are more harassed, persecuted, suffering, and martyred than perhaps any other Christian tradition in recent history.”<sup>34</sup>

## DIVISIONS

For some five years after the glory days at Azusa Street (1906-1909), the empowered Pentecostals proclaimed the “five-fold gospel,” i.e., salvation, sanctification as a second blessing, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, divine healing as in the atonement, and the imminent second coming of Christ. Since the first Pentecostal denominations had Wesleyan roots, this was no problem. But soon the movement sprang up in hundreds of unrelated independent churches, many of them with Baptist roots. In 1914, over 300 pastors met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to form a

<sup>32</sup>. Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 145–148.

<sup>33</sup>. George W. Stanley, “My Life’s Experiences for God” (Siler City, NC: ND), 20–25. Charles Stanley, *Courageous Faith: My Story from a Life of Obedience* (New York: Howard Books, 2016).

<sup>34</sup>. David Barrett, “The Twentieth Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal in the Holy Spirit with Its Goal of World Evangelization,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, July 1988, 1.



new church, which they named the “Assemblies of God.” They were united doctrinally by what they called “the finished work” theory that left out entire sanctification as a crisis experience. This became a new “fourfold gospel” that influenced all the later Pentecostal movements.<sup>35</sup>

In the meantime, a new view of the Godhead gained many Pentecostal followers, many in the newly organized Assemblies of God. Calling themselves the “Oneness Movement,” these Pentecostals denied the Trinity and preached that Jesus was Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit at one and the same time. They further taught that one could not be saved without water baptism in the name of Jesus. After 1915, several Oneness Pentecostal denominations were formed that later united in St. Louis in 1945 as the United Pentecostal Church. Another large Oneness church was the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, a predominately Black denomination.<sup>36</sup>

In later years, some of the American churches suffered divisions based more on leadership questions than on theological differences. In 1923, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) split over the strong leadership of its founder, A. J. Tomlinson. A group of “elders” took over the church and ousted Tomlinson, who soon organized what became known as the “Church of God of Prophecy.” Another church split involved the Congregational Holiness Church, which left the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1921 over questions about divine healing.<sup>37</sup>

### **A LACK OF UNITY**

During most of these years, Pentecostals remained separate and hardly spoke to each other. Each church went its own way, planting churches and sending missionaries to the far reaches of the world. There was no coordination or agreements to avoid duplicate efforts in America or on the mission fields. Also, there were instances of sheep-stealing and proselyting between these rival denominations. With the advent of the Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements after 1960, the problems of disunity became more acute.

The first moves toward unity took place in Europe in 1947 with the beginning of the triennial World Pentecostal Conferences now known as the Pentecostal World Conference (PWC), and in 1948 with the founding of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America. The story of disunity now

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<sup>35.</sup> William Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971).

<sup>36.</sup> Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 195–200.

<sup>37.</sup> Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 196–198.

gave way to sincere attempts to bring as much unity as possible to a fragmented and burgeoning worldwide movement.

[3]

## PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC UNITY

AS THE MANY PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS exploded around the world, there was little attention given to questions of unity. Pastors, evangelists, and a myriad of witnesses were too busy planting churches and sending out missionaries to worry about unity. They were just too busy. But as time went on, it became clear that their disunity was a scandal to the mainline churches. Much criticism was levelled against these empowered movements that were seen as fragmented and lacking a common witness. Denominational rivalry between churches meant that some places had a surplus of Pentecostal churches while other places were left untouched. Also, leaders had little idea about the tremendous growth of the movement beyond their own flocks.

In North America, theological differences soon appeared and divided the movement into three major divisions: the Wesleyan Pentecostals, which included the Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.); the “Finished Work” Pentecostals, which included the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and the Pentecostal Church of God; and the “Oneness” Pentecostals, which included the Pentecostal Assem-

blies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church. For decades, these groups hardly spoke to each other. Similar divisions took place in many other areas of the global movement.<sup>38</sup>

## **UNITY AFTER WORLD WAR II**

It was only after World War II that the first attempts were made to bring these brethren together after decades of separation. The first of these was the World Pentecostal Conference, which convened in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1947. The visionary organizer of this event was David du Plessis from South Africa. This group has met once every three years in different cities of the world since that time. Thousands of Pentecostals gathered in these conferences from many parts of the world to celebrate their unity. When the Europeans met together in Zurich, many questions arose about unity among the Pentecostal churches in North America, which remained severely divided. Du Plessis encouraged the Americans to come together as the Europeans had done.<sup>39</sup>

The very next year after Zurich — 1948 — North American Pentecostals met together for the first time in Des Moines, Iowa, as the “Pentecostal Fellowship of North America” (PFNA). This came soon after major American Pentecostal denominations joined the newly formed National Association of Evangelicals. Since the Black Pentecostals and Oneness Pentecostals were not included, this was an all-White Trinitarian fellowship. This group met annually until 1994.<sup>40</sup>

One of the first forces that brought cooperation between the Pentecostal churches in America was the healing crusade movement that flourished after 1948. Many pastors who had never met each other gathered together to invite and support such evangelists as William Branham, Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborn, and Jack Coe. They were delighted to meet each other at last. Soon many local pastor associations held regular meetings where Pentecostal pastors enjoyed fellowship and discussions of common problems. The same situation existed in Europe where many national groups knew nothing of each other.

## **CHARISMATIC UNITY**

In the meantime, Pentecostalism suddenly appeared unexpectedly in the mainline Protestant denominations. This began in 1960 when Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal priest from Van Nuys, Califor-

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38. Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 149–164.

39. Burgess and Van Der Maas, *International Dictionary*, 589–593.

40. See David du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (1970) and David du Plessis (As told to Bob Slosser) *A Man Called Mr. Pentecost* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1977).

nia, spoke in tongues. This event made national headlines, which eventually caused the movement to grow strongly in all the other Protestant denominations. At first these Spirit-filled Protestants were called “Neo-Pentecostals.” Other leaders of this phase of Pentecostalism included: Brick Bradford, Presbyterian; Larry Christenson, Lutheran; Ross Whetstone, Methodist; Vernon Stoop, United Church of Christ; Nelson Litwiller, Mennonite; and Pat Robertson, Baptist. Through the foreign missions programs of these churches, Pentecostalism spread around the world in these mainline churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. Up to this point, the movement was entirely a Protestant phenomenon.<sup>41</sup>

All of this changed drastically in 1967 with the unexpected appearance of Pentecostalism in the Roman Catholic Church. This happened during a weekend retreat of graduate students from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Professors from Duquesne heard about the Pentecostal movement and felt that it could be a blessing to the Roman Catholic Church. After studying *The Cross and the Switchblade* and the first four chapters of the *Acts of the Apostles*, the students were ready to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Several of them gathered in the upstairs chapel and soon were praising God in other tongues and with prophecies. News spread rapidly to Notre Dame University and the University of Michigan. Soon hundreds and then thousands of Catholics were rushing to prayer meetings to receive the Pentecostal experience. Early leaders of the movement included Patti Gallagher, Kevin Ranaghan, and Francis MacNutt, who saw the movement mushroom into the thousands and then millions around the Catholic world.<sup>42</sup> At first the Spirit-filled Catholics called themselves “Pentecostal Catholics,” but in a short time they adopted the name “Catholic Charismatics.” The word “Charismatic” was also later adopted by most of the Protestant renewal movements.

The Charismatic movement also entered the Orthodox Church in North America in 1971. Among the leaders of the Orthodox Charismatics were Athanasius Emmert, Eusebius Stephanou, and Boris Zabrodsky. According to Timothy Cremeens, himself a convert to Orthodoxy from the Assemblies of God, the movement was “marginalized” when no Orthodox bishops approved of the movement. Unlike the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox Renewal touched only a few thousand persons in the Church.<sup>43</sup>

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41. Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 149–208. Also see Vinson Synan, *The Twentieth Century Pentecostal Explosion* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1987).

42. Mansfield’s *As by a New Pentecost*: Also see Edward O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1971).

43. Timothy B. Cremeens, *Marginalized Voices: A History of the Charismatic Renewal in the Orthodox Church in North America, 1972–1993* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018).

### **THE CHARISMATIC CONCERNS COMMITTEE AT GLENCOE**

By the beginning of the 1970s, there were three major groupings of Pentecostals and Charismatics: the Classical Pentecostals, the Protestant Charismatics, and the Catholic Charismatics. The first attempt to bring these groups together was the Glencoe gathering that met near St. Louis in the 1970s and 1980s. First called together by Dennis Bennett and David du Plessis in 1971 in Seattle to settle problems among Charismatic leaders, the group faced the growing problems caused by the shepherding teachings of the “Fort Lauderdale four,” which included Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Charles Simpson, and Don Basham. In addition to du Plessis and Bennett, some of the early attendees were Derek Prince, Larry Christenson, Jamie Buckingham, Kevin Ranaghan, and Francis MacNutt. In 1975, the conflict exploded in the “shootout in the Curtis Hotel” in Seattle. Here Bennett and Pat Robertson strongly objected to the shepherding teachings. Also strongly opposing the shepherding group was Demos Shakarian, head of the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI). Both Robertson and Shakarian refused to allow the shepherding leaders to speak on their programs.

In 1976, these leaders met in Oklahoma City to struggle with the “shepherding movement,” which was now dividing the whole movement in the United States. This was called the Charismatic Leaders Conference. Little was accomplished in this meeting. From 1973 to 2001, the group met annually in the Marianist Retreat Center in Glencoe, Missouri, at the invitation of Francis MacNutt. Led by Kevin Ranaghan and Larry Christianson, in 1976 the group changed its name to “Charismatic Concerns Committee,” with the goal of attempting to settle controversies that sprang up within the movement over the years. Two of these involved questions about water baptism and the place of women in ministry. However, the “shepherding movement” continued to be the most absorbing controversy to face the group. About forty leaders of all segments of the renewal met annually in the Glencoe Marianist Retreat to give some guidance to the various movements represented. Attendance was by invitation only to leaders with “trans local” ministries. No records were kept, so members could speak freely. Speakers who addressed the group included John Wimber, David Barrett, C. Peter Wagner, Benny Hinn, and others.<sup>44</sup>

By the mid-1970s, the group decided to conduct a major Charismatic conference in Kansas City to impact the nation and the world with the message of the renewal.<sup>45</sup> The Kansas City “General Conference on Charismatic Renewal” met in the Arrowhead football stadium in the summer of

44. Bob Garrett, “The Charismatic Leaders Fellowship” (Augusta, GA: 2019).

45. For the “Shepherding Controversy” that concerned the Glencoe meetings, see David Moore, *The Shepherding Movement: Controversy and Charismatic Ecclesiology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

1977. Some 45,000 persons registered for the gathering to make a “common witness” to the world that “Jesus is Lord.” Speakers included Leo Joseph Cardinal Suenens (Catholic Primate of Belgium), Kevin Ranaghan, Bob Mumford, and Jim Forbes. In some ways, this conference marked the high-water mark of the Charismatic Renewal in the United States and brought the movement to the attention of the nation.<sup>46</sup>

### **THE NORTH AMERICAN RENEWAL SERVICE COMMITTEE (1985–2000)**

For almost a decade, the Glencoe leaders showed little interest in conducting another expensive and exhausting conference like the one in Kansas City. But in time, a vision formed for another similar conference to take place in 1987. This time the Glencoe leader was Vinson Synan, who led the group from 1984 to 2001. Synan worked closely with Kevin Ranaghan in planning the conference. It was decided to form a new corporation that would own and conduct the conference. It was named “The North American Renewal Service Committee” (NARSC). The chosen city was New Orleans. It was also decided to conduct a leaders’ conference in 1986 in the Superdome, followed by a general conference in 1987. After months of planning, the Leaders Conference convened with about 7,500 leaders from all sectors of the renewal in attendance. Among the speakers were Oral Roberts and Paul Yonggi Cho.<sup>47</sup>

In the very hot summer of 1987, the “General Conference on Charismatic Renewal and World Evangelization” convened in the Superdome. Upwards of 40,000 people attended this gathering, where all the workshops and plenary sessions emphasized world evangelization. Major speakers included Vinson Synan, Reinhard Bonnke, and Tom Forrest, with special videos from Billy Graham and Pope John Paul II. A unique feature of the congress was a Charismatic parade down Bourbon Street, complete with twenty-five blocks of floats, bands, and clowns. It was the second largest parade in the history of New Orleans other than Mardi Gras.<sup>48</sup>

After the New Orleans Congress, the North American Renewal Service Committee conducted large congresses in Indianapolis in 1990, Orlando in 1995, and a concluding congress in St. Louis in AD 2000. These congresses emphasized the goal of winning half the world’s population to Christ by the end of the century, a challenge given to the leadership by Fr. Tom Forrest. After the St. Louis Congress, the NARSC leaders felt that its mission was now completed and never met again.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46.</sup> The story of the conference is told in David Manual’s *Like a Mighty River: A Personal Account of the Charismatic Conference of 1977* (Orleans, MA: Rock Harbor Press, 1977).

<sup>47.</sup> Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 267–270.

<sup>48.</sup> Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 367–368.

<sup>49.</sup> For a detailed account of the NARSC story, see Vinson Synan’s future autobiography, *Where He Leads Me: The Vinson Synan Story*, 157–168.

After the year 2000, the Pentecostal World Conference continued to meet every three years and the PFNA, every year. A major change came in 2004 when the all-White PFNA was disbanded and the “Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America” (PCCNA) was born. In what the press called “the Memphis Miracle,” for the first time since Azusa Street, “the color line was washed away in the blood.” Leading in this change was Bishop Bernard E. Underwood and Vinson Synan of the Pentecostal Holiness Church and Bishop Ithiel Clemmons of the Church of God in Christ. Although a large number of Oneness Pentecostals attended the Memphis meeting, only Trinitarians were admitted for full membership. In their subsequent meetings, the Oneness Pentecostals were invited to attend the sessions with the Trinitarians.<sup>50</sup>

In all these organizations, there were huge Neo-Charismatic and independent denominations in the world that were not active or represented. This situation called for a new paradigm to bring all the elements of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movements together in unity. Thus, the vision for Empowered21 was born.

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<sup>50</sup>. See Harold Hunter, *Reconciliation Magazine* (Springfield, MO, 1998).



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## EMPOWERED21 —A GLOBAL NETWORK

OF ALL THE ATTEMPTS TO BRING UNITY to the Pentecostal/Charismatic movements of the world, Empowered21 has created the widest global network in history. This story involves three men who conceived the vision and brought it into being. The three were Dr. William (Billy) M. Wilson, a preacher from Kentucky, his friend, Mart Green, a businessman from Oklahoma, and Dr. Rob Hoskins, a missionary from Florida. Both Wilson and Green were born and raised in a vibrant Pentecostal denomination known as the Church of God of Prophecy. The two young men met while ministering at youth camps for their church. They became fast friends for life. Working closely together in future years, these two men not only founded the Empowered21 movement, but helped save Oral Roberts University from bankruptcy and led it on to become a strong and solvent institution.

### **BILLY WILSON**

William (Billy) M. Wilson was born in Owensboro, Kentucky, on October 4, 1958. After graduating from Daviess County High School, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Western Kentucky University. Later he earned the Master of Arts and Doctor of Ministry degrees from the Pentecostal

Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee. Raised in the Church of God of Prophecy, he was licensed to preach in 1978 and was ordained bishop in 1984. Over the years, he pastored churches in Ohio and Tennessee. In 1983, he was appointed as the International Director of Youth and Camping Ministries for his denomination. In this position, he worked globally with over 100 national and state youth ministries, conducting youth camps and training sessions for youth. It was in this capacity that he met Mart Green, as they worked together in youth camps. Wilson also served as the International Director of Evangelism from 1994 to 1998 and as Communications Director in his denomination from 1994 to 2003.<sup>51</sup>

His work caught the attention of the leaders of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), which also had headquarters in Cleveland. The Church of God of Prophecy began as a split from the Church of God in 1923, after which the two churches went their separate ways. In a unique move, both churches accepted Wilson as an ambassador extraordinaire to work between their denominations. In 2003, Wilson was also ordained as a bishop in the Church of God. He was the only person in history to be ordained bishop and accepted by both churches. In this position, Wilson was given the title of “International Minister of Outreach” and led the “International Ministry of Outreach: A Cooperative Ministry of the Church of God and the Church of God of Prophecy,” which focused on joint evangelistic efforts between the two denominations. During this time, he attempted without success to bring both churches to the point of amalgamation or merger. Later in 2011, Wilson resigned his ministry in the Church of God of Prophecy and remained with the Church of God.

During these years, Wilson branched out into several national ministries. In 2008, he helped found the Awakening America Alliance, which consisted of over 250 Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Evangelical denominations and parachurch ministries. Another ministry he led was the *World Impact with Billy Wilson* television show. Throughout all his other activities, this TV ministry has continued for decades. In 2006, Wilson was named Executive Director of the Center for Spiritual Renewal in Cleveland, Tennessee, which was founded by Robert Fisher in 2002. Fisher was planning a centennial celebration for the Azusa Street Revival of 1906–1909. Tragically, Fisher passed away before the event took place. After Fisher’s passing, the Board of Directors of the Center for Spiritual Renewal asked Wilson to lead the celebration.

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<sup>51</sup>. The information on Wilson came from his personal bio entitled “William (Billy) Wilson” and the Wikipedia article entitled “Billy Wilson (academic).” Also, a personal interview with the author on January 16, 2019 at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In 2006, Wilson led the Azusa Street Centennial Celebration in Los Angeles. Speakers came from all over the world to mark this important event. Meetings were held in many other Los Angeles venues. More than 50,000 people attended this celebration from 112 nations. During these days, a tent was raised on the very spot where the Azusa Mission once stood. Even Al Jazeera covered the event for the Muslim world. In this meeting, Wilson made contact with Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders from around the world who were to become the core leaders for the forming of Empowered21.

Over the next few years, Wilson led in calling international scholars together to study the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of the world. The first of these convened in London, with Harold Hunter leading the gathering of scholars. After this, Vinson Synan was chosen to lead the scholars' meetings. Important scholar meetings were conducted in Germany, Chile, London, and Ecuador. Joining with Synan in Quito was the decorated scholar Amos Yong of Fuller Theological Seminary. The papers collected in these sessions became chapters in five books that were later published under the sponsorship of E21. In 2008, Wilson was contacted by his friend Mart Green during the time of crisis at Oral Roberts University, which was at the point of closure because of a huge debt. David Green, Mart's father, sensed a burden from the Lord to help ORU, and Mart asked Wilson to get involved. Wilson and Green were destined to work together at ORU, with Green as chairman of a newly formed Board of Trustees and Wilson as vice chairman.<sup>52</sup>

In August of 2019, Wilson was selected as the chair of the Pentecostal World Fellowship during the Pentecostal World Conference in Calgary, Canada.

Wilson has published numerous books, articles, and circulars over the years. Most notably, he authored the books *Fasting Forward: Advancing Your Spiritual Life through Fasting*, *Foundations of Faith*, and *Father Cry*.

## **MART GREEN**

Mart Green was born in Lawton, Oklahoma, on September 2, 1961, to a middle-class business family. His father, David, was later to found the major store chain Hobby Lobby. Green was raised in a family surrounded by preachers in the Church of God of Prophecy. All five of his father's siblings were preachers or married preachers, and both grandparents were as well. As a young man, he attended Tomlinson College in Cleveland, Tennessee, and Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklaho-

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<sup>52</sup>. Jennifer LeClaire, "ORU Names Billy Wilson as Fourth President," *Charisma News*, January 31, 2013.

ma, for only one semester in each school. Like his father, Green was not called to preach; he entered the world of business.<sup>53</sup>

Green began his retail career in the home of his parents as a youth. With \$600, his family started Hobby Lobby in their living room. The business now has over 900 arts and crafts stores in the United States. Green serves as the ministry investment officer for Hobby Lobby and as the board chair. In 1981, Green established Mardel, a chain of Christian and education stores headquartered in Oklahoma City. Mardel now has thirty-four stores in seven states. In June 2002, Green founded and was the producer and /CEO of Every Tribe Entertainment, a feature film production company. Two of his films were *The End of the Spear* and *Beyond the Gates of Splendor*. From 2008 to 2014, Green served as Board Chair of the Board of Trustees of Oral Roberts University. During this time and later, the Green family gave over \$250 million to rescue and build the university. Also serving on the Board of Trustees was Billy Wilson, who later became president of the university.<sup>54</sup>

In later years, Green, through a collective alliance called Every Tribe Every Nation (ETEN), built the Digital Bible Library whose purpose was to digitize, centralize, standardize, and finalize the biblical texts of the world. One of his driving passions is illumiNations, which has a vision that all 6000+ vital languages on planet earth will have some portions of Scripture by 2033. Green's personal motto is "This Book Is Alive."

The Green Family's most ambitious project, spearheaded by Mart's brother Steve Green and Steve's wife Jackie, was the construction of the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., which was dedicated in 2017. These projects demonstrated the Green family's great respect for the Bible as the living Word of God.

## **ROB HOSKINS**

The third man who helped envision Empowered21 was Mart Green's friend Rob Hoskins, who worked closely with Green on these projects. Hoskins served as an ordained missionary in the Assemblies of God before becoming president of OneHope Ministries in 2004. Along the way he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree at Vanguard University. In recognition of his ministry of distributing millions of books and other media materials to young people all over the world, he was given the John Maxwell Leadership Award in 2005 and was named as one of the twenty-one emerging leaders of the Church

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<sup>53</sup>. The information on Mart Green is taken from his bio on Wikipedia and a personal interview with the author on January 13, 2019 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>54</sup>. Bill Sherman, "ORU receives another \$10 million donation," *The Tulsa World*, December 17, 2010.

in *Charisma Magazine* in 2010. Hoskins completed his Doctor of Ministry degree at Gordon Conwell Seminary in 2019 and was also granted an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Oral Roberts University in 2017.

Working closely with Mart Green in reviving Oral Roberts University, Hoskins joined the Board of Trustees in 2008 and went on to chair the Board of Trustees from 2014 to 2017. From 2008 to 2010, he worked diligently with Wilson and Green in planning for and founding the Empowered21 movement. Hoskins now serves on the E21 Global Council and is liaison for the E21 next gen group, working with next gen leaders around the world.<sup>55</sup>

## **FOUNDING A GLOBAL NETWORK**

The Empowered21 movement had its origins in a vision given to Dr. Robert Fisher concerning a fitting celebration of the centennial of the Azusa Street Revival that began in 1906. The celebration, held in Los Angeles in April 2006, was a resounding success as more than 50,000 persons attended the various events that were celebrated in several Los Angeles venues.

After the Azusa Street celebration in 2006, the center began a connection with Oral Roberts University (ORU) when Wilson's friend Mart Green was chosen to chair the Board of Trustees of the university. At this time Wilson also joined the Board of Trustees. From this association came a vision for another meeting on the campus of ORU. Although the meeting was under the auspices of ORU, the International Center for Spiritual Renewal was chosen to administer the event. Called the "Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment," the Tulsa meeting drew 10,000 persons to the campus in April 2010. In preparing for the Tulsa meeting, Mart Green and his associates conducted a broad-ranging survey of the next generation to find out what term best described the Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal in their minds. In the end, the word "empowered" won out over the terms "Pentecostal," "Charismatic," or "full gospel." Also, since everyone wanted to look toward the future instead of the past, the numeral 21 was added, referring to the twenty-first century. Thus, the term "Empowered21" (or E21) was born, and Empowered21 was formally organized in 2009.

## **VISION FOR EMPOWERED21**

The vision statement of Empowered21 is powerful and pointed: "That every person on earth would have an authentic encounter with Jesus Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit . . . by Pentecost 2033." Its mission statement proclaims that "Empowered21 will help shape the future of

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<sup>55</sup>. [Wikipedia.org/wiki/RobHoskins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RobHoskins)

the global Spirit-empowered movement throughout the world. We will do this by focusing on crucial issues facing the movement and by connecting generations for intergenerational blessing and impartation.” Thus, the major focus is on what is called the “next gen” (next generation) in order to continue the “spiritual grace” of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal into future generations. Underlining all the efforts of this vision is a prayer for a “fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the twenty-first century.” These themes have permeated all the events and planning sessions of E21 from the beginning.

In the two years before the formation of the E21 movement, Wilson led 17 unique “conversations” with some 500 church leaders and scholars from 54 nations and 15 universities with the goal of answering these questions: “What does it mean to be Spirit-empowered in the twenty-first century?” and “What steps can be taken to engage new generations in the Spirit-filled experience?” Armed with the wealth of knowledge from these conversations, E21 conducted two major events on university campuses.

### **A GLOBAL MOVEMENT**

The first was the aforementioned Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment, which drew 10,000 persons to Oral Roberts University in April 2010, where 210 workshops produced a futuristic book edited by Vinson Synan entitled *Spirit-Empowered Christianity in the 21st Century* (Charisma House, 2011). The second was a meeting at Regent University in 2012 in conjunction with the Society for Pentecostal Studies, which emphasized the “convergence” of Spirit-empowered generations and movements. More than 500 leaders registered for this event. During this time, the E21 movement was organized on an international scale with a global council and fourteen regional cabinets around the world. Included in these groups were leaders from almost all of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Wilson and Pastor Jack Hayford served as co-chairs of the Global Council in the beginning, with Dr. George Wood as the chair of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and then superintendent of the Assemblies of God USA, replacing Hayford in 2014.

The first global gathering after the American events at ORU and Regent University was the E21 Asia Congress held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in October 2011, which drew some 15,000 persons. Other plans for the future included worldwide celebrations on Pentecost Sunday each year to celebrate the birthday of the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room (Acts 2). On Pentecost Sunday 2012, many thousands gathered in local celebrations around the world. Totally ecumenical, the vision is to see Pentecost Sunday rise to the level of Easter and Christmas as opportune days to make a common witness to the world.

An important part of the E21 vision has been to gather scholars from around the world to study the past, present, and future of the empowered movements on every continent and from as many nations as possible. To accomplish this goal, three meetings convened before the Global Congress in Jerusalem in 2015. One was held in Oxford, England, in 2012 under the leadership of Dr. Harold Hunter. Another took place in Sydney, Australia, in 2013, where the focus was on Asia. Vinson Synan and Amos Yong directed this latter consultation and those that followed. The third meeting was in Quito, Ecuador, in 2014, where the focus was on Latin America.

### **MEETINGS OF SCHOLARS**

Another meeting of scholars gathered during the Empowered21 Global Congress in Jerusalem in 2015 in a culminating congress where thousands of people gathered for one of the largest Christian meetings held in the Holy Land in modern times. Here, the scholars read papers focusing on Africa, North America, and Europe. In the end, four volumes of the papers read in these gatherings were published and edited by Synan and Yong. Entitled *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future*, the four volumes were: Asia and Oceania (I); Latin America (II); Africa (III); and North America and Europe (IV). They were published by Charisma House in Lake Mary, Florida. Many of the papers published in these volumes were initially presented in the above-mentioned conferences and consultations.

Another book published by E21 came as a result of the scholars gathered in London in 2016. E21 leaders from around the world asked for a book that addressed the so-called “hyper-grace” teaching that was gaining popularity on some televangelists’ programs. The papers were gathered and edited by Vinson Synan and appeared in 2018 with the title *The Truth about Grace: Spirit-Empowered Perspectives*. This book featured all sides of the grace question and included chapters by Michael L. Brown and Joseph Prince, among others. It was also published by Charisma House. Other Scholars Consultations have been conducted in Singapore, Johannesburg, and Bogotá with each session focusing on a different issue and with books published following each consultation. Dr. Wonsuk Ma, Dean of the College of Theology and Ministry at ORU, now chairs the Scholars’ Consultation annually.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPOWERED21**

In looking back, it is evident that the Empowered21 movement is the most widespread and important global network of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements that have appeared since the glory days of Azusa Street in 1906. Wilson, with the financial help of the Green family, has tirelessly traveled around

the globe, organizing events and regional cabinets of leaders. He has done all this while serving as president of Oral Roberts University, a position where he has excelled. Under his leadership, the university has operated with no indebtedness and has built new buildings — including a new dormitory to house the growing student population.

While leading a great university, Wilson also led E21 congresses in Singapore and Kiev, Ukraine, in 2017. In 2018, major congresses gathered in São Paulo, Brazil; Jakarta, Indonesia; Johannesburg, South Africa; Dublin, Ireland; Riga, Latvia; and again, in Brazil. In 2019, Empowered21 meetings were convened in Dubai; Athens, Greece; and Bogotá, Colombia. Other meetings will gather in the years leading up to the greatest E21 meeting of all. Preliminary plans are being drawn up to celebrate the 2,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem in 2033. By that time, it is fervently hoped that “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>. Isaiah 11:9 (NIV; all subsequent citations are from this version unless otherwise noted).



# [PART II]

BY DR. BILLY WILSON

Now that we have uncovered the history of the Spirit-empowered movement, discussed some of its unique successes and challenges, and have introduced Empowered21 — a global network focused on bringing unity to the Spirit-empowered movement — it's time to go deeper.

Throughout Part II, Dr. Billy Wilson will give a personal account of his experience within the movement, both in a global context as well as in his everyday involvement as the president of Oral Roberts University. We will hear how heaven's call came to inspire E21's founding and will be encouraged by stories of the previous "three waves" of renewal, as he presents the idea that we could, in fact, be on the cusp of a fourth wave. Lastly, we will gain insights into how a new generation views this coming fourth wave, as we are all inspired to play our part in helping them to exponentially expand the Kingdom of God. Read on and be encouraged. Rejoice in the truth that every place on planet earth will soon be touched with the knowledge of God's glory — as the waters cover the sea!

*NOTE: As you read through this section, you will notice that while Part I was written in third person, Part II is written in first person. This was on purpose, so that this portion could be written specifically from the heart and opinion of the author. Please receive these thoughts with this in mind.*

[5]

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE DAY at the end of an unbelievable week that would conclude the most intense nine months of my life. I stretched facedown on the carpeted stage in the middle of the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena as worship and intercession filled the large auditorium. Thousands of young people surrounded the stage, receiving prayer with anointing oil. The Azusa Street Centennial Celebration was almost over, and God's power was falling mightily. Minutes earlier, we watched in jubilation as a man was healed, standing straight up from a wheelchair that had held him bound for years. Dozens of young men and women were experiencing deliverance from intense addictions, and hundreds across the arena were being filled with the Holy Spirit. God was so near and His presence so palpable. Something supernatural was happening!

Leaders from around the world continued to lay hands on young people as the presence of God kept me pressed facedown against the platform floor. Though exhausted from the intensity of the previous nine months, it was more than my weariness that held me glued to the ground. I was experiencing the weight of His presence. God was answering our prayers for Him to touch new generations with His power. It was tangible. Even as I write these words years later, I can still feel the weight of

that moment. I knew in my heart that night that Spirit-empowered Christianity was moving into the future with significant power and strength. I was exhausted but elated!

This event — the Azusa Street Centennial Celebration — occurred in April 2006, during the week of the 100-year anniversary of the launching of the Azusa Street Revival. It was a grand affair, drawing together over 50,000 attendees from 114 nations. The Centennial utilized six different venues throughout the city of Los Angeles for a powerful week of ministry, celebration, and impartation. The event became a giant homecoming for the diverse Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Attendees ranged from Charismatic Catholics to Historic Pentecostals, including Oneness Pentecostals, all united together to celebrate their shared spiritual roots at Azusa Street.

One man with extremely deep roots in the revival had the initial idea for the celebration. His name was Dr. Robert Fisher. About three years before the Centennial, I met with Dr. Fisher, who was the executive director of the Center for Spiritual Renewal in Cleveland, Tennessee. Bob (as most knew him) asked me to assist as operations officer for the event, with him serving as executive officer. Our agreement was that he would lead in the raising of the funds needed, and I would spend them in executing an ambitious vision. That sounded like a great plan to me!

The reason Bob felt a special connection to Azusa Street was that his grandfather Elmer Fisher served on staff with William Seymour (the leader of the Azusa Street Revival) throughout the outpouring. Bob felt called to host a centennial celebration worthy of the Holy Spirit's movement around the world throughout the twentieth century. As our dreams for the event expanded, our excitement also grew. We were embarking on a challenging journey. People from across the globe connected their spiritual roots to Azusa Street and wanted to be part of the Centennial. The energy surrounding the event began to build. Unfortunately, the challenges did as well. Though many *did* feel emotionally connected to Azusa Street, Los Angeles would prove a difficult and expensive host city and would offer a less-than-ideal environment for the event. Financial resources were scarce and registration seemed to be lagging less than a year away from the Centennial. Utilizing multiple venues with various groups and numerous strategies also added up to quite a complicated scenario. Pressure built significantly.

In the midst of it all, tragedy struck. About nine months before the Centennial was to take place, Dr. Fisher received a terrible diagnosis: leukemia. Things were in a swirl. Bob tried hard to continue the planning with me, even from the hospital, but the disease moved much more aggressively than expected. My last visit with my friend and mentor took place in his hospital room in Atlanta, Georgia, just weeks after his initial diagnosis. It was a sad day for me as I watched this wonderful Christian

gentleman, a late-life mentor and my good friend, come to grips with his health situation. It was hard to accept that he might not live to see the dream of the Centennial realized. It was even harder to accept that such a wonderful man was leaving the earth – and our lives – so quickly. I always admired Bob’s passion for Christ, his statesmanship, and his deep personal wisdom. One sacred memory I’ll forever cherish was our prayer together that day as I said goodbye for the last time.

Following Bob’s transition to heaven, the Center for Spiritual Renewal Board and the Azusa Street Centennial Cabinet requested that I step in to serve as the executive officer for the Azusa Centennial. They also asked that I serve as executive director of the Center for Spiritual Renewal. After several prophetic affirmations that I was to be “strong and very courageous,” I accepted the challenge. I knew it was going to be a non-stop, several-months-long sprint toward the Centennial. And it was. Never in my life had I worked as hard as I did in those months leading up to April 2006. Miraculously, the necessary resources for the Centennial came in, and we ultimately finished the event in the black with over 50,000 people in attendance.

During the final service, with my face in the carpet, I experienced the culmination of the preceding three years in a moment I will never forget. I lay there in silence as the Holy Spirit whispered to my heart about the future. He spoke of new generations encountering His power as streams of the Spirit-empowered movement united. As I listened, my flesh felt exhausted, but my spirit was energized. I would come to realize later that God was preparing me for a front-row seat to witness His work across His Kingdom, and around the world over the next few years.

[6]

## A SECOND FLOOD

AS MEMORABLE AS THE LAST NIGHT of the Centennial was for me, there is another encounter that might have impacted and prepared me even more for what was to come. It occurred a few years earlier, and transformed my way of thinking forever. Though these were completely different experiences, I found myself in the same position both times: lying facedown on the carpet. However, the earlier encounter was not on a grand stage in a loud arena in Los Angeles, California. Instead, it was in a small, quiet prayer room in Cleveland, Tennessee. This small prayer chapel was constructed during my pastorate to help our congregation consistently focus in intercessory prayer. At the time of my encounter, our church was in a forty-day rotating fast, and as pastor I was participating the entire time with a juice-only fast. The fast was concluding with a week of 24/7 prayer, where every hour of every day for seven days, at least one person would be seeking God in the small prayer room. Since I was the pastor and wanted to be a good example, I chose one of the toughest time slots to fill: the 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. slot.

On this particular morning, I was alone in prayer. I started with a time of praise, moved onto a period of personal cleansing, and then prayed for various needs within our community, church, and denomination. Somewhere in the midst of it all, the Holy Spirit visited me, and I found myself face-down, crying out to God for a new revival in new generations. This became a life-changing moment for me. God's voice interrupted my tear-filled prayer with a promise that would change my perspective — and ultimately, my world.

He said, "I am going to send a second flood — a *new* flood like the flood of Noah's day. Only this second flood will be spiritual and not physical. This new flood will not be a flood of retribution and justice but of mercy and love. My Spirit is going to flood the earth!"

Instantly, I felt impressed to read Habakkuk 2:14, which says, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." *How do the waters cover the sea?* I thought. An answer rose up in my spirit: *Completely.*

As I sought God for deeper understanding into this revelation, He took me to the story of the flood in Genesis 7. Noah's flood came from two sources. Scripture says that "the springs of the great deep burst forth" and "the floodgates of the heavens were opened." In other words, water came down from the sky and up from the ground. In order to completely cover the earth, both sources were necessary. In a similar way, God impressed upon me that this new spiritual flood of His great mercy and love would cover the earth completely. The knowledge of God's glory would so saturate the world that no spiritually dry place would be left. Just as the physical flood in Noah's day would require more than one source, so this flood would require multiple sources as well. During those early morning hours, amidst my tears, I believe I discerned at least three sources for this earth-covering spiritual flood:

***A Fresh, Global Outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*** *The Lord showed me that heaven will answer the heart cry of new generations for an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit by sending a fresh outpouring of power and glory. Spiritually dry places in the earth, including difficult-to-reach nations, will experience new awakenings to God's mercy and grace. No place on the planet will remain exempt from this spiritual deluge.*

***The Convergence of Spiritual Streams.*** *The Lord also impressed upon me that unity among movements and spiritual currents would be like the confluence of two flooded rivers. Where and when they connected in unity, it would bring an overflow (like a headwater or tail water effect), and the waters would spiritually flood the earth around these connection points. The century following the Azusa Street Revival saw great divergence in Spirit-empowered Christianity, with each subsequent movement of the Holy Spirit becoming like a stream branching from the river of revival. However, I saw*

*that the twenty-first century is to be more of a time of convergence than divergence. Movements and streams will unite to see a great flood of grace.*

***The Deep and Hidden Places Breaking Up and Springing Forth.*** Finally, in my unique early-morning encounter, the Lord revealed that the third source of this flood will come from the hearts and lives of millions of people. These are people filled with God's presence who have endured significant breaking in the twenty-first century. The twentieth century saw a season of focused anointing on just a few people or ministries made prominent through mass media. However, the twenty-first century will see a shift toward a dispersed anointing on multitudes around the world, and the Holy Spirit flowing out of them will raise the spiritual flood level in every nation on earth.

These three sources will combine to bring this second flood — one that covers the entire earth with an awareness of God's glory, just like the waters covered the earth in Noah's day. When it has finished, there will be no spiritually dry places in the world.

Following this life-changing encounter, I remained on the floor for a while, still stunned by what God was impressing upon me. I was unsure of what to do with such a revelation. As I staggered out of the small prayer room almost three hours later, I did not fully understand why God spoke to me that day, but I would soon find out. Only a few weeks later, Dr. Fisher's invitation to assist him in the Azusa Street Centennial Celebration came, and so began my journey from denominational leader and pastor to Kingdom leader and convener.

### **EMPOWERED21: A GOD-GIVEN VISION**

As much as this second flood vision impacted my personal journey, I believe it impacted my ministry even more, specifically as a part of Empowered21— an organization that exists to help shape the future of the Spirit-empowered movement by connecting generations for blessing and impartation. In 2013, during an Empowered21 Global Council meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, a discussion arose regarding the network. The leaders who were present felt there might be one large goal God was calling us to embrace together. As we prayed about this, Habakkuk 2:14 came up again, and so did the words God had spoken to me years before. The Global Council grew energized as we discussed seeing the knowledge of God's glory cover the earth until every person had an opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ. After several hours of discussion and editing, we adopted the Empowered21 vision as a commitment by all groups of the council.

*That every person on Earth*

*would have an authentic*

*encounter with*

*Jesus Christ*

*through the power and*

*presence of the Holy Spirit*

*. . . by Pentecost 2033.*



We chose Pentecost 2033 as our target date because it marks the 2,000-year anniversary of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Acts 2. It was also the date farthest in advance, giving more time for the movement to complete this task. This vision re-personalized the Great Commission for us, reminding us all of our ultimate purpose as Spirit-empowered believers: reaching individuals for Christ. E21's vision does not mean that the Global Council believes every person on earth will accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord (although that would be awesome). What it does mean is that we believe every person on our planet should have an authentic opportunity to intimately know Christ – to develop a personal and eternal relationship with the one true God. It certainly is an overwhelming vision, but that's usually how God-given ones are. This big vision cannot be completed by one church, denomination, ministry, organization, or person alone.

The vision to see every person reached with the message of Christ will require that we *all* unite to evangelize and disciple people aggressively around the globe, with an acute awareness that *nothing* can change without the supernatural power of God and the empowering of His Holy Spirit. A new spiritual flood is needed and possible. A new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a unity birthed in humility, and deep brokenness will all be required to usher in this new spiritual flood that will leave no place, no nation, no state, no city, no home, no church, and no individual heart spiritually dry. As it was in the days of Noah, so let it be now, Lord. Please, send this flood.

[7]

## ISSUES FACING THE MOVEMENT THEN (2009–2010)

TEARS WERE RUNNING DOWN their cheeks as they spoke. The room was galvanized. We were on the edge of our seats. Young leaders were giving voice to their heart cry for spiritual fathers and mothers, while we as older leaders were being impacted deeply. Some of the best and brightest in the Spirit-empowered movement were expressing their longing for intergenerational connection, as well as their hope that elders would trust them enough to empower their leadership. Their anger, frustration, and disappointment at the moral failures of leaders they once trusted spilled over into the room. Expressions were well-articulated and pointed. Love, affirmation, and covering were needed.

What was even more eye opening than this initial encounter was how many times it repeated itself. In several of our 2009–2010 Empowered21 “conversation” events, similar scenes unfolded. These insightful conversations convened on five different continents, with over 500 people from 54 nations and more than 15 different universities, participating in 17 unique conversations with Spirit-empowered leaders, scholars and new generation voices. During these events, we asked questions like: “What does it mean to be Spirit-empowered in the twenty-first century?” and “What steps can we take to en-

gage new generations in the Spirit-empowered experience?” Their answers helped us to assess present and future needs of the movement.

These “conversation” events were significant to our newly founded organization, as the input gathered is what would inform our direction for the next several years.<sup>57</sup> After the events concluded, the E21 Global Council synthesized the collective input into a mission statement for the network while also prioritizing the movement’s major needs around the world. It states:

***Empowered21 will help shape the future of the global Spirit-empowered movement throughout the world. We will do this by focusing on crucial issues facing the movement and by connecting generations for intergenerational blessing and impartation.***

The eight prominent themes that we collectively discerned as top needs of the movement as a result of these 2009–10 conversations are listed below, in order of priority.

## **LEADERSHIP CHARACTER**

The need for greater integrity and character among leaders of the movement was the most recurring theme during these early conversation events. Recent moral failures of prominent leaders within the Spirit-empowered movement left a strong distaste in the mouths of the next generation, and they were crying out for change. It was abundantly apparent that new generations craved godly leadership and longed for a restoration of trust. The next gen voices who spoke with such passion in the conversations stated again and again that they needed leaders who were authentic, transparent, and known for their unwavering integrity. In response to this significant need, Empowered21 has nurtured a strong commitment to integrity among all involved at the Global Council, Regional Cabinet, and committee levels of the network.

## **GREATER BIBLICAL LITERACY**

Over and over again, conversation participants spoke of a growing need for biblical literacy, while placing a special emphasis on the desire of younger generations for increased biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit and His work. They repeatedly mentioned that many of their current pastors did not preach or teach consistently on the Holy Spirit. This left a major knowledge gap for newer generations who attended these churches that were claiming Spirit-empowerment but not teaching (or many

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<sup>57</sup>. Empowered 21: Conversation Process in Preparation for the Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment in the 21st Century. PDF file. 2010.

times even practicing) it. The need for knowledge of biblical truth continues to escalate throughout Christianity, not just in the Spirit-empowered movement. Rob Hoskins, president of OneHope, an international Christian ministry dedicated to delivering God’s Word to each of the more than 2 billion children in the world, said, “Despite unprecedented access to God’s Word – more than at any other time in history – sadly, biblical literacy is on the decline.”<sup>58</sup>

Albert Mohler, historical theologian and president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, agreed that biblical literacy was lacking throughout this decade. He wrote: “Christians who lack biblical knowledge are the products of churches that marginalize biblical knowledge. . . . Pastors and churches too busy – or too distracted – to make biblical knowledge a central aim of ministry will produce believers who simply do not know enough to be faithful disciples. We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches.”<sup>59</sup>

Our conversations made it obvious: The problem of biblical illiteracy was being acutely experienced in the Spirit-empowered movement, especially in new generations hungry to know more about the Holy Spirit.

### **DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL FATHERS AND MOTHERS**

As mentioned previously, on every continent, at every single conversation event, with no pre-sensitization, each group used the term “spiritual fathers” many times. There was a sense of loss and loneliness we often call an “orphan spirit” that was consistently present. A heartfelt cry was emerging from the newer generations for intergenerational mentoring and connectivity. Young leaders longed for older leaders to mentor, shepherd, and love them. In 2013, a study conducted by the Barna Group further proved spiritual parenthood as one of this decade’s major needs. They found that nearly six out of every ten young people who had grown up in church walked away from it (and sometimes faith, altogether) during the first ten years of their adult life. Of those young adults, seven out of ten did not have a close friendship with an adult and nearly nine out of ten never had a mentor at the church.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>. Rob Hoskins, “Biblical Illiteracy: Contagious or Preventable?” *Rob Hoskins*, October 17, 2016, <https://robhoskins.onehope.net/biblical-illiteracy-contagious-or-preventable/>.

<sup>59</sup>. Dr. R. Albert Mohler, “The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It’s Our Problem” Albert Mohler, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, January 20, 2016, <https://albertmohler.com/2016/01/20/the-scandal-of-biblical-illiteracy-its-our-problem-4/>.

<sup>60</sup>. “5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church,” *Barna Group*. September 17, 2013, <https://www.barna.com/research/5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church/>.

Hearing these young leaders talk reminded me of the impact this specific need had on my own life. Because I was raised in a broken home without a natural father present, I had once related to the sense of loss they carried. It pushed me to study the topic further, and this inspiration and research resulted in the book *Father Cry*, which addresses this deep longing for fathers we hear in new generations.<sup>61</sup>

## **RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY**

Internationally, the harvest fields that seemed ripest were also those most in need of significant resources. In much of the two-thirds majority world, ministries were desperate for financial support; however, we noticed a distinct shift in how Spirit-empowered leaders believed this would be supplied. Instead of looking to the West to fund their evangelism efforts, churches and ministries around the world were witnessing God's provision for themselves within their region and context. This was a very significant shift in the Spirit-empowered movement.

## **EDUCATION**

The need for greater and more effective ministerial training for leaders within the Spirit-empowered movement was a central issue in numerous conversations. Many participants expressed a longing for higher education that would equip ministers properly for challenges unique to the twenty-first century. Many of the contemporary equipping and educational models were failing to adequately address and provide solutions to those challenges.

## **CONTEXTUALIZATION**

This need related to the desire for regions of the world to be less dependent on the West and more dependent upon God's work in their own region. A subsequent desire was that each area of the world should discern and address the needs of the movement in their regional context. The global structure of Empowered21 was our direct response to these expressions. Today, E21 has fourteen different regional cabinets living out the vision, mission, and purposes of Empowered21 within the context of their own individual regions. Contextualization has been key to the growth of E21 across the globe.

## **TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP**

It became increasingly obvious during the conversation events that the Spirit-empowered movement was in the midst of significant seasons of transition, both generationally and geographically.

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<sup>61</sup>. Billy Wilson, *Father Cry: Healing Your Heart and the Hearts of Those You Love* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen, 2012).

In nearly every group, new, younger leaders were emerging, while older, more veteran leaders were fading. This was creating tension within churches and ministries around the world, as both groups were struggling to manage transition dynamics. Our evaluation was that the entire movement was in an elongated “passing of the baton” moment and was in dire need of better processes to facilitate leadership succession. It was also noted appropriately that overall leadership of the Spirit-empowered movement was shifting from North to South<sup>62</sup>, with Asia and Africa leading the way in providing new paradigms for ministry. It was imperative to all involved in the discussions that we find solutions to help facilitate these intergenerational and intercontinental transitions more effectively.

## **RISE OF ISLAM**

In 2009–2010, one of the greatest global needs was how to advance the gospel in places where Islam is growing. These stressed regions of the world were undergoing the most intense spiritual warfare and persecution of any in the Spirit-empowered movement. Leaders expressed a need for fresh strategies, updated tools, and revised resources to help them become more effective in their efforts toward Kingdom expansion, even in Islamic strongholds.

## **SUMMARY**

The summary of these major challenges discovered during this conversation phase provided us with an issue map to follow in pursuit of helping shape the future of the Spirit-empowered movement.<sup>63</sup> This prioritization of needs in the movement also served to inform the agenda for our first ever Empowered21 Global Congress, which was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on ORU’s campus in April 2010.

During this congress, we provided a platform to address these issues, and following it, Empowered21 grew rapidly. E21 formed a large Global Council populated with the movement’s top leaders participating, fourteen regional cabinets on six continents, a Scholar’s Consultation, a Discipleship Commission, a Next Gen Network and a new Global Evangelists Alliance. All of these groups and efforts sought (and still seek) to carry out the vision, mission and purposes of E21 in answer to the needs of the fastest growing spiritual movement in the world, Spirit-empowered Christianity.

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<sup>62.</sup> Todd M. Jonson and Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Third ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), xvi.

<sup>63.</sup> “Empowered21: Conversation Process in Preparation for the Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment in the 21st Century,” PDF file, 2010.

We experienced much progress and growth regarding these challenges throughout the 2010–20 decade. Now, as we move into the third decade of this new millennium, we have found new issues that we must address. We will examine these present and future issues in the chapters ahead.

# [8]

## ISSUES FACING THE MOVEMENT NOW (2018–2020)

IN FEBRUARY 2019, Empowered21's Next Gen Network hosted a gathering of young leaders in Dubai called "40 under 40." These top-tier developing influencers represented seventeen countries and five continents. They came together to interact, encourage one another, forge relational unity, and grow. They also gave their input on contemporary issues the movement is facing. Duplicating methodology adopted during the E21 global conversations of 2009-2010, these Spirit-empowered, fresh voices took time to reflect on the movement's greatest needs one decade later. The Dubai "40 under 40" gathering followed a previous E21 next gen leaders gathering held in January 2018 in Miami, Florida. The Miami meeting also probed the movement's greatest needs as seen through the eyes of top-tier, young leaders from a broad spectrum of Spirit-empowered ministries.

This chapter summarizes the collective input received in these meetings, along with the input of hundreds of other next gen voices connected to Empowered21 through a variety of events. We have listed the top challenges of the Spirit-empowered movement again in order of emphasis, agreement, and passion. It is an interesting study to compare this list of eight top needs and challenges



as perceived by next gen leaders with the one made almost a decade earlier, during the birthing of E21. There are some similarities as well as significant differences.

## **BIBLICAL TRUTH**

Similar to the “Greater Biblical Literacy” need expressed ten years earlier, one of the most significant needs expressed for this decade is the craving for biblical truth. The present preaching trend of less Scripture and more application has left new generations longing for God’s Word and His eternal principles. This generation wants to hear *exactly* what Scripture says and understand what it means to their life situation. While their desire for pastors to preach and teach on the Holy Spirit remains, we uncovered the truth during our time together that new models will be vital to engage them in consistent Scripture reading, study, memorization, and meditation.

## **A DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL FATHERS AND MOTHERS**

Unsurprisingly, a cry for spiritual fathers and mothers continues to echo in this generation. In fact, the velocity and passion of this cry have increased over the last decade! In *Father Cry*, I talk extensively about this issue<sup>64</sup>, quoting experts such as David Blankenhorn, the founder of the Institute for American Values in New York City. He says, “This trend of fatherless is the most socially consequential family trend of our generation.”<sup>65</sup> And we see its effects blatantly, both in the natural and spiritual sense. Within the movement, horror stories abound of insensitive older leaders failing to serve as good spiritual parents, often creating more intimidation than inspiration in the hearts of their spiritual children. Many older leaders have yet to discern that new generations want to follow someone who serves as more of a “guide by their side” than a “sage on the stage.” This new generation needs spiritual parents who will walk with them, not just over them, throughout the days ahead.

The clear promise of Malachi 4:6 is that the hearts of parents will turn to children and the hearts of children will turn to parents. If this turning does not occur, Scripture warns us that destruction will be the grave result. However, where intergenerational connection, honor, and love *do* occur, God’s name will be exalted, blessings will be experienced, and the Kingdom of God will grow exponentially. From its inception, Empowered21 has committed itself to connecting generations for honor, blessing, and

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64. Wilson, *Father Cry: Healing Your Heart and the Hearts of Those You Love*.

65. David Blankenhorn, “Fatherless America,” *American Experiment*, January 3, 1993, <https://www.americanexperiment.org/reports-books/fatherless-america/>.

impartation. Our experience has been that where this happens, blessings abound, and the Holy Spirit works in powerful ways.

### **GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY**

This current, highly prioritized need within the movement reveals a major shift from the previous decade's list. Ten years after the initial Empowered21 conversations took place, contextualization was no longer a predominant topic. In fact, the opposite – global connectivity – was repeatedly mentioned. The participants conveyed their feeling that the world was now globalized, and that the Church must also connect globally. John Wesley's "the world is my parish" philosophy rang true for these young leaders, and they were resolute that the Church should focus on reaching people everywhere. This desire for worldwide connectivity is likely due to our culture's increase of cutting-edge technology and user-friendly social media. Because of these advancements, there are currently fewer cultural and regional divides than those once faced by previous generations. It is much easier for new generations around the world to think in similar terms because they have seen the same movies, sung the same songs, and many times, even listened regularly to the same preachers. In order to reach a new generation, the Church's thought processes and ministry structures *must* become more globalized.

### **NOMINALISM REGARDING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In every conversation group, this topic was huge. Participants spoke passionately about how the Holy Spirit has become so marginalized and de-emphasized that many ministries only claim to be Spirit-empowered (or Pentecostal-Charismatic) in name without contemporary proof of their confession. Over a decade ago, Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life surveyed Pentecostals in 10 countries, and in 6 of those 10, at least 40 percent said they do not speak in tongues as evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit,<sup>66</sup> which has undoubtedly led to much confessing without much professing. If the poll was were taken more recently, I estimate that the figure might be much higher!

Because tongues speech, prayer language, and spiritual gifts have been nudged aside, many from newer generations rarely witness these manifestations in their local church, and even fewer experience them on a personal level. So, why is this happening? Why has the work of the Spirit been pushed aside? There may be a variety of reasons ranging from fear and ignorance to a desire for control, but whatever the cause of this neglect, solutions must be found. A new generation is hungry for the depth

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<sup>66</sup>. Adelle M. Banks, "Poll Says Many Pentecostals Don't Speak in Tongues," *Christianity Today*, October 6, 2006, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/octoberweb-only/140-53.0.html>.

of spiritual power the Holy Spirit brings, and they are looking for leaders who can walk with them as well as lead them into this reality. According to these prominent next gen voices, the nominalizing of the Spirit's work is a very significant issue in the global "Spirit-empowered" church.

### **AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS**

In the past decade, many newer generations have struggled to comprehend the need for the local church, given their access to instant worship, preaching, prayer, and online community. Yet, these trends could be changing. Although Generation Z grew up with technology, 53 percent report preferring face-to-face communication over pseudo-relationships experienced through social media.<sup>67</sup> They *desire* real relationships and genuine community. The recent pandemic and the accompanying isolation of individuals globally has only served to feed this desire. However, Generation Z doesn't want just any kind of relationship or community. They are challenging the Church to be real, to cast off pretense, and to live honestly. They want us to recover the ecclesiology found in the book of Acts and throughout the New Testament of a Church striving for unity despite our imperfections.

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

In many instances, Spirit-empowered churches have failed to produce Spirit-empowered disciples. Because of this, the next generation senses a desperate need for new, intentional processes that will help individuals develop their relationship with Jesus. This specific challenge is what initiated the formation of the Empowered21 Discipleship Commission, whose work has been groundbreaking in this area. The commission has pursued a goal to create an outcome-based "age and stage" model for developing Spirit-empowered disciples.

At pre-school age, the focus is on *exploring* truth, because when studying the calling of the first disciples, we can see that first-century faith followed a pattern of belonging, becoming, and *then* believing. In this stage, we create environments that allow young children to explore the truths of faith in the safety of accepting relationships. Once children are elementary-school-aged, they are moved toward *embracing* the truths of faith in a personal way. During this time, moments of personal decision, encounter and application all take place. In middle school, the focus progresses to *experiencing* truths of the faith in everyday life. "What Bible verses have I experienced today?" becomes a daily question.

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67. Dan Schawbel, "Gen Y and Gen Z Global Workplace Expectations Study," *Workplace Intelligence*, September 2, 2014, <http://millennialbranding.com/2014/geny-genz-global-workplace-expectations-study/>.

Finally, the high-school-age group and young adults focus on *expressing* the truths of the faith to others through their identity as Christ-followers. By the time someone completes all four stages of this age-stage process of discipleship, a Spirit-empowered follower of Christ should be formed, or at least be forming. Young disciples (both age and stage) should be able to listen and hear God clearly, live life through experiencing Scripture, share their love with near ones beginning at home, and yield to the Spirit for intimacy, discernment, direction, and empowerment. This is the kind of process that will help to create strong Spirit-empowered disciples in the twenty-first century and beyond.<sup>68</sup>

### **GREATER EXERCISE OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

I've heard often that this generation longs to be "naturally supernatural." What this means is that they long to see gifts of the Spirit at work in their daily lives, not just in public church gatherings. New generations desire spiritual demonstrations that bring tangible results and are eager to witness how these results can impact culture and bring about social transformation. Because many in new generations have not witnessed spiritual gifts in operation, they will need to approach their experience with both a spirit of exploration as well as wise scriptural guidance. They are very hungry to witness what they read about in the book of Acts.

### **NEW STRATEGIES TO REACH NEW GENERATIONS**

It doesn't take an extensive study to determine something we all know to be true: Many, *many* churches in the Spirit-empowered movement are stuck in old paradigms, old strategies, and old ways of ministry. In order to successfully evangelize and resource the next generation, we must offer the Holy Spirit freedom to create new strategies, both through new ministry expressions in already-established churches and through new church plants designed from their inception to reach today's harvest. This becomes easier when we realize that Generation Z, the generation born after 1995, is the largest people group on earth today as well as in American history,<sup>69</sup> and is therefore the greatest spiritual harvest field of our time.

Gen Z is not only the largest generational group on earth, however; it is also arguably the most challenging. In his book *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*, James Emery White said that Gen Z is "the most influential religious force in the West and the heart

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68. "Spirit-Empowered Discipleship: Self Assessment of Discipleship Outcomes," PDF file, 2016, <https://empowered21.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Spirit-Empowered-Faith-self-assessment-S-89.pdf>.

69. "Generation Z: Latest Gen Z News, Research, Facts & Strategies," n.d. *Business Insider*, <https://www.businessinsider.com/generation-z>.

of the missional challenge facing the Christian church.”<sup>70</sup> In my opinion, Gen Z does present great challenges for the Church in the West, but it also represents the global Church’s greatest test and opportunity during this new decade. In some instances, we are witnessing this play out across Asia and Africa, as ministries that once blazed in revival now experience immense difficulty in reaching new generations. Many young people are leaving church seats empty because these congregations have failed to adapt their strategies to a new generation. In many instances, these young men and women love Jesus, but they are not able to relate to the local expression of the Body of Christ they are encountering. The global Church *must have* a strategy upheaval if we want to see new generations come to know Christ in a real and powerful way. God may be using some very unusual occurrences to initiate these changes.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began spreading across the globe, thousands of local churches were suddenly interrupted. Governments shut down public gatherings, believers were told to stay home, and pastors were left wondering how their churches would survive. The university where I serve was also disrupted significantly, with our classes moving to remote, virtual mode. In those beginning days of extreme uncertainty, my prayers were both inquisitive and intercessory. I vacillated between crying out, “God, help us” (or more accurately, “God, help *me*”) to asking “Lord, what do you want to do during this time?” We did receive God’s help in wonderful ways, and I believe I heard His voice in answer to my questioning. I received a strong impression (that I believe was from the Lord) that although God did not cause the pandemic we were experiencing, He would use it to move the Church into a new level of effectiveness. This was summarized in my heart with the terminology that God would use the restrictions and pain of the pandemic to teach the Church (and our university) “**a new way for a new day.**”

And this is exactly what happened. The creative energy of the Holy Spirit began to flow and ministries began operating in brand-new ways around the world: online church, parking lot church, drive-by church, prayer caravans around hospitals and places of care, etc. Those congregations who were prepared technologically were able to move quickly into a new season of ministry with many doubling their attendance (albeit virtually) within a few days. Although some churches saw a decline in their income, several others who were already keyed in on reaching new generations actually saw giving and finances go up. Suddenly, ministers who had resisted using technology in their church found themselves online, ministering to their congregants and finding “a new way for this new day.” Gen-

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<sup>70</sup>. James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 11.

eration Z's need for an encounter with Jesus Christ shouts for us to continue finding new paradigms of ministry in the days ahead. The creative energy experienced in the Church because of a killer virus unleashed on the earth must continue. These *new days* require that we find *new ways*!

## **SUMMARY**

As we conclude our discussion of the issues currently facing the Spirit-empowered movement, it's important to mention that while these contemporary issues came from next gen leaders, they resonated with older leaders as well. Several "spiritual fathers" from the E21 Global Council were present in the conversations and voiced significant agreement with these conclusions. Every person in each of our conversations, no matter their age, acknowledged the truth that the world is changing, and so the movement must change as well. These are key and critical concerns to address if we want to see this biblical, Holy Spirit-led movement thrive in the remainder of the twenty-first century.

# [9]

## THE NEXT MOVE OF GOD

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT! Twice a week, more than 3,000 young adults from over 100 nations and all 50 states gather to express their praise, seek God's face, and communicate their love for Him in our biweekly twice-weekly Oral Roberts University chapel services. If you ever feel discouraged about the future, down on the next generation, or worried about what will happen to the Spirit-empowered movement in the twenty-first century, I urge you to attend one of these chapels, either live or online. Our services are arguably some of the most encouraging gatherings on the planet. You will be blessed as you witness a hungry, earnest generation encountering God's presence. The result is life-changing!

As president of ORU, I am privileged to serve in a living laboratory of next generation, Spirit-empowered expression. When God spoke to Oral Roberts about building the university, He directed him to "Build Me a university. Build it on my authority and on the Holy Spirit."<sup>71</sup> As far as we know or have learned, ORU is the only major university in the world that states emphatically that it is built on the

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<sup>71</sup>. Ken Walker, "ORAL ROBERTS: Healing Evangelist Who Founded ORU," *Charisma Magazine*, 2015, <http://www.charis-mamag.com/anniversary/40-who-radically-changed-our-world/23926-oral-roberts-healing-evangelist-who-founded-oru>.

Holy Spirit. We remain committed to this foundation, more than 50 years since our establishment. We are continuing to learn what it means to be a premier educational institution while also living in the dynamic of God's power.

Journeying with our students daily has not only given me greater hope for the Spirit-empowered movement's future, but it has also provided me with insight into their hearts. Unequivocally, I believe this new generation of Spirit-empowered young adults makes up the greatest generation in the history of the Christian Church. I don't mean to insult or offend those of us from previous generations, but I am convinced this is true. God has endued Generation Z with potential unlike any other people group in history. They are gifted, determined, hard-working, committed, technologically savvy, globally connected, and serious about God. These traits have poised them to impact the Church and world more than any other generation has to date. While writing this book, I took some time to reflect on some of my up-close, daily Gen Z experiences, combining those with my global involvement regarding the movement. I came to the deep conviction that we are approaching a new wave of Holy Spirit power – a “fourth wave,” so to speak. Let me explain further.

Spirit-empowered believers, sociologists, and scholars have often used the concept of three waves to describe major outpourings of the Holy Spirit, beginning before and continuing after the Azusa Street Revival. David Barrett, missionary statistician and editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, says, “Historically, the Renewal can be seen to have arrived in three massive surges or waves whose origins are traced . . . to the years 1741, 1907, and 1970.”<sup>72</sup> Barrett would see the First Great Awakening as a precursor of the Spirit-empowered movement.

While I agree with him that the call to holiness by John Wesley, the public evangelism techniques of George Whitefield, and the visceral religion espoused by Jonathan Edwards all began paving the way for what the Holy Spirit did at Azusa Street, I believe something unique was initiated at that specific moment in history. So, I want to begin at Azusa Street in discussing three waves of Spirit glory over the last 120 years.

Emil Bartoş, Reader PhD at the Faculty of Baptist Theology, wrote, “Undoubtedly, the most important Christian spiritual movement of the last decades (some would say of the last century) is the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. . . .” He describes these waves or moves of the Spirit that have formed Spirit-empowered Christianity as separate events with similar experiences, saying that while we don't

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<sup>72</sup>. David Barrett, “The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal in the Holy Spirit, with Its Goal of World Evangelization,” *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, Volume 12, Issue 3 (1988): 119–129.



believe that the Day of Pentecost is replicable, we do believe that “the mighty spiritual manifestations that have accompanied the event are repeatable and desirable for all the Christians throughout Church history.”<sup>73</sup> These repeated manifestations, though in different forms, are what together make up the three waves of the Spirit-empowered movement.

### **THE FIRST WAVE: CLASSICAL OR HISTORICAL PENTECOSTALS**

The first wave flowing out of the Azusa Street Revival led to the establishment of many historic Pentecostal denominations and churches. Groups like the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God of Prophecy, the Pentecostal Church of God, and the International Church of the Foursquare, along with many others, were all formed out of this first wave. These “Pentecostal” movements usually adhere to the teaching of initial evidence, which is a belief that when a person becomes filled with the Holy Spirit, they will speak in tongues, and this is the initial sign or evidence they have been filled. They also usually trace their spiritual roots to some form of the nineteenth-century holiness revivals (therefore, the connection to the First Great Awakening) and connect significantly with the Azusa Street Revival.

### **THE SECOND WAVE: CHARISMATICS**

As briefly mentioned in the earlier part of this book, on Sunday, April 3, 1960, Episcopal priest, Rev. Dennis Bennett, shared with his thriving Van Nuys, California, congregation that he had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and now spoke in other tongues.<sup>74</sup> This shocked his parishioners and peers, many of whom weren’t quite sure how to handle this startling revelation. For several weeks, the story spread like wildfire, intriguing some and offending others. Eventually, Bennett decided to resign from his pastorate so as not to cause further controversy, moving to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Seattle. Though he left Van Nuys, the story of Spirit baptism continued to spread. In fact, the report garnered media attention in local periodicals and newspapers and was eventually published in well-known magazines such as *Newsweek* and *Time*.<sup>75</sup> This was the event many historians view as the spark that would ignite what we now know as the Charismatic Movement.

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<sup>73</sup>. Bartos, Emil, “The Three Waves of Spiritual Renewal of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement,” *Ecumenical Review Sibi*, Volume 7, Issue 1 (2015): 20–42.

<sup>74</sup>. “The Rev. Dennis J. Bennett: 10/28/17–11/1/91.” n.d. DENNIS BENNETT BIOGRAPHY, Rita Bennett Ministries & Christian Renewal Association Inc, accessed February 13, 2020, <http://www.emotionallyfree.org/DBbio.html>.

<sup>75</sup>. “The Rev. Dennis J. Bennett: 10/28/17–11/1/91.”

During the years that followed, millions of church members outside the historic Pentecostal circle also encountered supernatural renewal in the Holy Spirit. In fact, this second wave seemed to touch at least a portion of every major denomination's adherents, leading them to experience the baptism of the Spirit and demonstrations of spiritual gifts. Many experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in new and dynamic ways, including those involved in the Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Mennonite, and Lutheran churches.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal was one of the most notable movements to come out of this second wave, reportedly stemming from an experience had by Ralph Kiefer and William Storey at Duquesne University. In 1966, on a quest for a spiritual awakening, they visited a prayer meeting where they were taught about the Holy Spirit, received their heavenly prayer language and began speaking in tongues. They shared their testimony with others willingly, and their story spread to students at the University of Notre Dame<sup>76</sup>, then to Michigan State University, and then to the University of Michigan<sup>77</sup>, as many began to seek and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From there, the Renewal continued to spread, eventually making Catholic Charismatics the largest Charismatic movement in our day.<sup>78</sup>

### **THE THIRD WAVE: NEO (NEW)-PENTECOSTALS AND NEO (NEW)-CHARISMATICS**

Peter Wagner was the first person credited with using the term “third wave” in a 1983 interview for *Pastoral Renewal Magazine*. He used it to denote new expressions of Spirit-empowered Christianity taking place later in the twentieth century. He said, “I see historically that we’re now in the third wave. . . . I see the third wave of the eighties as an opening of the straight-line evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that the Pentecostals and Charismatics have experienced, but without becoming either Charismatic or Pentecostal. I think we are in a new wave of something that now has lasted almost through our whole century.”<sup>79</sup> These new, third-wave churches did not exactly fit with either the historical Pentecostals or denominational Charismatic groupings, though there were similarities to each. Many of these new, independent and “networked” churches were apostolic in their leadership models. They exploded toward the conclusion of the twentieth cen-

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<sup>76.</sup> Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *The Divided Flame: Wesleyans and the Charismatic Renewal*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers), 46.

<sup>77.</sup> Allan Heaton Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism, Second Edition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 46.

<sup>78.</sup> Dr. Todd M. Johnson, “Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity,” *Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary*, March 25, 2020, <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/gcts-sandbox/blog/pentecostal-charismatic-christianity/>.

<sup>79.</sup> C. Peter Wagner, “A Third Wave?” *Pastoral Renewal*, (July—August 1983), 1.

tury and have continued to expand in number and influence during the first part of the twenty-first century. In a recent study by Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo, the following numbers of adherents were identified in each of the three waves.

TABLE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATICS BY WAVE, AS OF 2020.<sup>80</sup>

Wave Number	Total Number, as of 2020
First Wave	123,688,000
Second Wave	268,288,000
Third Wave	252,284,000

Source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed July 2019.

## A FOURTH WAVE?

As we contemplate the future of the Spirit-empowered movement, it seems only fitting that we ask ourselves: ***Will there be a fourth wave?*** Will there be a fresh expression of Spirit-empowered Christianity that is so distinct and unique that it will require new terminology to define? Personally, I not only believe that there will be a fourth wave, I also believe we are at the beginning of this fresh move even now (though it may take a few years to discern this wave's unique attributes). In prophetic honesty, I also realize that we could simply be witnessing a renewal of the other waves, and that what we are seeing will not form into a new, definable part of the movement. Either way, one thing is obvious: A fresh, global move of the Holy Spirit *has* begun with new generations, and it *will* change the world forever.

One great joy I have as president of ORU, beyond speaking in chapel regularly, is teaching a class each year called "Spirit-empowered Living." This foundational class is required for every student and usually has an attendance of close to one thousand. It provides an exciting learning environment in a lecture setting as we walk through what it means to live the Spirit-empowered life and experience God's presence together. Every year, we have many students receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit during this class. One of the treats and challenges of the class is periodically answering questions from these extremely sharp students.

<sup>80</sup>. Johnson and Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Third ed., 936.

The hunger of these students for the things of God is tangible, and their desire for Him to use them is exemplary. Of course, we have stragglers and strugglers, but the core of the class is a great delight. Students come from multiple streams of the Spirit-empowered movement, ranging from historic Pentecostal congregations, to a multitude of Charismatic ministries and new kinds of churches. Some are even from non-Spirit-empowered fellowships, so it's a special honor to introduce those students to the Holy Spirit's work in a new way. As I mentioned before, ORU students come from over 100 nations and a plethora of ethnicities, and this class certainly reflects those statistics. It also depicts a significant cross-section of the global Spirit-empowered movement. I recently asked this diverse group of students to help me understand their perspective on what a new move of the Holy Spirit might look like in their generation. I asked them:

- *What would be a few defining characteristics of a fourth wave?*
- *What words might be prominent in describing a fresh move of the Holy Spirit?*
- *What will this new, Spirit-led movement occurring in Generation Z and beyond look like?*

First, it's important to note that almost unanimously, the students agreed that they need and want such a move of God, and that it is happening even now among them. The words they used to describe this move varied (as you can imagine with a group of 1,000 extremely diverse students), yet several clear trends emerged as they described the potential for a fourth wave. Five terms that aptly summarize the vast majority of responses are: 1) unity, 2) worship, 3) wonders and works, 4) unashamed boldness, and 5) persecution. These five themes lead the way into our next chapter.

[10]

## FIVE SIGNS OF THE COMING WAVE

WHEN I WALK THE HALLS AND SIDEWALKS OF ORU'S CAMPUS, I'm often reminded of why Generation Z is known as the first digital native generation in our world's history. Nearly every one of them is holding an iPhone, iPad, or other electronic device in their hand (sometimes more than one!). It's almost as if technology serves as an extension of who they are. They spend many waking hours of their day on various devices, which connect them instantly to people all around the world. Perhaps this is why they strongly desire to see a globalized Church. While these students are certainly proud of their own heritage, families, and communities, they also take seriously accepting others from different races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. They place little value on denominational divisions and rarely even think or speak in these terms.

Our students jointly represent over fifty identified denominations (though most are from independent or non-denominational churches), but they continually prove their belief that the walls between God's people should be broken down until we can all flow and work together as one. They seem to intuitively understand that it's this unity that allows the work of God to reach new places and pen-

etrate difficult-to-reach areas, and it's this unity that will expand Spirit-empowered Christianity and the Kingdom of God into the new decades of the twenty-first century.

### **UNPRECEDENTED UNITY**

Unity is powerful! When God's people are united, they can do the impossible. Take the biblical story of the battle of Jericho, for example. Jericho was imposing. Its soaring double walls appeared impenetrable as they towered above the people of Israel, including their new leader, Joshua. The city seemed unconquerable and victory seemed impossible. God's command was clear. A united strategy would be required to bring down this stronghold. All of Israel (including those who lived on the east side of the Jordan River) were instructed to march together, blow their trumpets in unison, and shout in one accord after completing their march around the walls. This united action brought dramatic breakthrough, and the impossible became possible. The walls fell. The stronghold was broken. Jericho was taken!

Another Old Testament witness to the power of unity is found in the account of the capture of Jerusalem recorded in 2 Samuel 5. Although Joshua and the Israelites entered Canaan with the intent to claim all of the Promised Land including Jerusalem, the city remained a Jebusite stronghold of resistance for over 400 years. Israel coped with the resistant Jebusites in Jebus (Jerusalem). They lived with them and worked around them, but they could not conquer this important city for four centuries. Jerusalem was finally taken when all of the tribes united under their anointed king, David. Unity under the king gave them the courage and favor needed to bring down this long-held fortress and make it their capital. Jerusalem went from being a stronghold of the enemy to the most important earthly city in history.

The final biblical example of the power of unity I'll mention is found in Acts 6. At this time, a significant conflict in the early church was dividing the Grecian believers' widows and the Hebraic believers' widows. The conflict arose because of a perceived prejudice in the distribution of resources and quickly became a stark departure from the unity the church in Jerusalem shared immediately following Pentecost. The apostles solved this dilemma by appointing leaders from the Grecian minority group (good lesson for conflict resolution!) to oversee distribution to the widows. Then, the apostles were free to continue with prayer and the ministry of God's Word. They found a solution that brought unity out of conflict. Acts 6:7 tells us the result of this new unity. "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." This is the first time in the New Testament that we see a significant number of priests believing

in Jesus. When the level of unity in the church increased, their level of effectiveness also increased. I am confident that fresh unity among believers today will allow us, too, to break spiritual strongholds and witness new advancements of the gospel. Unity worked for the early church in the book of Acts, and unity will work today.

Throughout history, unity has served to foster increased penetration of the gospel into new, unreached areas of society. We can liken the effect of spiritual unity to that of a laser. Most of the light we observe daily is dispersed light, which radiates from a source creating waves that move in multiple directions through space. As necessary as this light is for us to go about our day, its power to penetrate is limited, because it has been dispersed. Lasers are different. Lasers unify waves of light and focus them in one direction. This focused unity is powerful. Lasers can be used to cut through steel and penetrate places where dispersed light could never reach. The secret to a laser's potential is in the unity of light's direction and wave length they produce.

Like a laser, unity among believers allows the message of Christ to penetrate hard-to-reach people groups while creating a multiplication effect for our ministry efforts. Leviticus 26:8 proves the power of unity and agreement when it says, "Five of you will pursue 100, and 100 of you will pursue 10,000; your enemies will fall before you by the sword." Working together releases God's presence to do what one of us working alone could never do. This *supernatural synergy* not only brings the power of two together – it multiplies the effect beyond the ability of the united parties. Something supernatural happens in unity. God is pleased, and His blessing on united effort produces the supernatural synergy that allows us to accomplish more than we ever dreamed possible.

Unity is critical for the times we live in, yet it is also important to recognize that divergence and diversity have served a divine purpose within the Spirit-empowered movement over the last century. Like a mighty river diverging into multiple streams, the movement has blessed billions of people. Each subsequent diverging stream of the movement brought new people into God's Kingdom and extended the reach of the Spirit's work. The Spirit-empowered movement is diverse with multiple expressions and streams across the earth. Yet, as we move into the future, there is a growing sense in new generations that convergence is now needed more than divergence.

I envision that a church moving from diversity toward unity will have a spiritual effect similar to the physical effect of moving from the use of atomic bombs to hydrogen bombs. Atomic bombs work using a principle called fission, which causes atoms of certain heavy metals to split, resulting in incredible energy. When fission works completely, 2.2 pounds of uranium-235 can create as much

energy as would be produced by 34 million pounds of TNT. This principle was behind the devastating power of the atomic bomb used toward the end of World War II. In Hiroshima, the atomic bomb released 13 kilotons of force, killing more than 200,000 people either directly or indirectly.<sup>81</sup> The power of fission is certainly astounding, but the power of fusion is even greater! Hydrogen bombs are much more powerful than atomic bombs because they unleash the multiplied power of unity. The principle of fusion is that a release of energy occurs when the atoms of certain heavy metals converge instead of split. When these atoms converge (or unite), it releases amazing energy. Hydrogen bombs are capable of producing an effect 1,000 times more powerful than that of an atomic bomb. Even so, I believe the power of unity will reveal multiplied effectiveness and release overwhelming spiritual power when compared to the power of diversity in the days ahead.

### **JESUS' PRAYER FOR UNITY**

We should anticipate that during this new season of renewal, the Holy Spirit will work aggressively to answer Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17. During the years since my visitation from the Lord regarding a second flood, I have contemplated and meditated on this prayer many times. In it, we find three simple insights I consider critical regarding Christian unity. First, we must understand that believers' unity should be *relational*. Jesus' prayer was that we would be one as He and the Father are one.

In John 17:20–21, He said, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” This Inter-Trinitarian unity is founded in relationship flowing from perfect love and submission. My personal opinion is that the unity we are experiencing and will experience more in the days ahead will be an ever-increasing relational unity birthed and bathed in love and submission to one another.

The twentieth century was a season for *organizational* unity within the Spirit-empowered movement. Denominations, parachurch ministries, and constituted groups formed over and over again as the move of the Holy Spirit was organized for greater effectiveness. Yet, what we are witnessing in the twenty-first century is a new era of *relational* unity. Individuals and constituted groups are rising above their traditional divisions to love and mutually submit to one another, humble themselves, and build relational bonds that tie the Body of Christ together around the world. Christian unity requires love and humility!

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<sup>81</sup>. Curtis LeMay and Paul Tibbets, “Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – 1945,” *Atomic Heritage Foundation*, June 5, 2014, <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-1945>.



The second simple insight from John 17 is that while unity is relational in scope, it must be **missional** in intent. Jesus prayed that because of our unity, the world would believe God had sent Him. John 17:23 continues, “I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” Relating to one another in love is of utmost importance, yet God has something more in mind than just embracing unity for the sake of unity. After years of experience with convening Christian leaders, we have discovered that relational networks deteriorate unless they have a united mission. When our unity is focused in a common missional purpose, relationships deepen and the Kingdom of God advances. Christian unity requires a purpose!

The third insight from John 17 is that true unity can only happen in an environment filled with God’s presence and glory. John 17:22 says, “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. . . .” We hear much about relational unity and shared mission, but many times we leave out this critical element to the fulfilling of Jesus’ prayer. Simply put, “God’s glory is the rest of the story.” When God is at work, He brings us together in ways we could never forge by human activity alone. Without His presence and the work of the Holy Spirit, our attempts at unity are futile and limited to human ingenuity. Our horizontal efforts to relate and share in mission will experience frustration, and our witness will be limited without the vertical connection with heaven required to experience His glory. I serve with numerous groups where this is the missing element. We are all in the room, but God’s glory is noticeably missing. Because of this, our true unity and effectiveness is limited. His glory will make us one. Christian unity requires Christ’s presence!

## **WORSHIP**

For several decades now, a worship revival has been taking place in the earth and it shows no signs of abating anytime soon. I love it! Technology has helped move this worship explosion into a global phenomenon, as millions of young believers all over the world connect through song. Every continent has experienced a fresh wind of praise. Stadiums have been packed, YouTube channels have been energized, and album and song sales have grown exponentially. The desire of this generation to experience God personally and hear His voice in worship has been unlike anything Christianity has ever witnessed. Contributors to our Spirit-empowered Living class conversation noted that worship is especially loved by Gen Z because it is a personal, participatory activity.

Through worship, this generation can express themselves and individually experience God’s presence without needing anyone or anything else. An individualized, customized experience even in the

midst of a crowded arena or sanctuary is a dream come true for many young believers. Every Christian movement in the world has been affected by this worship revival with even the most liturgical groups embracing new songs and new forms. This has especially been true in the Spirit-empowered movement, where worship bands have overtaken preachers both in popularity and in the number of lives being reached. Though there are numerous things within the worship movement that beg for correction and refined theological direction, we should count on this worship revival continuing in a new wave of renewal in the earth. This generation sees the experience of worship becoming even more integral to their Christian experience. Indeed, a worship revival may be one of the key signs to this fourth wave.

### **WONDERS AND WORKS**

Generation Z consistently desires a stronger connection between wonders and works. They fully believe that this new move of God will contain an increase in the miraculous but also are committed to greater ministry among those who are poor and broken. There is a growing sense that we will experience gifts of the Spirit making a tangible difference among marginalized populations and bringing cultural impact. This is due to the fact that newer generations see no competition between social ministry and supernatural ministry; instead, they see the horizontal and vertical dimensions of Spirit-empowered living intersecting to bring the greatest good and reveal Jesus' love in new ways. Perhaps this is why among these young people, 26 percent aged 16 to 19 volunteer on a regular basis, 60 percent say they want their work to make a difference<sup>82</sup>, 30 percent have already donated to an organization, and 1 in 10 say they want to start a charity to help the marginalized.<sup>83</sup> They are others-focused, and I believe that both the miraculous and their ministry focus will work together to mark a fourth wave.

### **UNASHAMED BOLDNESS**

Our students used the word “unashamed” to describe the type of boldness their generation will use to carry this new revival. They will not be afraid to let the world know who they are in Christ. In a generation filled with more self-publishers than consumers, this is fantastic news. The possibility of young men and women using every platform available for witness brings an enormous amount of hope for our future. But along with this hope, students recognize that their boldness can bring on hardship as

82. Sylvan Lane, “Beyond Millennials: How to Reach Generation Z,” *Mashable*, August 20, 2014, <https://mashable.com/2014/08/20/generation-z-marketing/>.

83. Aimee Meade, “‘Philanthroteens’: Young People Who Use Their Pocket Money to Change the World,” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media Limited, June 19, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2015/jun/19/philanthroteens-young-people-who-use-their-pocket-money-to-change-the-world>.

well. Still, they do not seem fazed by the backlash boldness may bring. Persecution isn't something they shrink away from, as we saw blatantly in the heroic efforts of one of ORU's late alumni, John Allen Chau.

## **PERSECUTION**

Things were winding down in my office in anticipation of the 2018 Thanksgiving weekend when I received a text from our Vice President of Advancement who oversees the communication efforts at ORU. Attached to her text was a newspaper story along with the shocking words: "This ORU alumnus was recently martyred." Over the next few hours and into Thanksgiving weekend, details reached us of what I consider the most amazing missionary story of the twenty-first century (at least thus far). John Allen Chau was killed by Sentinelese indigenous people on North Sentinel Island, a small remote island located in the Bay of Bengal and under the governance of India, while trying to reach them with the message of Jesus Christ. Before Thanksgiving weekend had ended, his story had gone viral.

The North Sentinelese people, whom John so desperately wanted to reach, are considered by many the most unreached people group on earth. They have no Bible in their language, because no one else speaks their language, and no one has been able to get close enough to them to learn it. It is actually illegal in India for anyone to visit the Sentinelese. This tribe lives completely isolated (by their own choice, according to the Indian government), with no modern conveniences, no healthcare, no provision from outside sources, and no contact with the world. In many ways, North Sentinel Island is a human Jurassic Park, created and protected by the Indian government.

In the fall of 2018, John Chau set out on a journey to share the saving love of Jesus with this isolated tribe, detailing his entire trip in a personal journal. As recorded in an extensive article in *GQ Magazine*, the morning before he was killed, he penned a letter to his friend, saying, "I think I might die. . . . I'll see you again, bro – and remember, the first one to heaven wins." John did indeed give his life attempting to bring the good news of Jesus to unreached people. Fishermen on a ship offshore recorded seeing his body dragged through North Sentinel sand, with a rope tied around his neck, seemingly lifeless. Along with the worldwide explosion of John's story came a worldwide explosion of criticism regarding his efforts.<sup>84</sup> But following the first barrage of critical reports and articles about John, a clearer story unfolded, giving way to a better understanding of his journey and a deep appreciation of his conviction and love for the lost.

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<sup>84</sup>. Doug Bock Clark, "The American Missionary and the Uncontacted Tribe," *GQ*, Condé Nast, August 22, 2019, <https://www.gq.com/story/john-chau-missionary-and-uncontacted-tribe>.

As a teenager, John grew confident God was calling him to reach unreached peoples, and over time discerned he was to specifically attempt to reach the North Sentinelese. He attended ORU, which was his father's alma mater, and graduated cum laude with a B.S. in Exercise Science. While John attended the university, he traveled on two different mission trips to Cape Town, South Africa, leading one of them. He worked as an outreach coordinator on the missions staff, making it clear to all who knew him that he viewed his time at ORU as training for his call to full-time missions. He was a wonderful, dedicated young man. He read mission-oriented books consistently and even trained his body for the mission field. One humorous-but-revealing story from his dormmates conveyed that some mornings, they could hear John screaming from the shower.

"John! Why are you screaming?" they would ask.

He would reply, "Because they don't have warm showers on the mission field!"

John was taking a cold shower to get himself ready for missions work. They would get a good laugh, but his friends knew that his commitment to pursuing what he believed was his life's purpose was no joke, even then. After college, John zeroed in on discovering how he could reach the Sentinelese. He underwent rigorous preparation both physically and spiritually, readying himself for the trip. When we reviewed John's journey following his death, we realized that he may have been one of the most prepared missionaries ever as he engaged an impossible task. He was also one of the most courageous. He understood that trying to reach the Sentinelese was dangerous and could mean his death. Yet, he went anyway.

John Chau is lovingly remembered on ORU's campus as perhaps the most well-known alumnus in our history. I am convinced that future generations will view his story as one of the great missionary stories of our time and will be inspired by it for decades to come. Many will use it as an example of the courage required to reach unreached peoples on earth in the twenty-first century. John's brave actions serve as a wonderful example of the heart and dedication many of our Gen Z believers have today. This generation seems to understand that a new move of the Holy Spirit will mean persecution and even death for some. Still, they are ready!

So, let me ask the question again. Will there be a fourth wave of Spirit-empowered Christianity in the twenty-first century? Our students' answers as well as stories like that of John Chau shout a loud affirmation to this inquiry. Yes, we will see greater unity in the church than we have ever known. Yes, worship encounters will continue to escalate across the globe. Yes, works and wonders will move to-

gether, bringing practical and supernatural hope to the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Yes, an army of unapologetic evangelists and missionaries will rise to use every available platform to make Jesus known no matter the personal costs. And finally, yes, a fourth wave of spiritual power is coming in the twenty-first century!

[11]

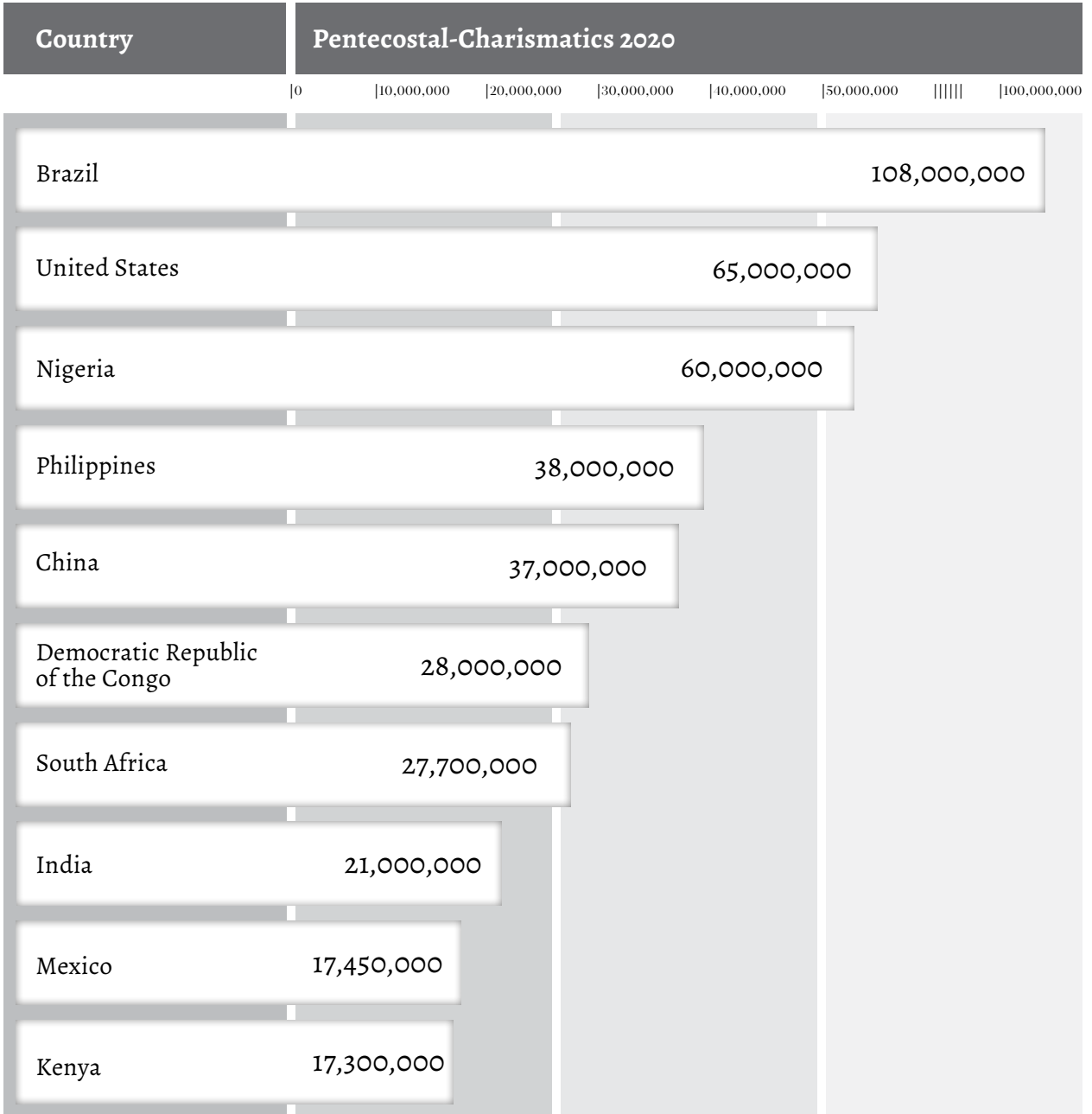
## A G R O W I N G M O V E M E N T

THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED MOVEMENT is currently the fastest-growing religious and Christian movement on earth. According to data from Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo's forthcoming book, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: the Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, there are approximately 644.3 million Spirit-empowered believers in the world today. From 1900 to 2020, the movement grew at a 5.97 percent growth rate, faster than both Christianity and the world's population.<sup>85</sup> Some maintain that it is the fastest-growing Christian movement ever. Just over 110 years after the Azusa Street Revival, these results are nothing short of supernatural. According to Johnson and Zurlo, the top ten nations that currently have the most Spirit-empowered adherents are displayed in Table 2.

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<sup>85</sup> Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: the Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement in the 21st Century* (2020), 30.

TABLE 2. COUNTRIES WITH THE MOST PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATICS, 2020.<sup>86</sup>



Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed July 2019).

<sup>86</sup>. Johnson and Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: the Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement in the 21st Century*, 31. All references are to the pre-publication manuscript. Forthcoming from ORU Press, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2020.

The top nations of Spirit-empowered believers as a percentage of the total population are displayed in Table 3.

TABLE 3. COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATICS, 2020.<sup>87</sup>

Country	% 2020
Zimbabwe	52.3
Brazil	50.5
Guatemala	50.1
South Africa	47.2
Puerto Rico	45.2
Eswatini [formerly Swaziland]	41.3
Vanuatu	37.4
Ghana	37.4
Chile	35.2
Philippines	34.6

(Limited to countries with over 100,000 Christians)

Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed July 2019).

Yes, this means that one out of every two people you meet in Guatemala today attends a Spirit-empowered congregation and embraces the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And as exciting as that is, we can

<sup>87</sup>. Johnson and Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: the Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement in the 21st Century*, p. 32.



expect it to get even better! Current predictions are that this worldwide growth of Spirit-empowered Christians will continue into the future from 644 million in 2020 to 1 billion by 2050.<sup>88</sup>

## **GROWING IN INFLUENCE**

It is obvious that the Spirit-empowered movement is growing numerically. However, it is also growing in influence, extending to every sphere of society. From politics and sports to media and business, Spirit-empowered people continue to make an amazing impact. One example of a Spirit-empowered, high-ranking politician is Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia. He attends Horizon Church in Sydney, Australia, and has remained strong in his walk with Christ even in the public eye. Another example is 2018 NCAA football champion Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa (now with the Miami Dolphins), who shared that praying in tongues helped him stay calm during the championship game (which they won).<sup>89</sup> The Major League Baseball Hall of Fame's first-ever unanimous inductee, New York Yankees reliever Mariano Rivera, is a Panamanian Spirit-empowered believer open about his faith. Margaret Court is perhaps the greatest women's tennis player of all time and now pastors a Neo-Charismatic church in Perth, Australia. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who is the highest-ranking church official in the United Kingdom, was quoted by the BBC as stating: "In my own prayer life, and as part of my daily discipline, I pray in tongues every day – not as an occasional thing but as part of daily prayer."<sup>90</sup> The list could go on and on as God raises up Spirit-empowered believers to places of authority where their influence is seen and felt.

Spirit-empowered leadership is also growing throughout Christianity. The World Evangelical Alliance is heavily influenced by the Spirit-empowered movement and so are many other once predominantly evangelical groups. In the Cape Town 2010 Congress on World Evangelization, a significant number of Pentecostals and Charismatics represented their nation, and although many felt they were underrepresented on the program, their presence was felt significantly. Seminaries, parachurch ministries, broad Kingdom initiatives, and every area of Christian expression are witnessing the growing influence of Spirit-empowered believers.

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<sup>88.</sup> Johnson and Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: the Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement in the 21st Century*, 9.

<sup>89.</sup> Jeannie Law, "Alabama Quarterback Prayed, Spoke in Tongues to Keep Calm During National Championship Game," *The Christian Post*, January 11, 2018, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/alabama-quarterback-prayed-spoke-in-tongues-to-keep-calm-during-national-championship-game.html>.

<sup>90.</sup> "Archbishop Justin Welby Prays 'in Tongues' Every Day," *BBC News*, January 21, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-46945022>.

## **GROWING THEOLOGICALLY**

The movement is also experiencing growth in theological thought and relevance. There are currently at least twenty internationally recognized journals connected with Spirit-empowered universities, organizations, or ministries, and most have been established within the last two decades. Many publishing companies have even created entire divisions specifically to support and serve Spirit-empowered churches and leaders. A quick search on Google Scholar for “Pentecostalism” produced over 40,000 entries, and a search for “Pentecostal movement” produced over 64,000 entries. There is no doubt: Pentecostal scholarship is growing within the Church. Pentecostals-Charismatics have progressed from having just a token presence at broad Christian theological and ecumenical tables to, in many instances, being one of the predominant voices. This is the case at the Global Christian Forum, where the Pentecostal World Fellowship is one of four anchor groups joining the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance.

The need for ongoing theological growth in the Spirit-empowered movement can be compared with Isaiah’s directive found in Isaiah 54:2 to “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, **strengthen your stakes.**” Isaiah paints a word picture of a growing tent that needs stronger tent pegs (stakes) to hold it against the storm. As the tent grows larger, the stakes or pegs must go deeper. In order for the Spirit-empowered movement to continue expanding and growing numerically, those of us who are part of this movement must grow as well, especially theologically. Our theological understandings must deepen if the breadth of our ministry is to continue expanding amidst today’s societal storm. This is the only way that the Spirit-empowered tent will avoid being blown away by the winds that are against it.

## **GROWING CHALLENGES**

Along with any significant growth within any organization or system, new challenges arise that must be faced, and so it is with the expansion of the Spirit-empowered movement. As I gaze into the foggy horizon before us, I see a few challenges more clearly than I see others.

### ***EXCLUSIVITY VS. INCLUSIVITY***

One of the potential hindrances to the movement’s growth is our current generation’s love of inclusivity. Because of the pluralistic view that has surrounded them their entire lives, this generation at times rejects the exclusive claims of Jesus in favor of more inclusive paradigms. This causes people to accept the false idea that there are many ways to God. Jesus’ statements on this matter are clear.

He is *the* Way, *the* Truth, and the Life, and He is the *only* Savior of the world. These exclusive claims are critical to all of Christianity, especially in relation to world evangelization.

Confidence in the singularity of Jesus as Son of man and Son of God will be a prerequisite for anyone hoping to bring others to salvation amidst the religious milieu of the twenty-first century. Acts 4:12 states: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” As the Spirit-empowered movement joins other Christian believers in standing for this truth, we must prepare to face ridicule, criticism, and persecution, even by other Christians.

### **PRIMACY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Another challenge I see on the horizon before us is helping people understand the primacy of the local church. In the twenty-first century, we can take part in worship, prayer, generosity, and even some measure of community without ever leaving our home, or for that matter, being part of a local church. During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, believers around the world proved this over and over again. We can now listen to the best messages of the best preachers in the world (whoever they are) repeatedly at our leisure. We can watch the best worship sessions from our cell phones and share the most intimate struggles of our hearts via social media or text message with Christian friends in other countries. We have a plethora of charities and causes we can give to without ever writing a check or filling out an offering envelope. All we have to do is load our information once and click a button. We can even do so in the middle of the night if we want! No need for an offering bucket or offertory song. So, why go to church?

Pastors are usually equipped with standard answers to this question. These “regular” answers focus on scriptural injunctions that believers should gather together, that we need one another, that Christianity is not a “do-it-yourself” proposition, that community is powerful, that Jesus promises His presence where two or three are gathered together. These and many other answers are given regularly. They are solid and point people back to God’s intent for the Church. Still, I believe we will need a fresh focus on this issue to convince this relationally distanced generation that they should be connected at and with a local church.

I disagree with several leaders who have stated over the years that “the local church is the hope of the world.” *Jesus* is the hope of the world, but it is in the local church that His ministry to the world is best expressed, as the Body of Christ lives out His commandments in a local context. The local church

is not optional or just *one* of God's ways. It is God's way, established by Jesus, lived out by the apostles and absolutely critical to making disciples in the nations. In my opinion, we will need to help new generations understand this primacy in new and dynamic ways if the Spirit-empowered movement is to continue to flourish.

## **TONGUES**

Every year in my Spirit-empowered Living class, the most controversial, question-generating and interactive moment we have is when I teach from the Bible on individual prayer language and speaking in tongues. Though most of our students come from churches that believe in glossolalia (or at least once did), I'm constantly amazed at how many of them react strongly when I teach on this subject. It further proves to me something I already knew intuitively and statistically, which is that we have been losing the battle on this key teaching for several generations now. A significant portion of the responsibility for this failure rests on a growing number of church leaders who claim to be Spirit-empowered, but fail to teach the Spirit-empowered lifestyle.

History verifies how dangerous a lackadaisical attitude to primary fundamentals can be to forthcoming revivals. Many prior movements in Christianity that started with a blaze, cooled significantly as they moved away from their distinctiveness and uniqueness. Five years before his death, in his "Thoughts upon Methodism," John Wesley famously said, "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect having the form of religion without the power."<sup>91</sup>

The connection of Spirit baptism to tongues speech or prayer language was central to the Azusa Street Revival. It is not a stretch to say unequivocally that there would simply be no Spirit-empowered movement today without this connection. Experiencing one's personal Pentecost at Azusa Street meant speaking in tongues. One of the key sparks that ignited the Charismatic Renewal revolved around tongues speech when Dennis Bennett confessed he had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in his heavenly language.

Pentecostals and Charismatics have theologized tongues speech in a variety of ways ranging from initial evidence, to the operations of a gift, to prayer language. However, despite these differences, everyone in the movement has embraced tongues as a legitimate expression of Spirit baptism and has agreed that this experience is available for today's believer. When I teach on this subject, many of my

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<sup>91</sup>. John Wesley and Herbert Welch, *Selections from the Writings of John Wesley*, (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1901), 127.

students sit wide-eyed in amazement, as we examine historical evidence where people were baptized in the Holy Spirit with tongues speech as the most consistent sign. In many instances, I leave these classes questioning whether pastors anywhere teach on this anymore. This is a big challenge for the Spirit-empowered movement.

The arguments against speaking in tongues have been around awhile, but they have made a strong comeback in our contemporary context. My students' thought processes tend to echo those of their pastors and parents who may have "thrown the baby out with the bath water," so to speak, regarding glossolalia or prayer language. Arguments often begin by sharing habitual hypocrisy situations in which someone in their local church family has feigned to speak with the tongues of angels while living like a fallen one (the devil!). To be honest, this argument against tongues makes absolutely no sense. Just because someone is a hypocrite, it does not negate the reality of an experience documented in the book of Acts and throughout Christian history. It's like saying that just because someone recklessly hits a pedestrian while driving a car, we should all stop driving cars because car driving is evil!

The next argument tends to be: "If God used this person, and they didn't speak in tongues, then why do I need to?" My perspective on this is, of course God uses people who have not yet experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They hear from God, grow great churches, and reach people for Christ. Throughout this class I often refer to one of our recommended books for the class, *The Holy Spirit and You*, an insightful guide to the Spirit-filled life written by Dennis and Rita Bennett. They explain well the difference between the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, people were moved by the Holy Spirit and were able to operate in several manifestations such as having words of knowledge, experiencing the gift of healing, and discerning spirits. It wasn't until the New Testament, at Pentecost, that they received the gifts of tongues and interpretation.<sup>92</sup> However, I often wonder how much *more* fulfilling and effective their public ministry (and their own personal walk!) could have been with this added dimension. Other rebuttals are statements like, "I just don't want to be weird," "I believe that a prayer language is real and available; it just isn't for me," "I tried, but I couldn't receive my prayer language," or "I think other manifestations of the Spirit are more important."

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<sup>92</sup>. Dennis J. Bennett and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You: A Guide to the Spirit-Filled Life*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1971), 80.

Despite the fact that these age-old arguments have resurfaced strongly in new generations, I have also discovered that more people have experienced this specific dynamic of the Spirit than you would expect. I have met these “closet Charismatics” all over the world in Evangelical churches, in political offices, on airplanes, in interchurch committees, in grocery stores, and even at ballgames. Millions and millions of people have personally enjoyed the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit. It seems critical at this moment that those who have been blessed with this supernatural communication capacity learn to speak up about it in the future. Praying in the Spirit or speaking in tongues was a normative Christian practice in the New Testament, and it is vital for us in the twenty-first century. When we pray in the Spirit, we receive unique revelation, intimate communion, and supernatural edification. What a blessing and necessity in our day!

So, how do we approach this challenge that is obviously before us of helping new generations understand the importance and blessing of Spirit language without coming across as dogmatic or simply pushing for doctrinal conformity? How do we lead people into this amazing blessing of supernatural communication without alienating unbelievers or making everyone think we are weird? How do we help this generation live full of the Holy Spirit, express the gifts of the Spirit, and connect with heaven in fresh ways? I will share just a few tips to help us address this challenge, but I realize these are only rudimentary and abbreviated suggestions.

### **HELPING NEW GENERATIONS EMBRACE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

First and foremost, we must determine to live a Spirit-empowered life ourselves, unashamedly depicting for the next generation how prayer language is demonstrated in a biblical way.

Second, we must understand that coming generations are watching our actions more than they are listening to our words. When a person who has lived with integrity before younger generations is unashamed of the work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life, it verifies Scripture and helps new generations overcome the hypocrisy argument. Don't underestimate the power of your testimony, nor what happens when those around you see the Holy Spirit operating in your life. Never be afraid to let others hear you pray in tongues unless your life doesn't back up your testimony. In that case, please stay quiet!

As president at ORU, I've seen this truth of the power of example lived out on campus consistently. Students who vehemently questioned prayer language as freshmen often became strong proponents of it by the time they graduated. I would like to assume their spiritual progress on this issue was due to my stellar teaching, but I'm very aware that this is probably not the case (although I do hope my teaching helped some)! More likely, their embrace of the Spirit's work in their personal life occurred as a result of rubbing shoulders with a Spirit-empowered friend who developed into a spiritual guide for them on this subject. People learn best from experience and examples.

Third, the Spirit-empowered church must reacquaint itself with the basic teachings that have led multiplied millions to experience the Holy Spirit in the dynamic of tongues over the last century. Even just a simple walk through the five occasions of Spirit baptism in the book of Acts identifying the who, what, when, where, and how will help those who are sincere about receiving this gift.<sup>93</sup>

Fourth, the Spirit-empowered movement needs to reimagine our vocabulary in a way that connects with new generations. We must build bridges and not barriers by the words and terms we use. During the Charismatic Renewal, vocabulary around the experience of Spirit baptism shifted from the terminology of "speaking in tongues" to the use of terms like "praying in the Spirit." It seems that this shift allowed new audiences to more readily embrace the work of God without any perceived baggage. Both of these statements are biblical; it is just that one connected with newer generations better than the other did. I am convinced that new vocabularic bridges must be built that will help this generation cross into this powerful experience. I am not an expert on what terms and words will help the most, but I do believe that the creative power of the Spirit will help us find a way.

If you are a parent, pastor, leader, coach, or influencer of any kind for the next generation, I hope you comprehend what a valuable opportunity we have. New generations are hungry. They desire the supernatural. They long to know and experience God. They want the truth and the Spirit of truth. We can help them encounter Him in profound and personal ways. Pastors, I specifically want to plead with you on behalf of the entire Spirit-empowered movement: *Please* preach on the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit unashamedly. *Please* assist this generation in understanding the amazing treasure and power of God available to them. *Please* offer opportunities somewhere within the life of your church for young people to experience the bless-

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<sup>93</sup>. There are at least five occasions where people are baptized in the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Acts 2:1–4, Acts 8:14–17, Acts 9:17–19, Acts 10:44–48, Acts 19:1–7.

ing of releasing their prayer language, speaking in tongues, and connecting with God supernaturally. And *Please* pass the baton of Spirit-empowered experience to your children, grandchildren, and all those who follow you. Our future depends on it.



[12]

## PASSING THE BATON

INDONESIA IS UNDENIABLY FACILITATING one of the greatest revivals of our era. The Christian Church in Asia has exploded, growing rapidly in three of the four regions of Asia, with the highest growth rate in South Asia and Southeastern Asia, where Indonesia is located.<sup>94</sup> If you visit an Indonesian Spirit-empowered church, you will experience God's presence in tangible ways. Spirit-filled Indonesians are not ashamed of supernatural manifestations. The release of the Spirit in their meetings is life-changing and could help many western ministries more fully experience Christ's power.

Indonesian pastor Niko Njotorahardjo serves as co-chair of Empowered21 Asia and has led numerous E21 events across the continent over the years. Pastor Niko often talks about a third Pentecost flowing out of Asia to touch the world. He describes Acts 2 as the first Pentecost, the Azusa Street Revival as a second Pentecost, and the current revival in Asia as a third Pentecost. After experiencing God's presence strongly in Indonesia recently, I must confess that Pastor Niko may be right. God is moving mightily across the continent of Asia, and it is blessing the world. I can't help but wonder

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94. Johnson and Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Third ed., 11.

what would happen globally if none of us were ashamed of the Holy Spirit's work or the power that is released when we pray in the Spirit.

## **STRATEGIES FOR SPIRIT-EMPOWERED SUCCESSION**

No matter if we are leading a revival in Indonesia, pastoring 2,000 or 200 people, or raising three kids at home, all of us play an integral part in helping pass the baton of Spirit-empowered living to the next generation. Several years ago, I was in a meeting designed to discuss spiritual awakening. During the gathering, one of my ministry colleagues leaned across the table and said: "Once you get to the age of 40, it should all be about the next generation anyway." This statement struck my heart. I was over 40 years old at the time and began to realize my purpose was not about me or my generation; rather, it was about new generations and finding ways to help them carry the baton of fervent Christianity into the future. As I conclude my thoughts for this volume, I want to give a few steps and insights that may help us accomplish our task of seeing next generations run faster, further, and more fervently for Jesus than we have done thus far.

### ***LESSEN HYPOCRISY***

One step we must take is to ***lessen hypocrisy*** in the Spirit-empowered church. We all know it is impossible to dispel hypocrisy completely, as this has existed in the Church since the days of Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira. People have confessed what they did not possess for centuries. Spirit-empowered Christianity has been plagued with this since Azusa Street, but so have other expressions of Christianity. So, how can we diminish or mitigate the reproach of moral failure in future generations? I believe we must model spiritual integrity and spiritual vitality at the same time. In other words, those most on fire among us do not have to be the most extreme or morally inconsistent. Likewise, spiritual maturity does not mean we must give up our fire or passion for Jesus and acquiesce to a "less than" normal.

Pentecostals do not have to act peculiar, and Charismatics do not have to act crazy. Yes, the King James version of the Bible says that we are a "peculiar" people (1 Peter 2:9), and we *are* in that we are God's most unique possession in all the world. But, this does not mean we have to act weird. You can be used by the Holy Spirit, perform miracles, preach an uncompromising gospel, lay your life down for Jesus, and all the while point to the reproach of the cross while avoiding moral scandal and reproach yourself. If people read or hear more about us personally than they do about Jesus because of our ministry, then we are on the wrong track. We are called to make Christ famous in the earth, not to make the front pages or a national newscast because of our outlandish behavior. The idea is not to

conform to the world, but rather to avoid driving the world away from Jesus by our own inconsistent and hypocritical actions. Like the apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 2:15, “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.”

### ***DISCOVER AND ADOPT NEW VOCABULARY***

Another way to assist new generations in taking up the Spirit-empowered baton is to ***discover and adopt new vocabulary*** for teaching them about the Holy Spirit. Terms like “speaking the heart language of God,” “supernatural communication,” “Kingdom language,” “worshipping in the Spirit,” “tongues of fire,” “connecting with the eternal,” “the language of intimacy,” and “connecting with heaven” may all help new audiences experience a first-century phenomenon in the twenty-first century. This is exactly what happened when we adopted the term “Spirit-empowered,” which we use consistently throughout this book. This terminology became prominent in our vocabulary because of research we conducted with the next generation, specifically college students.

Our study discovered that words like “Evangelical,” “Pentecostal,” and “Charismatic” were not descriptors new generations would normally use to self-identify. Instead, younger minds associated more with terms like “Spirit-filled,” “Spirit-led,” and most prominently, “Spirit-empowered.” These inquiries among college-aged students are what helped us decide on the name “Empowered21” (young leaders added the 21 to stand for the 21st century) for a relational network focused on the future of the movement. This does not mean we should never use the terms “Pentecostal” or “Charismatic.” (We use these terms numerous times in this book, and I am honored to serve as a leader in the Pentecostal World Fellowship.) However, it does mean that new language sometimes gives us an opportunity to communicate meaning in fresh ways with new audiences. This may help us more readily overcome preconceived negatives people have associated with certain terms.

For instance, in our surveys, we discovered that new generations associated the word “Evangelical” with negative political messages, and for the most part did not want the baggage they felt it carried. In my opinion, we are witnessing and will continue to witness a vocabularic evolution in Christianity as new generations move into leadership. This has always happened in God’s work. One simple illustration in my lifetime is that we have moved from “the singing of hymns” to “song service” to “worship service” to just “worship” in churches I have attended. Which of these terms is biblical? All of them, I think!

Obviously, “speaking in tongues” is a very biblical statement, but we must remember that it is not the only terminology used to describe glossolalia in Scripture. There are other ways the Bible refers to this experience, and we must not be so dogmatically determined to use our preferred language style that we miss out on an opportunity to reach the next generation. If using terms like “speaking the heart language of God,” “allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through you,” or “groaning in the Spirit” helps someone understand and embrace the power of God, then as long as the terminology agrees with Scripture, let us by all means explore its usage. We must find ways to build bridges rather than create barriers, even with our vocabulary.

### ***RECONNECT PURITY WITH SPIRITUAL POWER***

Another way we can help Generation Z embrace a Spirit-empowered lifestyle is to ***reconnect purity with spiritual power***. We should note that just one decade ago, the top need rising out of the Empowered21 conversations around the world was leadership character. This desire for leaders who were authentic, pure, and holy was substantial. It was so important that it emerged as the perceived number-one need in the movement. I was very surprised that in our recent polling of young leaders on the top needs for this decade, this issue was rarely if ever mentioned. From the top of the list to not even on the list in one decade is quite a dramatic change! There are probably a few reasons for this. Perhaps the movement has done a better job of vetting and disciplining those who are morally loose or who have abused their leadership authority through sinful practices. Or perhaps the movement’s leadership is more righteous and holy than we were ten years ago. I hope both of these are true, but I tend to believe there may be another more alarming reason. Perhaps we have just decided to accept moral failures among leaders as normative and part of the journey.

One of the highest values new generations embrace in today’s spiritual leaders is authenticity. In many instances, leaders who exhibit transparency regarding their deepest struggles with sin in very open ways are revered by this generation even more than those who are striving to live morally pure lives. Obviously, all have sinned, and we all identify with the inward battle to keep our hearts right, our actions integrous, and our motives pure in a defiled world. Yet, I believe this strong desire among new generations to find a leader who identifies with their moral struggle and who seems more at their level spiritually is pushing us in a direction of diminishing effect. These trends have opened the door for considerable wanderings among many Spirit-empowered believers regarding lifestyle issues and have broadened the range of behavior deemed acceptable.

Divorce and remarriage, sexual promiscuity, drunkenness, voyeurism through a variety of media, addiction to pornography, personal greed, foul language, and abhorrent attitudes sadly seem accepted by some as simply part of any leader's personal journey. Popular worship bands and notable young preachers who leave an "amazing" church service to go to the local bar and drink hard liquor into the night damage testimonies. Ministers whose multiple marriages and promiscuity get overlooked because they can draw a crowd or keep political connections leave even godly people wondering. Pastors who lie about and misuse church funds for personal gain cause the world to question what the Spirit-empowered Christian life is really all about.

Though we must certainly reject the legalisms of the past, we must also reject the licentiousness of the present. A new call for this generation to reconnect purity and power is in order now. If we are to reach every person on this planet for Jesus, then we must be among them, yet different from them. No, we are not to sit in God's seat of judgment over our peers, but we must take Paul's words in Romans 12:2 seriously. We must not "conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing" of our minds. In other words, we should keep the call for leadership character a high priority as we seek to live as pure, Spirit-empowered believers in the twenty-first century. As leaders, we must indeed share our struggles, be authentic, and live transparently, but we must also be sure to share our victories over those struggles so that this generation knows God's call to purity can be answered in the affirmative. Our impact on the world and the level of spiritual authority we have will be in direct proportion to the purity we embrace. Leadership in God's work is a high calling and requires a pursuit of spiritual integrity.

*"Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer [leader] desires a noble task. Now the overseer [leader] is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect" (1 Timothy 3:1-4).*

### **EMBRACE OUR IDENTITY WITH HUMILITY**

We can also help lead new generations toward a Spirit-empowered lifestyle by modeling how to **embrace our identity with humility**. It is increasingly evident that the Spirit-empowered movement is experiencing an ever-escalating role of leadership within the global Christian community. We have come into our own, moving from the "other side of the tracks," so to speak, to places of authority and prominence. During this season of favor, it is important to ask ourselves, "How will we handle

this new role?" I pray we will not engage with our Christian brothers and sisters from a place of pride nor feel the need to seek their approval of our identity.

Our best posture for these days of growing influence is the one Jesus took while on the earth...that of a servant. The future should find us on our knees with a towel and basin, asking our brothers and sisters in Christ how we may serve them more fully. We must not be ashamed of who we are, nor of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that make us unique. Neither should we cause offense by flaunting spiritual gifts just to call attention to ourselves as if we were spiritual elites. We are called to engage in dialogue with other Christians and say yes to the opportunities God gives us for leadership at the tables of the Christian Church. We need the entire Body of Christ if we are to reach every person on earth. A movement that selflessly serves the entire Church could help inspire the greatest evangelistic thrust in history! Let us be that movement.

### ***TRANSITION RELATIONAL UNITY TO SHARED MISSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS***

Finally, we can help connect this new generation to a Spirit-empowered lifestyle **by transitioning relational unity to shared missional effectiveness**. As you have read in this book, Spirit-empowered believers have made great progress over the last several decades in building relationships and connecting together. Yet, in many instances, we have remained in our separate missional camps, connected only by friendship. In the twenty-first century, I personally believe we will see this new level of relational unity transition toward unity in mission and perhaps even in organization. Tangible cooperation and initiatives that reduce duplication of effort and maximize Kingdom resources for good will escalate as new generations less concerned about our traditional lines of division move into leadership.

In the last two decades, the largest corporate mergers in human history have taken place, from the AOL-Time Warner merger in 2000, to the Dow Chemical-DuPont merger in 2015, to the very recent Walt Disney Company-21st Century Fox merger. Dozens of other multi-billion-dollar mergers have taken and are taking place, with thousands of smaller mergers occurring regularly. The world gets it! Synergy can increase the power and reach of an industry so that two are better as one. Though some mergers work better than others, they are all pursued with an intent to improve effectiveness, save resources, increase influence, and maximize profits. In this way, the world system seems ahead of the Church, but I believe we will see the Church catching up in the days ahead. I foresee mergers of denominations, large church networks, mission organizations, seminaries, universities, publishing entities, worship labels, media networks, etc., as the Holy Spirit does His work in uniting us to

maximize our efforts for world evangelization in this century. New generations are hungry to see this happen, and by God's grace, it will.

### ***PRIDE: OUR ENEMY***

The chief enemy of Christian unity is and always has been pride. Spiritual and missional unity will always be difficult to achieve because of the humility and mutual submission it requires. However, when achieved, unity is powerful and world-changing. It is worth the struggle. Unity is a magnet for God's presence and a prerequisite for His greatest blessing.

*"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore" (Psalm 133:1-3).*

Anointing, freshness, blessing, and favor are all experienced as a result of unity. There is a popular quote that says: "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he does not mind who gets the credit." Ronald Reagan had a framed plaque with this saying on his Oval Office desk when he was President of the United States. Many people attribute this quote to him; however, the statement has several variations and quite a long history, including similar proclamations by President Harry Truman, Charles Montague, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, and a host of others. An on-line group called *Quote Investigator* believes this statement may have originated in 1863 with a Jesuit priest named Father Strickland.<sup>95</sup> One thing is certain: No one can take credit for the quote, or they will negate its meaning! What would happen in the Kingdom of God if it simply did not matter to us who gets the credit? Our limitations would be broken and Jesus' vision for us could be completely fulfilled. This is possible, but it will take a new baptism of humility in the Body of Christ.

One of the greatest examples of humility leading to unity and blessing is that of William Seymour during the Azusa Street Revival. Seymour did not preach in a grand cathedral or even in a beautiful church. Instead, he preached on the bottom floor of the Azusa Street Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, in a 40' x 60' two-story structure, which had most recently been a horse stable.<sup>96</sup> "Redwood planks supported by nail kegs" served as the first pews, which were "arranged in a square, facing the center of the building." Throughout the revival, Seymour stood on top of a wooden packing crate

<sup>95</sup>. "A Man May Do an Immense Deal of Good, If He Does Not Care Who Gets the Credit," *Quote Investigator*, October 5, 2018, <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/12/21/doing-good-selfless/>.

<sup>96</sup>. Dr. Eddie Hyatt, *Fire on the Earth*, (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2006), 6.

covered with a piece of cloth, which served as his pulpit. Frank Bartleman, a Pentecostal writer who attended the Azusa Street meetings, said that “Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoe boxes, one on top of the other [which served as the mission’s pulpit]. He kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there.”<sup>97</sup>

Repeatedly, as the congregation and their leader humbled themselves before God, the glory filled the building. Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Westerner, Easterner, rich and poor all experienced God’s glory together. At Azusa, as in John 17, the glory was the rest of the story. As mentioned before, Bartleman said that at the Azusa Street Revival, “the color line was washed away in the blood [of Jesus Christ].”<sup>98</sup> We all emphatically “amen” this statement, yet I wonder if we have fully embraced what allowed this unity to happen: *humility*. At Azusa, when God’s people rejected pride, God’s uniting presence was strong. And the rest is history.

## CONCLUSION

The Spirit-empowered movement is truly amazing. The growth and impact we now see in every nation on earth is something our forefathers could only have dreamed of. Yet, I anticipate that the greatest days of spiritual power and evangelistic effectiveness for Spirit-empowered Christianity are not in our past, but in our future. Getting to this future will require supernatural power in dimensions we’ve yet to experience. A fourth wave is needed. God is ready! The Holy Spirit is moving! New generations are emerging! And the harvest is ripe! Now is the time to humble ourselves and unite for these amazing days of opportunity when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth ***as the waters cover the sea.***

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<sup>97</sup>. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 73, 93.

<sup>98</sup>. “Pentecostalism in North America,” *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, April 28, 2020, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/pentecostalism-north-america>.



