

# Holistic Pneumatology in Mission

## Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement

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### Introduction

At first glance, Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement<sup>1</sup> may seem very different. One seems to reflect a peaceful and quietly pious approach to life and worship while the other is known for outward expressions of praise and exuberant worship, especially in Majority world contexts such as Africa and Latin America. However, a closer look reveals many similarities between the two, especially in the area of spirituality and mission. Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement both developed as renewal movements within Christianity—in the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries, respectively—and common themes on pneumatology and mission are found in the histories of both. This article compares these two movements and the similarities found in their understandings of the work of the Holy Spirit and how those understandings relate to missional engagement.

To begin, I will first discuss Anabaptist mission history and theory, including some basic understanding of the role and work of the Holy Spirit

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1 I use the term “Pentecostal-charismatic” as a generalization of both organized Pentecostal denominations and movements within existing traditions such as mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches, and other non-denominational movements that developed during the twentieth century. It is understood that there are many historical forerunners and streams that led up to this particular time period, including Anabaptism. However, the focus for this discussion will remain in the context of current discussions on pneumatology and the general understanding of the importance of spiritual gifts and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that empowers believers for ministry and mission. For further information see footnote 45 below.

(pneumatology). I will then use this material in dialogue with the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, which places strong emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. Once these comparisons are made, my discussion will shift to the role of pneumatology and how that relates to a holistic approach in mission theory and praxis that brings together the spiritual world and material realities. Two other themes within this holistic pneumatology include the importance of lay participation and ecumenical unity through the work of the Holy Spirit.

This discussion is intended to add to a growing body of work that considers pneumatology as an integral part of mission theory and praxis. This is especially true for sharing the Christian faith in the Majority world, as the center of Christianity has shifted away from Northern and Western domination to the Global South and East.<sup>2</sup> As holistic pneumatology is examined for similarities within Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, a renewed sense of Christian spirituality will begin to emerge. My intent here is to renew awareness of pneumatology that exists in these traditions so that there is a deeper understanding of how to engage with spirituality that is more prevalent in the Majority world and often in our own cultural contexts.

## Anabaptists and Mission Theory

To understand the relationship between pneumatology and holistic mission theory, it is important to begin with a brief overview of the Anabaptist tradition and its mission practices. The term *Anabaptist* includes several denominations,<sup>3</sup> and much of the information to be considered here comes from the Mennonite tradition. However, Wilbert Sherk contends that historical

Anabaptism and contemporary Mennonitism are not synonymous.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, we will begin by examining the roots of the Anabaptist tradition. Anabaptism developed out of the sixteenth-century Reformation with followers who “had broken away from Roman Catholicism but were also out of step

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2 For additional discussions, see Albert W. Hickman, “Christianity’s Shift from the Global North to the Global South,” *Review and Expositor* 111, no. 1 (February 2014): 41–47; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). This is a small representation of works that are discussing the changes taking place in global Christianity.

3 These include Amish, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Brethren, and others that find their origins in the Anabaptist tradition.

4 Wilbert R. Sherk, *By Faith They Went Out: Mennonite Missions 1850–1999* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2000), 111.

with the main Reformers.”<sup>5</sup> The early development of the movement included “more rigorous application of the teachings of Jesus by [the Anabaptists’] emphasis on discipleship”<sup>6</sup> and understanding of “the church as a voluntary community”<sup>7</sup> based in love in human relations rather than being linked to the state church. Anabaptists chose to meet together with like-minded believers instead of being tethered to the confines of a specific state-ordained church or a reformed model of the same.

David Bosch notes this growing tension between Anabaptists, the Reformation movement, and the Roman Catholic Church not only within the church and state relationship but also in the area of mission. In the sixteenth century, the Reformation movement was more concerned with renewing the Roman Catholic Church than replacing it. The focus was reforming the existing church rather than pursuing a Pauline view of missionary activity outside of Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> For this reason, Anabaptists “pushed aside with consistent logic every other manifestation of Christianity to date: the entire world, including Catholic and Protestant church leaders and rulers, consisted exclusively of pagans. All Christianity was apostate; all had rejected God’s truth.”<sup>9</sup> As part of the Reformation movement as a whole, Anabaptists agreed with standing in protest against corruption, clergy abuses, and self-serving theology. However, this became more about changing church structure rather than dealing with “heart” issues such as believers baptism instead of infant baptism, separation from rather than submission to the state, and the importance of acknowledging the inner working of the Spirit in the priesthood of all believers rather than believing it to be limited to the professional clergy.<sup>10</sup>

The early Anabaptists rejected the canon law, or the scholarly interpretation of scripture all enforced by the sword of the state, in favor of the authority found in biblical interpretation within a gathered community.<sup>11</sup> Doug Heidebrecht argues that one of the significant contributions early Anabaptists made to the development of Mennonite traditions was a model of biblical study

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 246–47.

9 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 247.

10 Conrad L. Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit: A profile of Anabaptist Churches in the Global South* (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald, 2012), 155.

11 Doug Heidebrecht, “Toward a Mennonite Brethren Peace Theology: Reading the Bible through an Anabaptist Lens,” *Direction* 43, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 230.

and theological reflection that anticipated “the active involvement of the Spirit within the community when it gathers around the Scriptures.”<sup>12</sup> This suggests several things about pneumatology within the foundations of the Anabaptist movement. As Anabaptists focused on the involvement of the Spirit, they saw a holistic need to reform both the practice of Christianity in the church and its relationship to the state. Additionally, the early Anabaptists’ holistic pneumatology moved the interpretation of scripture beyond the exclusive right of educated clergy, to include the laity as they gathered together to understand the Bible. Charles H. Byrd argues that Swiss Anabaptists “insisted that the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit be present in any true Christian church,” and Pentecostal practices appeared very early in the Swiss Reformation.<sup>13</sup> This focus on the Spirit provides a link between sixteenth-century Anabaptism and twentieth-century Pentecostalism.<sup>14</sup>

In the midst of turmoil in sixteenth-century Europe, caused by the upheaval of the church-state relationship breaking down within medieval Christendom and the threat of a Turkish invasion of Europe, “Anabaptists were forced to develop their theology in an openly hostile environment that denied them political legitimacy.” This adds to the theory that they developed their holistic pneumatology as they “confronted and challenged the social, religious and political” standards of their day. Because of their decisions, Anabaptists were “sought out, persecuted, jailed, dispossessed, exiled, and put to death by Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic cities and rulers.”<sup>15</sup> The marginalization they experienced allowed them to think outside the traditional framework of the established church and seek the active working of the Spirit within both the individual and the gathered community.<sup>16</sup> Heidebrecht refers to the Anabaptists’ understanding of the active presence of the Spirit in both individual

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12 Heidebrecht, “Toward a Mennonite Brethren Peace Theology,” 230.

13 Charles H. Byrd, “Pentecostalism’s Anabaptist Heritage: The Zofingen Disputation of 1532,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28, no. 1 (2008): 50. Byrd makes connections between the early Swiss Brethren as part of the sixteenth-century European Reformation and the term Pentecostalism that typically refers to the spiritual phenomenon that took place in the early twentieth century. He argues that the Swiss Anabaptist emphasis on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of spiritual gifts among Christians “reflect[s] Pentecostalism in the modern sense of the term” (50), even though it took place five hundred years before the modern movement came into existence.

14 *Ibid.*, 49.

15 Heidebrecht, “Toward a Mennonite Brethren Peace Theology,” 229–30.

16 *Ibid.*, 231.

and community as a reunification of the work of the Spirit and the interpretation of scripture.<sup>17</sup> This “lively pneumatology” allowed for the interpretation of the scripture to be mediated by the Spirit; the relationship of word and Spirit together provided divine illumination for proper understanding for “outward public proclamation.”<sup>18</sup> Inner transformation and connection to community provided a “necessary connection between the outward proclamation of the Gospel and the inward illumination and conviction of the Spirit as he [invited] people to respond to God.”<sup>19</sup> Some have argued that there is evidence of Unitarianism and an Antitrinitarian stream within the early Anabaptists.<sup>20</sup> Howard Bender contends this was due to the lack of a well-defined theology of the Trinity, the result of untrained writers who relied on a simple interpretation of the biblical text.<sup>21</sup> Of course this was not true for all Anabaptists, as many were theologically trained and decidedly non-Trinitarian in their doctrine. Robert Friedman contends that “Antitrinitarians were (and still are) intellectually ambitious” as they rely on their own reason for theological discourse.<sup>22</sup> Although there was some theological diversity, Anabaptists were strongly Trinitarian and remain so in the present age.<sup>23</sup>

Forced marginalization—a result of persecution mentioned above—and response to the work of the Spirit led Anabaptist Christians to “regard all of Germany as well as the surrounding countries as mission fields.”<sup>24</sup> No longer bound by territories and specific parish assignments, the Anabaptists’ “wandering[s]

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17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Harold S. Bender, “Unitarianism,” 1959, *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, accessed February 3, 2017, <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Unitarianism&oldid=143778>.

21 Ibid.

22 Robert Friedmann, “Antitrinitarianism,” 1953, *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, accessed March 27, 2017, <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Antitrinitarianism&oldid=144727>. Friedmann provides a brief historical overview on Antitrinitarianism, citing persons such as the former Catholic priest Adam Pastor, who took an early stance against Trinitarianism within the Anabaptist movement in the sixteenth century. Although this article was written in the 1950s, I use it here to show the variant views held within Anabaptism, where both “Unitarian” and Trinitarian theologies existed.

23 A. James Reimer, “God (Trinity), Doctrine of,” 1989, *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1989, accessed February 4, 2017, [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=God\\_\(Trinity\),\\_Doctrine\\_of&oldid=143584](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=God_(Trinity),_Doctrine_of&oldid=143584).

24 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 246.

. . . infuriated the Reformers.”<sup>25</sup> In contrast to the Reformers, Anabaptists considered the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) to be a central and binding command, including it in their confessions of faith and reciting it in their court testimonies more than any other biblical text. Bosch states that “they were among the first to make the commission mandatory for all believers.”<sup>26</sup> The early Anabaptists had a “strong missionary consciousness,”<sup>27</sup> and their call was to live in this tension with the world, submitted to the reign of Jesus Christ as spiritual and human reality.<sup>28</sup>

The historical background of the Anabaptist movement provides the basis for what can be seen in the current understanding of missional practice of denominations such as the Mennonite Church USA and the Mennonite Brethren. Shenk makes a distinct separation between Anabaptism and the early Mennonites on several points. He argues that while founded in the Anabaptist movement, early Mennonites withdrew from society as a means of preserving their own culture, standing in fierce contrast to the Catholic Church and its sacramentalism.<sup>29</sup> Because of their preoccupation with conservation, they became ambivalent toward mission,<sup>30</sup> in stark contrast to the early Anabaptist movement. This began to change during the nineteenth century as Mennonites experienced a spiritual quickening that would move them out of isolation and into the influence of the wider Protestant missionary movement.<sup>31</sup>

Mennonite mission theory retained its Anabaptist roots that focused on nonviolence and the importance of social justice. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, it has moved from isolation to a more actively engaged mission theory described as “Holistic Christian Witness”:

The church exists for the task of bearing witness to the coming of Christ’s kingdom in the world. Mennonite Mission Network seeks to hold together evangelism, witness and personal transformation with peace, justice and social transformation—believing that each of these values has an important place within the kingdom of God.<sup>32</sup>

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 111.

28 Ibid., 112.

29 Ibid., 113.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 114.

32 James R. Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission: Following God’s Call to Reconciliation: Missio Dei*, no. 22 (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Mission Network, 2013), 26.

The trend toward a renewal in mission theory began in the mid-nineteenth century, renewing the basic principles from scripture that “God’s ultimate purpose is ‘to unite all things under Christ,’ that is, to liberate men and women from the power of death, their mortal enemy.”<sup>33</sup> This holistic view that “God’s mission is to set things right in a broken world, to redeem it and restore it to its intended purpose”<sup>34</sup> permeates mission theory as noted above and is the first of three themes to be identified here.

A second theme within the Anabaptist tradition’s mission theory is the importance of lay people. As shown above, the Anabaptist movement, from its foundation during the Reformation, has placed high value on the laity and its interpretation of scripture within the gathered community. Women and men, ordinary lay people, have participated in spreading the message of salvation “through personal conversations and invitations to meetings.”<sup>35</sup> The Spirit has been deeply connected to the Christian life experienced in community as it convicts of sin and leads to repentance.<sup>36</sup> Spirit baptism preceded water baptism and then led to the “common life in the church.”<sup>37</sup> This emphasis on lay involvement continues to be key in contemporary Anabaptist mission theory in the holistic method of spreading the gospel. Anabaptist emphasis on the “practical realization of the priesthood of believers and its lay activity”<sup>38</sup> has developed into the idea that “mission is rooted in God’s love, focused on Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.” As the Holy Spirit is poured out on all believers, it “move[s], transform[s], inspire[s] and empower[s] the church in mission.”<sup>39</sup>

The third theme to be identified here is ecumenical influence and cooperation. Mennonites experienced a period of social withdrawal, but as their mission theory developed they became more influenced by other Christian traditions and society as a whole. As they learned from the modern missionary movement, Mennonites became ecumenical borrowers as a result of “increased contact with and cooperation in various venues.”<sup>40</sup> The Protestant missionary movement’s methodology and rationale were largely accepted in the mid-twen-

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33 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 124.

34 Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission*, 12.

35 Wolfgang Schäufele, “The Missionary Vision and Activity of Anabaptist Laity,” *Anabaptism and Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1984), 85.

36 Jamie Pitts, “The Spirit in Mennonite History” (paper for the Mennonite Church USA-Church of God [Cleveland] ecumenical dialogue, 2016), 33.

37 Ibid.

38 Schäufele, “The Missionary Vision and Activity of Anabaptist Laity,” 87.

39 Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission*, 12.

40 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 116.

tieth century. This has led to an environment of collaboration that seeks to “[build] partnerships and networks among complementary groups and agencies,”<sup>41</sup> both within the tradition and around the world. As Anabaptists cross the divide and join with other traditions in the mission of God, it is the power of the Spirit that unifies people to witness to the One Triune God.<sup>42</sup> The ecumenical nature of Anabaptist mission theory may not be one of its stronger points, but it does show a connection with other traditions through a realization of the work of the Spirit.

## Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement

We’ve seen from what has been discussed so far that understanding the movement of the Holy Spirit has been part of the Anabaptist tradition from its beginning in the sixteenth century. Anabaptism’s holistic, lay-led, and ecumenical nature is seen as inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, who empowers all believers to accomplish the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. Conrad Kanagy notes the decline of Christianity in westernized cultures of North America and Europe in contrast to growing expansion in the Majority world, or as he refers to it, the Global South including Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>43</sup> The growth of Christianity in the Majority world is due in large part to the spread of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement,<sup>44</sup> which adapts easily into the highly spiritualized cultures that exist there. This is an important consideration in thinking about parallels between the two theological positions; as the involvement of the Spirit is considered in Anabaptist mission theory, what similarities might be found with the Pentecostal-charismatic<sup>45</sup> movement and mission theory?

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41 Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission*, 22.

42 Erin Dufault-Hunter, “Extending to Fellow Christians an Invitation to the Anabaptist Stream of God’s Story,” *New Anabaptist Voices: Missio Dei*, no. 20, eds. Matthew Krabill and David Stutzman (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Mission Network, 2012), 14.

43 Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit*, 28–29.

44 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 8–9.

45 The term “Pentecostal-charismatic movement” includes Classic Pentecostalism traditionally thought of as organized Pentecostal denominations that believe initial evidence of Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues. Pentecostal-charismatic movements within existing traditions such as mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches believe in the gifts of the Spirit manifested through tongues, healing, prophecy, etc. within their own context. Other movements have emerged that claim no association with denominational structures but place high importance on the gifts of the Spirit and spiritual baptism. See Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of*



To begin with, both the Anabaptist tradition and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement emerged as an alternative for renewal within the Christian faith. With historical roots in the Reformation, Anabaptism developed a theological stance self-identified as a “third way” that was neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic, and had a strong missionary call and consciousness.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, the Pentecostal-charismatic movement has historical roots in Protestantism, renewed its theology through awareness of the Holy Spirit, and saw itself as an alternative to the existing traditions.<sup>47</sup> Vinson Synan identifies Pentecostalism as one of three streams within the larger “river” of Christianity: (1) Catholicism, for its focus on orthodoxy and liturgy; (2) Protestantism, for the centrality of the scripture and the proclamation of the word; and (3) Pentecostalism, for its emphasis on the Spirit-filled life and empowerment for ministry and mission.<sup>48</sup> Like the early Anabaptists, early Pentecostals suffered persecution, ridicule, and marginalization from established churches, which led them to isolate themselves from the “old and corrupt churches,” resulting in an “anti-ecumenical attitude.”<sup>49</sup>

Both Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement also began with a desire for a deeper spiritual connection within the Christian faith, which eventually led to the organization of denominational structures. Pentecostal-charismatics understand this as three “waves” of renewal. First was the development of Classic Pentecostals, who emphasized baptism of the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of that experience. This spawned many Pentecostal denominations, including the Assemblies of God, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), and Church of God in Christ.<sup>50</sup> The second wave came through the “charismatic renewal” movement aimed at renewing mainline Catholic and Protestant churches<sup>51</sup> through emphasis on spiritual gifts, healing, and prophecy, with less stress on speaking in tongues as the

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*Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901–2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 395–98 and P. D. Hocken, “Charismatic Movement,” *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 477–519.

46 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 111.

47 Alan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 62.

48 Vinson Synan, *The Holiness–Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 291–93.

49 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 62.

50 Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 8.

51 *Ibid.*

initial evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit. The “third wave” or Neo-charismatic movement consisted of predominantly “mainline evangelicals who experienced signs and wonders but who disdained labels such as ‘Pentecostal’ or ‘charismatic.’”<sup>52</sup> The Pentecostal-charismatic movement is multi-faceted<sup>53</sup> and has progressed from a segregated group to one affecting other Christian traditions and beyond.

Although Mennonites rejected Pentecostalism in the early years of its development, the Pentecostal-charismatic movement did influence Anabaptism in the twentieth century. By the 1970s, Anabaptists were more accepting of the charismatic movement, and a report approved by the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church called for the “unhindered manifestation of the Spirit’s presence through the vibrant expression of praise and the fearless spreading of the good news of the mighty works of God taking place in our time.”<sup>54</sup> In the late 1970s, Anabaptist groups such as Mennonite Renewal Services and Brethren Renewal Services, a parallel movement in the Church of the Brethren, promoted the charismatic movement and engaged in ecumenical conferences on the Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup> As Spirit-filled expressions of faith gained acceptance, lay members began to embrace the charismatic movement while remaining within their own Mennonite or Brethren tradition. This was confirmed by a sociological study from the late 1990s that found almost half of all Mennonites “claim the baptism of the Spirit.”<sup>56</sup> Again, this indicates that the charismatic movement within the Anabaptist tradition has deeply influenced the laity and encouraged ecumenical involvement as the Spirit crosses all denominational lines. Some would argue that the Pentecostal-charismatic influence in the Mennonite tradition simply returned it to its sixteenth-century roots, providing

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52 Ibid., 9.

53 Not all Pentecostal groups hold to the Trinitarian concept of many Christian traditions. This includes groups such as Oneness Pentecostals, who believe in the outward evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit but baptize only in the name of Jesus, as they believe in one God without any “distinction of persons . . . Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead incarnate.” Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 205. See also Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 141–47 and D. D. Bundy, “Oneness Pentecostalism,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 936–45.

54 Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 196.

55 Ibid., 197.

56 C. Bender, “Mennonite Charismatics,” *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 870.

for a clear-cut connection between the two such as “communal living, nonhierarchical church authority, and other Anabaptist principles.”<sup>57</sup> Yet, as noted above, the difference is that the early Anabaptists understood the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit as having a “supportive and confirming and inspirational role under Christ and the Scriptures”<sup>58</sup> rather than being the central focus for their theology as found in Pentecostal-charismatic circles.

Both Anabaptists and Pentecostal-charismatics have a strong missional call, something that has been in place since the early days of both traditions. Much of the phenomenal growth that has been taking place in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement stems from this strong missionary zeal and call to share a more holistic understanding of the gospel message as essential for both salvation and a Spirit-empowered life, similar to what is known from the beginnings of Anabaptism. The early Anabaptist movement believed “Christian ministry was charismatic by nature, raised up directly by the Holy Spirit and unable to be restricted by any institutional parameters.”<sup>59</sup> However, the signs and wonders possible through the Holy Spirit’s working were thought to “have a relatively minor role in theory and practice of evangelical Anabaptism.”<sup>60</sup> This may look somewhat different from the Pentecostal-charismatic movement’s interpretation of the same; however, it does show an affinity toward charismatic practice and willingness to recognize the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and the resulting transformation of heart and life.

The Pentecostal-charismatic movement had its origins among the poor and marginalized groups of society, often as the result of lay people’s willingness to share the gospel outside of the mainstream churches of their day. Pentecostals took their newfound form of Christianity with them as speaking in tongues led many to believe they were called to share the gospel in a particular part of the world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as seen in Acts 2, was understood by Pentecostals as a missionary spirit and seen as the incentive for world evangelization and Pentecostal expansion.<sup>61</sup> Synan refers to this as “missionaries of the one-way ticket.”<sup>62</sup> So adamant were these lay people about their call that they believed God was sending them out across the globe to share the

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57 Bender, “Mennonite Charismatics,” 870.

58 Kenneth R. Davis, “Anabaptism as a Charismatic Movement,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 53, no. 3 (July 1979): 226.

59 *Ibid.*, 231.

60 *Ibid.*, 226.

61 Julie Ma, “The Holy Spirit in Mission,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (June, 2015): 172.

62 Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition*, 129.

Pentecostal experience without assurance of returning home. As a result, the Pentecostal-charismatic movement became a worldwide phenomenon. Allan Anderson states:

Pentecostalism has always been a [global] missionary movement in foundation and essence. It emerged with a firm conviction that the Spirit had been poured out in “signs and wonders” in order for the nations of the world to be reached for Christ before the end of the age. Its missionaries proclaimed a “full gospel” that included individual salvation, physical healing, personal holiness, baptism with the Spirit, and a life on the edge lived in expectation of the imminent return of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

Again we see the holistic nature of the involvement of the Spirit in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, where mind, body, and spirit were touched by the good news of the gospel. Lay people rather than trained missionaries or clergy often took up the missionary task in both their local communities and around the world. As the Pentecostal-charismatic movement grew and developed, people from all different denominational backgrounds were affected by the ecumenical work of unity in the Holy Spirit.

Both traditions struggled to some extent with truly ecumenical involvement outside of their commonly held beliefs about Spirit-empowered lives and transformation of heart and life. For the Anabaptists, transformation included “proclaim[ing] the holistic good news of peace with God” and reconciliation between people and God’s creation.<sup>64</sup> In addition, holistic pneumatology included missions that sought “to address the imbalance of relationships within a community to honor each person’s participation and maintain equity between people.”<sup>65</sup> This was “recognized as God’s concern for the poor, the oppressed, and marginalized,”<sup>66</sup> the impartiality of God that must be reflected in the church. The Pentecostal-charismatic movement also recognized the need to serve the oppressed and marginalized but struggled with paternalism and an air of superiority over “heathen” and “idolaters.”<sup>67</sup> Yet the empowerment found

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63 Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 294.

64 Heidebrecht, “Toward a Mennonite Peace Theology,” 237. Heidebrecht is drawing upon his analysis of biblical texts such as 2 Cor 5:14, 18–20 in developing his point about the “ministry of reconciliation.” His argument for the holistic reconciliation of the world through Christ is connected with the larger picture of Anabaptism I have described. I am using his points to portray an Anabaptist theological perspective.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 233.

through the baptism of the Holy Spirit allowed Pentecostal missionaries to confront spiritual power on the mission field, which “was absolutely basic to the popular understanding of the universe”<sup>68</sup> for the people they felt called to serve and evangelize. Their cultural missteps were no doubt a result of inherited mission theory and a lack of training, but as the movement continued to grow, the low classes of society and disenfranchised were the most receptive to the message and care of the missionaries. In both the Anabaptist and Pentecostal-charismatic movements, the missionaries’ understanding of the indwelling Holy Spirit empowered them to confront evil spirits, heal the sick and injured, and champion the cause of the poorest and most oppressed of society.

### **Pneumatology in Mission**

In what has been discussed so far, the Holy Spirit has been important for both Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition and their understandings of mission. This point leads to the question of what it means to have a Spirit-centered concept of mission and how Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement help to define a pneumatological view of mission. As has been discussed, three themes can be identified in relation to pneumatology in mission. Since both movements originated from places of renewal in Christian thought, with their followers often suffering persecution for their beliefs, they shared some common ideas about how they might be empowered to make disciples as Christ commanded. While differences in some ideologies and doctrinal stances exist between the two, places of agreement do exist—including the holistic work of the Holy Spirit in all areas of life; the empowerment of lay people to share the good news of the gospel and provide assistance to the poor and disenfranchised of society; and the ecumenical work of the Spirit, which is not limited by denominational boundaries.

The first theme for discussion is holistic pneumatology, because it provides an overall understanding that includes the other two themes that will be discussed later. Julie Ma refers to “holistic evangelism” that brings people to the saving knowledge of Christ and then transforms their everyday lives through social ministries,<sup>69</sup> which is often the focus of missionary work. In addition to the essential nature of the good news of the gospel in relation to eternal salvation brought through the conviction and indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a holistic spirituality sees the broader implications of transformation that include

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68 Ibid., 240.

69 Julie Ma, “Touching Lives of People through the Holistic Mission Work of the Buntains in Calcutta, India,” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40, no. 1 (2016): 81.

mind, body, and social surroundings. The “lived pneumatology,” as mentioned above, suggests the Anabaptist understanding that the agreement of inner and outer lives of believers is an “essential and necessary unity.”<sup>70</sup> The Spirit’s work in an individual through faith and regeneration must be expressed outwardly through a “life of discipleship and obedience.”<sup>71</sup> The holistic unity of the physical and spiritual being incorporates peace with God’s creation and community, including the promotion of justice. Heidebrecht contends spiritual transformation is necessary for all believers as the inward change connects theological convictions with personal conduct and social responsibility; this intersection of the church and the needs of the world is found in the heart of every Christian.<sup>72</sup> Kanagy et al. also see spiritual transformation as an essential piece of pneumatology in ministry, especially in the Global South, that is holistic in practice “without distinction between word, deed, and being.”<sup>73</sup> Mennonite “mission is rooted in God’s love, focused on Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>74</sup> While the church may face persecution, it “stands in solidarity with poor and oppressed people,”<sup>75</sup> trusting that through the work of the Spirit “people and communities can be reconciled to God and to one another.”<sup>76</sup>

Amid these inferences to the work of the Holy Spirit, Kanagy et al. critique twentieth-century European and North American Anabaptists for the absence of a thorough treatment of the Holy Spirit and its transformative presence.<sup>77</sup> They suggest that it is the Pentecostal-charismatic “movement in the Global South [that] has created a pathway for the continued development of an evolution of historic Anabaptism.”<sup>78</sup> The Pentecostal-charismatic movement expresses as well a holistic approach to mission theory that is seen through the lens of the indwelling empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Amos Yong stresses the importance of a “sturdy pneumatological foundation that understands *missio Spiritus*” as essential for a holistic Trinitarian understanding of the entirety

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70 Heidebrecht, “Toward a Mennonite Peace Theology,” 231.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., 239.

73 Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit*, 170.

74 Krabill, ed., “Walking Together in Mission,” 12.

75 Ibid., 14.

76 Ibid.

77 Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit*, 236.

78 Ibid., 187.

of God's redemptive work.<sup>79</sup> Andrew Lord contends for a holistic charismatic missiology that holds the spiritual and material worlds together to assist faith communities in crossing boundaries that often exist between church and culture.<sup>80</sup>

Although the work of the Holy Spirit is often seen through its Christocentric nature, as it should be, the more spiritualized contexts of the Majority world suggest a need to address spiritual forces that are embedded in many cultures there. Paul Pomerville argues that missionary growth in the world needs the outward charismatic ministries of the Spirit. It is the supernatural witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart and the outward signs of the Spirit that show the present rule of God.<sup>81</sup> Lord understands these outward signs—such as healing, prophecy, and power over the demonic—as mission of the Spirit within the framework of the eschatological kingdom of God. He calls for a broadening of Pentecostal-charismatic mission to include holistic mission, experience, context, community, and spirituality.<sup>82</sup> Julie Ma and Wonsuk Ma add to this, acknowledging the importance of missionary work in baptizing believers and planting churches, and specifying that disciple making is to be carried out through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.<sup>83</sup> This illustrates a holistic understanding of the Spirit as it applies to missions in both Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. Kanagy et al. suggest that conversations about the spiritual nature of Pentecostal-charismatic pneumatology may in fact “rub off”<sup>84</sup> on the Anabaptist tradition and return its followers to their original fervor for life in the Spirit.

The holistic approach to mission, the focus of this article, includes some additional themes in keeping with a pneumatological understanding of mission. The empowerment of lay participation in mission, which is holistic in nature, involves all believers—men and women, young and old, indigenous and foreign born, et cetera. As has been noted above, early Anabaptism stood against a

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79 Amos Yong, “Primed for the Spirit: Creation, Redemption, and the Missio Spiritus,” *Evangelical Journal* 33, no. 1 (2015): 9.

80 Andrew Lord, “Pentecostal Mission through Contextualization,” *PentecoStudies* 10, no. 1 (2011): 108.

81 Paul Pomerville, *Third Force in Missions: A Pentecostal Contribution to Contemporary Mission Theory* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 126–27.

82 Andrew Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 51.

83 Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal Charismatic Missiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 43.

84 Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit*, 158.

hierarchical system in which the priest was the main source of interpretation for Christian faith and life. Instead of this “CEO leadership model,”<sup>85</sup> Anabaptists believed “that all God’s children are called to mission and ministry at the moment of their freely-chosen baptism.”<sup>86</sup> Anabaptist mission theory includes the belief “that the church most faithfully participates in God’s mission when it calls forth leaders as prompted by the Holy Spirit to inspire the congregation for its ministries in the world.”<sup>87</sup> From the beginning, Anabaptist faith spread through the work of lay missionaries. “Women as well as men participated on the basis of their own independent religious convictions” shared outside of the church building “in the workshop, in the house, in the field, [and] on a journey.”<sup>88</sup> Ordinary members carried out the missionary commitment no doubt in response to the spiritual energy and vision of the Anabaptist congregations. Wilbert Shenk seeks to clarify a Mennonite theology of mission: “Through the community of the Spirit, Christ’s authority and saving presence is being extended . . . in every part of the world.”<sup>89</sup> Holistic pneumatology includes the priesthood of all believers through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to spread the good news of the gospel worldwide.

The same idea holds true within the Pentecostal-charismatic movement. The giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 is directly connected with the prophecy from Joel 2:28–29. The holistic pneumatology here includes the pouring out of God’s Spirit on all people regardless of age, gender, race, national origin, et cetera. Like the early Anabaptists, Pentecostal-charismatics relied heavily on the missional engagement of lay people. As Pomerville says, “Pentecostalism testifies to, and exemplifies, the fact that the continuing activity of the Spirit is not limited to His inward work with the written Word. His activity also involves His outward charismatic work in the lives of believers.”<sup>90</sup> Lord supports this idea adding, “Christian communities are central to the mission of the Spirit.”<sup>91</sup> It is the interconnectedness of the various spiritual gifts within the church that enables missional engagement to

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85 Tommy Airey, “The Creative Alternative Many Christians Are Looking For,” *New Anabaptist Voices: Missio Dei, Exploring God’s Work in the World*, no. 20, eds. Matthew Krabill and David Stutzman (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Mission Network, 2012), 10.

86 Airey, “The Creative Alternative Many Christians Are Looking For,” 10.

87 Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission*, 26.

88 Schäufele, “The Missionary Vision and Activity of the Anabaptist Laity,” 85.

89 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 133.

90 Pomerville, *Third Force in Mission*, 103.

91 Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 105.



take place. It is the unity of the Spirit that allows the community to “work together for God’s kingdom.”<sup>92</sup> For the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition as well as the Anabaptist tradition, “mission is the domain of every believer, i.e., not limited to a particular class of person, e.g., clergy, religious”<sup>93</sup> and “flows from communities rather than individuals.”<sup>94</sup> Holistic pneumatology in mission includes the work of the Spirit within the lay community, which “brings together those ‘on the margins’ as well as the prosperous and powerful.”<sup>95</sup> This leads to “the formation of indigenous Christian communities, rather than communities characterized by foreign cultural practices.”<sup>96</sup> Because we are Christ’s faithful witnesses empowered by his Spirit, his example stands as “the hallmark of every believer called to his mission.”<sup>97</sup> Of course, not every individual within the Christian community will be called to foreign mission. However, the unity in the Holy Spirit of various individuals, lay and clergy alike, provides a holistic picture of the kingdom of God that includes all believers.

The final theme for considering holistic pneumatology in mission is the ecumenical work of the Spirit. Oftentimes denominational guidelines lead to restriction of missional cooperation, whereupon focusing on our differences takes the place of unity though Christ and his Spirit with other brothers and sisters in the faith. As Shenk states, however, “Mennonites have also learned much from the modern missionary movements,” indicating they have been ecumenical borrowers as their participation in the missionary movement has brought them into contact and cooperation with other groups and endeavors.<sup>98</sup> He goes on to say that although various mission theologies have influenced Mennonite missions, none of them can “speak out of the historical Mennonite experience.”<sup>99</sup> Retaining the foundational principles of the Anabaptist tradition while working with other Christian traditions does create some tension. However, contemporary Mennonites see the value in collaboration and interdependence. They “seek to foster an approach to mission in which every partner is an equal at the table . . . demonstrat[ing] mutuality by . . . building partnerships and networks among complementary groups and agencies, within [their] con-

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92 Ibid.

93 Ibid., 108.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid., 112.

96 Ibid.

97 Ma, “The Holy Spirit in Mission,” 178.

98 Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out*, 116.

99 Ibid., 117.

stituency and with partners around the world.”<sup>100</sup> Jon M. Isaak suggests a Spirit-led way forward for Mennonite Brethren and engagement with Charismatic Renewal movements, citing the end of Christendom as an empire in the West. He contends that “the church will look different in the Holy Spirit era—less denominationally driven, more loose associations or networks of churches, a mix of small faith communities and mega churches”—but will remain grounded in the promise of Christ to remain with us.<sup>101</sup>

Isaak’s contention for a Spirit-led way forward also applies to developments within the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, as an ecumenical theme in holistic pneumatology in mission can also be seen within the tradition. Some Classic Pentecostals will hold to the idea of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, thus retaining their theological stance in relation to missional cooperation. Yet, as mentioned above, Synan identifies the Pentecostal-charismatic movement as one of the streams in the river of Christianity. This river includes the charismatic renewal that took place within many other Christian traditions, including the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement and renewals in the Orthodox, Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Mennonite, United Church of Christ, and other churches.<sup>102</sup> It is the ecumenical nature of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that brings unity within the Christian community—but unity does not mean uniformity.

Yong notes that it is the Spirit who brings “unity amidst diversity, plurality, and difference.”<sup>103</sup> It is “the Spirit’s unifying power [that] enables the integrity of each one amidst the many.”<sup>104</sup> Lord argues that life in the Spirit—the Christian spirituality of individuals and communities—is naturally linked to mission and transforms us into the likeness of Christ. “Without spirituality, mission can revert to activism that is somehow separate from everyday life, yet without mission, spirituality can become a personal pursuit with no impact on the world.”<sup>105</sup> The unifying nature of the Spirit as seen in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement allows for ecumenical dialogue and mission to take

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100 Krabill, ed., *Walking Together in Mission*, 22.

101 Jon M. Isaak, “Mennonite Brethren and Charismatic Renewal Movements,” *Direction* 44, no. 2 (2015): 204.

102 Details on the twentieth-century charismatic renewals that took place in these various traditions can be found in Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, chapters 7 through 9.

103 Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 135.

104 Ibid.

105 Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 122.

place. The Pentecostal-charismatic renewal movement allows for the focus to remain “on the core beliefs and practices of Christianity [since the movement is] less tethered by doctrines, dress codes, and historical contexts than religious traditions that are closely tied to European and North American cultural identities.”<sup>106</sup> Ecumenical cooperation grounded in the work of the Holy Spirit is an important part of engaging the spiritual realities present in the Majority world.

## Conclusion

This study has drawn comparisons between Anabaptism and the Pentecostal-charismatic movement, emphasizing missional theory and praxis in each tradition. Both movements originated out of a desire to renew Christianity through deeper engagement with the Scriptures and experiences with the Holy Spirit. Christians in both movements were persecuted; however, both movements grew among the poor and marginalized groups of society as they found comfort and acceptance there. The pneumatologies of the two movements may look different, but the holistic nature contained in them is an essential element of mission theory and praxis moving forward. This is especially important as we engage in an increasingly global society that is often far more spiritually sensitive than European and North American Christianity. As we seek to engage the spirituality that exists in our own culture and that of the Majority world, we will need a pneumatology that is holistic in nature—concerned with the mind, body, sociopolitical environment, and the spirit. Laypersons and clergy, women and men, young and old have spiritual gifts to be used in ministry and mission. The unity of the Holy Spirit will help us find more in common than focusing on our differences as we seek to live out the kingdom of God on earth. Anabaptists and Pentecostal-charismatics have rich histories that are invaluable to the missionary task of making disciples of all nations. The Spirit has been poured out on all people so that we may “see the wonders in the heavens and on earth” (Joel 2:30). Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and empower us for your mission!

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106 Kanagy et al., *Winds of the Spirit*, 210.