

# The Holy Spirit and Missio Dei

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the symbiotic relationship between the Holy Spirit and Missio Dei, particularly within the framework of Pentecostal manifestations, historically and in contemporary contexts, with a specific focus on Nigeria. It offers an overview of Pentecostal manifestations, drawing from biblical foundations to contemporary practices. It highlights Nigeria's landscape and explores how Pentecostalism catalyses church planting and exponential growth. Central to this discussion is the significance of acquiring and harnessing the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly for missions. It emphasises the importance of thirst and hunger for these gifts, and the paper explores strategies for exploiting and utilising them effectively in service. Believers can significantly impact evangelism, discipleship, and community development initiatives by integrating spiritual gifts into missions. Ultimately, this paper illuminates pathways for believers to engage in missions' endeavours empowered by the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit, offering insights into the intersection of Pentecostal manifestations and Missio Dei in Nigeria. Insights to this paper are drawn historically, missiologically, and from personal observations, relevant literature, and scriptural injunctions.

## INTRODUCTION

World population update suggests that there are approximately 8 billion people on earth. About 2.56 billion Christians are 1/3 of the world's population. It indicates that the command to "preach the Gospel to every part of the world" is still crucial and beckoning. The challenge to Christian believers is the salvation of the other 2/3 people. The concern of this paper is the Holy Spirit's role in missions. The book of Genesis account of creation, projects the Holy Spirit as the working power of God through the term "the Spirit of God" (Gen. 1:2). The Holy Spirit is the power of God in Missio Dei, which is redemptive, reconciling lost human beings to Himself. Therefore, the Church cannot adequately do missions without being endowed with power by the Holy Spirit, hence the instruction "...wait for the gift my Father promised..." (Acts 1:4, NIV). This paper considers the person of the Holy Spirit and His role in the mission of God, illustrating how Christians, through His power, could do missions successfully. Insights to this paper are drawn from personal observations, works by previous authors, and scriptural injunctions. The paper argues

that those who desire to partner with God in His Mission through the Holy Spirit should have genuine salvation experience, been disciplined, and have a daily thirst/hunger for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are also to wait eagerly for the endowment of the Holy Spirit. They must accept Him, be willing for His manifestation and avoid exploiting His gifts.

Prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ, He commanded His disciples not to leave Jerusalem. He told them to wait for the Gift His Father promised (Acts 1:4-5). According to Christopher Donlon, "Upon the opening of the Acts narrative, Jesus tells his disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit which would make them become His witnesses in 'Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"<sup>1</sup> While the disciples gathered together and waited in obedience in the upstairs room on the day of Pentecost, they experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Four apparent things of their experience that day were: 1) sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, 2) flames or tongues of fire rested on each one's head, 3) infilling of the Holy Spirit, and 4) speaking in other languages (tongues). The manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power that day led to the conversion of three thousand people as they preached (Acts 2).

Some church ministers and members today are to demonstrate this power and its manifestation to utilise it for missions. When this manifestation is evident among ministers and believers in the Church, there will be a radical, intentional and responsible engagement in witnessing, soul-winning and church planting, and the Church will also grow. This paper investigates the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit in the past (Bible time) and contemporary times. It examines how Pentecostal Manifestation was utilised to catalyse church planting and growth. This paper aims to invoke and awaken ministers of the gospel and churches, especially stagnating ones, to seek power and the gift of the Holy Spirit and utilise the power thereof for church planting and growth.

## OVERVIEW OF PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION

The manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit shall be reviewed from the biblical and contemporary perspectives. A few of the persons

1. Christopher Donlon, "Luke's Pneumatological Eschatology: Theological motifs in luke-acts." A Directed Research Submitted to Dr. Peter Althouse in Fulfillment of the Course Special Topics in Theological Issues, College Of Christian Ministries And Religion, (Lakeland, Florida, December 2012).

who were key players and events shall be considered in this paper. The arrangement is for the writers' convenience and does not suggest any superiority of one over the other.

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Several events in the Bible portray the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit. God released His power and gift in the lives of different individuals and groups who utilised it for "mission advancement" at different times.

### OLD TESTAMENT

The manifestation of supernatural power and the gift of the Holy Spirit has been a reality since the Old Testament times. God, the "energiser", poured out His Spirit upon the lives of some individuals of old, through whom He used to accomplish His purpose at different times. The following people are examples:

**Moses:** He was an ordinary man, a shepherd in the land of Median. His supernatural encounter at Mount Horeb, where God released His Spirit through the "flames of fire from within the bush," emboldened him to confront Pharaoh. He received the supernatural power and the gift to do miracles and afterwards embarked on the mission to deliver (save) God's people. He manifested the power and gift of the Spirit in Egypt such that the Pharaoh feared God (Exod.3).

**Elijah:** Another significant person who received and manifested the power of God was Elijah. He prophesied that there would be no rain in the land of Israel; it happened the same way (1Kings 17:1). He confronted Ahab and Jezebel and the prophets of Baal, and the Spirit and Power of God were made manifest after which Ahab, the King, and the people proclaimed the God of Elijah to be the true God (1Kings 18:39). In the Power and Spirit of God, Elijah multiplied food for the Zarephath widow and also resurrected her dead son (1Kings 17:17-24). He also prophesied the destruction of Ahab and Jezebel, etc.

**Elisha:** On the other hand, Elisha sought and received the power and gift of the Spirit of God and performed several miracles during his time. Some of the miracles he performed were: 1) dividing the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:14), 2) healing the bad water and unproductive land, 3) floating the borrowed axe-head on the water, and 4) praying for the Shunammite woman and her barrenness was broken and when her child died, he prayed, and the child was brought back to life (2 Kings 4:11-36).

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people manifested God's Spirit and Power at different times, which also pulled individuals, kingdoms and nations toward God. Toward the end of the Old Testament

and before the New Testament time, God, through the Prophet Joel, sent prophecies about "the day of the Lord." Among those prophecies was the promise of pouring out His "Spirit on all people," including servants of God, men and women (Joel 2: 28). This prophecy began its fulfilment in the New Testament to the present day.

### NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus is the model for the Pentecostal manifestation. Before the Pentecost day, the Spirit and Power of God had been made manifest on several occasions and throughout the ministry of Christ. He was the one who gave assurance of the supernatural manifestation and its abilities before His ascension. Instances can be drawn in the light of Matthew 3:16 and Luke 3:22: the Spirit of the Lord descended like a dove, followed by the voice of a witness attesting to and empowering Jesus for ministry. Jesus manifested or demonstrated supernatural power through preaching, healing, delivering the demon-possessed, walking on the sea, calming the storm, etc.

On the day of Pentecost, there was a change in the status quo; what used to be a Jewish festival turned into a Pentecostal manifestation. The Holy Spirit descended in power whirlwind and harmless fire, which empowered the apostles to speak in different tongues. From that day onward, the apostles ministered in that power, preaching, healing, conducting deliverance, signs, and wonders and doing other miracles in many villages, towns, cities and nations.

The manifestation of the gift and power of God (the Spirit) did not end with either Jesus or the apostles; instead, it was a continuous experience. Christians across the world, at one point or the other, testify of this experience, predominantly the power and ideology that ignited and drove the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Africa and Nigeria, in particular, are still experiencing the impact as more churches are emerging today compared to the nineteenth century. Michael Ogunewu affirms that these miraculous manifestations continued in the Church till the contemporary time.<sup>2</sup> He further stated that the manifestation of Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit is a fact that cannot be denied either within the Christian fold or by other nationals. However, he noted that despite the widespread of this Pentecostal manifestation, the emphasis seems stronger among some church denominations than others.

### PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY TIME

Pentecostal manifestations have continued for over a century. It has become a paradigm and is believed

2. Michael A. Ogunewu, *Travails and Triumphs of Aladura Christianity in Nigeria 1920-2010*. (Lagos: The Amen Mission Inc., 2015), 62-63

to be a catalyst for church planting and growth. Meanwhile, critics observe some excesses or extremes therein. David Perry affirms that “other evangelicals have also offered critiques of Pentecostal Spirit baptism from an exegetical standpoint.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, this paper focuses on harnessing (utilising) the Manifestation of Power and the Gift of the Holy Spirit for church planting and growth. Ogunewu maintains that leaders of some churches are tenacious with their belief in the presence and manifestation of supernatural power even nowadays.<sup>4</sup> By manifesting this gift and power, they have gained numerous congregants and planted many churches.

Donlon opines that there are three-fold<sup>5</sup> purposes of the Spirit in the believers’ life: for a prophetic witness, to reconfirm those baptised in the Spirit as part of the people of God, and to empower the Church for the eschatological mission. All these were visible in the Azusa Street Revival Movement. Contemporary church historians and missiologists have referenced the “Azusa Street Revival” and how it expanded the Christian mission to many parts of the world. In a background study of the Azusa Street Revival Movement, Gbenga Adebayo mentioned the Welsh Revival, which broke out in 1904 with about one hundred thousand people from Wales, as perhaps the foremost movement of such.<sup>6</sup> However, Veli-Matti Karkkainen argues that the Pentecostal Movement had had a humble beginning “in the outpouring of the Spirit among students at the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas (1901).”<sup>7</sup> Adebayo continues on William Joseph Seymour that “despite the challenges faced by this son of an enslaved Black person, this young man of about 35 years, with one eye whose parents were Catholics, stood firm in his desire to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit from God.”<sup>8</sup>

Seymour was not deterred by the rejection and humiliation of church elders in Ninth and Santa Fe, Los Angeles (a church he pastored for a while), who ejected him from their Church because he preached about the gift of speaking in tongues. They accused him of preaching about what he had not experienced or practised. Nevertheless, Seymour’s conviction, faith, tenacity, and consistency in seeking God’s face were greatly rewarded by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Supernatural manifestation. Adebayo further asserts that between April 9 and 12, 1906,<sup>9</sup>

during the ten-day fast by Seymour and his small new group, God released the power of the Holy Spirit on them.

Roberts Liardon affirms that on the evening of April 9, 1906, eight of them were endued as they received the gift and began speaking in tongues. The news of this experience became widespread throughout the community, and there was an upsurge in the crowd. The amazing event captivated people from different strata of society, and they ran to 214 Bonnie Brae Street, including Julia Hutchins, a church founded in Los Angeles. Caucasians from the Wesleyan Holiness Movement were searching for their baptism in the Spirit. Mexicans were relatively new to the area, and an assortment of Russians, Armenians, Chinese, Japanese, and Native Americans joined the movement.<sup>10</sup> Hence, there was a massive harvest.

Due to the sudden massive turnout (from 300 to 1,500 people), their meeting place could no longer contain them (an exceeding church growth); hence, they needed a more spacious place. Gary McGee noted that from September 1904 to June 1905, one hundred thousand (100,000) people were converted to Christ.<sup>11</sup> Different miracles reportedly took place in their meetings; for instance, blindness was cured, other bodily infirmities were healed, and people instantly spoke in various languages. Adebayo believes the Azusa Street revival was “one of the focal points of the emerging Pentecostal Movement.” Meanwhile, one will hardly believe that this location would birth a movement destined to change the face of Christianity globally<sup>12</sup> (perhaps it was divinely orchestrated). Afterwards, thirteen missionaries were sent out from Azusa Street, expanding the movement to different parts of the world.

## PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION, CHURCH PLANTING AND GROWTH IN NIGERIA

According to the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, the experience of Pentecostal Manifestation did not die with the Apostles. Still, it has continued to be a strength for centuries in the general church and until contemporary times.<sup>13</sup> As the influence of this great experience traverses the world, Nigeria is not left out in the scheme of things. A few selected Nigerian churches that seem to have shown exponential church planting and growth are highlighted below.

## THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD

History shows that this Church was started by

3. David Perry, “Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function,” a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, August 8, 2014, 24.

4. Ogunewu, 63.

5. Donlon, 28.

6. Gbenga Adebayo, “Lessons from the Azusa Street Revival for the Nigerian Church.” in *Crying for Spiritual Awakening, Ministry Enrichment Series*, Vol. 9, Emiola Nihinloa & Oloyede Folashade eds., (Ogbomosho: Kingdom Impact Publishing and Media Ltd., 2022), 182.

7. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, “Pentecostal Missiology in Ecumenical Perspective: Contributions, Challenges, Controversies.” Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu/1122950>. (Accessed on 02/10/2023).

8. Adebayo, 182

9. Ibid, 183.

10. Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Feel*. (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 97 – 99.

11. Gary B. McGee, *William J. Seymour and The Azusa Street Revival*. (Boonville Ave Springfield: The General Council of the Assemblies Of God, 1999), 3. Retrieved from <https://ag.org/Privacy>. (Accessed on 3/10/2023).

12. Adebayo 184.

13. Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel, “History of Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” Diocese of Lafayette. Retrieved from <https://diolaf.org/news>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

Rev. Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi, with about nine members, through a divine persuasion<sup>14</sup> as a house fellowship group. But as he received the power and gift of the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to perform miracles, the population increased amazingly. As of the time in review, The Redeemed Christian Church of God has planted about 2000 parishes in Nigeria and other parishes in about 21 different countries of the world. One of the prominent programmes of this Church is the all-night miracle service tagged “Holy Ghost Service.” It is held every first Friday monthly at the Redemption Camp, Km. 46, Lagos-Ibadan expressway. The headcount of attendance for this programme is an average of 500,000 people, and currently, this programme is held in many other parts of the world.<sup>15</sup> It attests to how far the manifestation or demonstration of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit has taken this Church in the Kingdom’s advancement.

### **LIVING FAITH CHURCH (WINNERS CHAPEL)**

Winner Chapel, like some others, has its theological position on Pentecostalism.<sup>16</sup> The founder was said to have had an 18-hour-long supernatural encounter in a vision where God spoke to him. Afterwards, he began a teaching ministry called “Faith Liberation Hour” in 1981 and was fully established as a church with four members in December 1983. Among her core emphasis are signs and wonders (manifestations of power and gifts of the Holy Spirit), which have attracted many people to the Church. The Vanguard News states, “Winners Chapel has six million members spread across 147 countries.”<sup>17</sup> The Church is also estimated to have 21,000 churches across Nigeria and many others across six major continents worldwide.<sup>18</sup> The growth of this Church has been propelled by its emphasis on signs and wonders alongside faith and prosperity.

### **MOUNTAIN OF FIRE & MIRACLES MINISTRIES**

Dr Daniel Kolawole Olukoya founded this Church through a prayer meeting programme in 1989 with 24 other people. The Church attendance increased based on the manifestation of the power of God through “verifiable miracles” which happened in the lives of the attending members.<sup>19</sup> The record shows that the power of God evangelised the prayer meetings to the

14. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, “Our History.” Retrieved from <https://www.rccg.org/our-history/>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

15. RCCG, Our Origin – RCCG Lord’s Temple. <https://rccglordstemple.org/our-origin/>. (Accessed on 3/10/2023).

16. Christian Events, “Winners Chapel Worldwide – Updated Information About The Living Faith Church Int’l” Retrieved from <https://www.christianevents.com.ng/>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

17. Vanguard News, December 27, 2014, “Winners Chapel has Six Million Members ...” Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/12/winners-chapel-has-six-million-members-spread-across-147-countries-oyedepo/> (Accessed on 16/10/2023).

18. Christian Events

19. Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries, “History of MFM.” Retrieved from <https://www.mountainoffire.org/about>. (Accessed 16/10/2023).

point that they had a spiritual explosion, and people started coming from far and wide to seek the face of God. People who heard and saw the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit happening in the prayer meetings came to receive theirs. Despite their relocation due to space, “believers and those seeking for help kept coming, leading to a very large congregation.” The founder, at this point, under Divine direction, “evolved a strategy of a network of branches in every state capital, local government headquarters, senatorial district and locality.”<sup>20</sup> Recent records show that Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries is counted among the fastest-growing churches of this generation worldwide. Its significant growth is evident in the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit.

The above mentioned are examples of some founders and churches in Nigeria that emphasise and promote Pentecostalism or Pentecostal manifestations and have greatly thrived. Their presence in most parts of Nigeria is noticeable.

### **ACQUIRING AND HARNESSING THE POWER AND GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Pentecostal Manifestation, which consists of prophecy, signs, wonders, healing, miracles and more, is a potent tool for church planting and growth. On “Spirit Baptism”,<sup>21</sup> David Perry said that the Pentecostals believe that the baptism of the Spirit is an endowment of power for witnessing and service, which feasibly propel church planting. The critical factor observed for the growth and expansion of the churches listed above, even during the time of the apostles, is the manifestation of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also, Jesus’ ministry was known for signs, wonders, miracles, etc. and that attracted a multitude to Him. Therefore, while the significance of Pentecostal Manifestation to church planting and growth is now apparent, it is essential to discuss how to acquire and utilise them concurrently for missions.

### **ACQUIRING THE POWER AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR MISSIONS**

Undoubtedly, opinions might vary regarding terminologies on how or in which the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit may be acquired. One may also notice variations in the Old and New Testaments on how these gifts were received and utilised. Two specific ways are seen in the Bible: 1) God’s election, e.g. Moses, Elijah, and Apostle Paul; 2) by seeking and waiting: Moses (Ex. 33:18), Elisha, the Apostles in Acts. However, the under-listed points are based on Jesus’ instruction:

20. “History of MFM”

21. David Perry, “Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function,” a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, August 8, 2014, 105.

## SALVATION EXPERIENCE

The first step to acquiring power and gifts of the Holy Spirit is to be saved. In Acts of the Apostles, the disciples of Jesus, who were already saved, received it. Jeran Ferguson gave an analogy with an electric bulb and light, saying that one cannot “receive the manifestation of light without a light bulb.” In the same way, the manifestation of God’s power cannot be received without one receiving God (salvation).<sup>22</sup> Don DeWelt, interpreting Acts 2:28, patently states that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes upon repentance and baptism.<sup>23</sup> Discussing the “requirements”<sup>24</sup> to receive the Holy Spirit, the above is corroborated here, as accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour is paramount to acquiring the Holy Spirit. Even though the three thoughts above might come from different contexts, they all emphasise that salvation happens first before receiving the gifts. Their emphasis agrees with the case of Jesus Christ’s disciples, who first accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour and stayed in tune with His ways and teachings before they were empowered.

## DISCIPLESHIP

A few instances could be drawn in the Bible of how discipleship played a vital role in receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. One such case is about Elisha, who was discipled by Elijah and later was filled with the Spirit/Power of God (1 Kings 19:19-21). Another is that of the disciples of Jesus who learned under their Master till they became mature enough to receive the power.

## THIRST/HUNGER FOR THE GIFTS

There is a crucial significance in thirsting or being hungry for something that matters a lot. The hunger propels a high level of sacrifice, intentional pursuit, extreme commitment, tenacity, etc. Writing “How to Receive the Holy Spirit”,<sup>25</sup> Don Krow underscores that in the New Testament, every time the Holy Spirit falls on an individual, a gift from Him manifests, and there will be evidence that such person has received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He further shared that he once became curious about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as people have spoken much about it; then, he knelt one evening and passionately asked God for it. As he vehemently prayed and made his reasons known to God, he had a sudden encounter; the Holy Spirit gave

22. Jeran Ferguson, “The Biblical Foundation: 4 Simple Steps to Receive/Activate the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Retrieved from <https://thebiblicalfoundation.com/4-simple-steps-to-receive-the-gifts-of-the-holy-spirit/>, 9-10. (Accessed 10/17/23).

23. Don DeWelt, *The Power of The Holy Spirit* Vol 1 (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1991) Retrieved from <https://fliphtml5.com/hecd/zqhz/basic#>. (Accessed 18/10/2023).

24. “7 Steps To Receive the Holy Spirit” Retrieved from <https://www.printfriendly.com/p/g/5pN6td> 3. (Accessed 18/10/2023).

25. Don Krow, *How to Receive the Holy Spirit* (USA: Don Krow Ministries 10065 Sun Ridge Circle Rogers), 62. Retrieved from [https://delessons.org/tools/de\\_program\\_condensed/Level\\_1/15\\_.pdf](https://delessons.org/tools/de_program_condensed/Level_1/15_.pdf). (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

him “a language, an utterance” he had not known before.

Therefore, it is suggested that it would be much more beneficial when believers and ministers of the gospel, particularly hunger for this infilling of the power and gift, than to think that God only gives it to those He prefers. Michael Denk states, “Just realise that on this Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, that we celebrate today that God has manifested Himself to every individual.”<sup>26</sup> This suggests that it was not for a selected few but all believers.

## WAITING EAGERLY FOR THE ENDUEMENT

Jesus instructed His disciples, “...stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven” (Luke 24:49, NLT). The ability to eagerly, obediently, and patiently wait for a promise or answer to a request is an essential or indispensable virtue that pays. For instance, each time a pregnant woman waits till full-term and the baby in the utero is delivered, the joy and relief it brings are relatively tremendous. Elisha waited relentlessly under Elijah for the power and gift of the Spirit, and in the long run, he got it and utilised it in doing exploits (2Kgs. 2:1-14).

Similarly, Jesus’s disciples obediently waited until they were endued with the power (Acts 1:4, 14, 2:1). In another instance, Mookgo Kgatla emphasises that the leader of Azusa Street Revival “assured followers that if they prayed for weeks with sufficient earnestness, God was ready to send a new Pentecost. Like the miraculous event described in Acts, this latter-day outpouring of the Spirit would be demonstrated with tongues of flame, healing, speaking in tongues, and other signs and wonders.”<sup>27</sup> Within days, what he said happened. Therefore, “believers” who desire “Pentecostal manifestation” must wait obediently, patiently and painstakingly. They must stay in prayer with every sense of commitment, devotion and passion. To avoid distractions, such waiting periods or moments are advised to be in isolated places, whether privately or corporately.

## ACCEPTANCE/WILLINGNESS FOR MANIFESTATION

The need to accept this gift and the willingness to manifest it (them) is crucial; this is an area of concern regarding the issue of “election or preferment.” For instance, Moses, who was elected, had difficulty accepting the opportunity when he was called, and it took God’s patience to convince him. But the disciples willingly waited in obedience, and as they received it,

26. Michael Denk, “Pentecost Manifestation” <https://www.theprodigalfather.org/pentecost-manifestation/>. (Accessed 29/09/2023).

27. Mookgo Solomon Kgatla, “The influence of Azusa Street Revival in the early developments of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.” In *Missionalia* (Online) vol.44 no.3 Pretoria 2016. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/44-2-156>. (Accessed on 29/09/2023).

they went into action immediately. It is then, therefore, necessary that those who desire to acquire this power will also be willing to accept it with its responsibilities. This paper asserts the validity of acquiring the gift of the Holy Spirit. While steps to receive these gifts have been established, it is necessary to consider their utilisation.

### EXPLOITING/UTILISING THE GIFTS FOR SERVICE

The power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for embellishment, entertainment or commercial purposes but for spiritual services. Anyone who receives or is given must utilise it for spiritual ministries, especially church planting and church growth. Acts 1:8 clarifies that the gift of the Holy Spirit is given for missions (“...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”, KJV).<sup>28</sup> The witnessing of the apostles had much credence as they were seen to be accompanied by the manifestation of miracles, signs and wonders. Furthermore, the gift of the Holy Spirit is “the power to hear from God, to speak in tongues, prophesy, do signs, miracles, and wonders and more.”<sup>29</sup> So, the disciples harnessed it to gather new converts, planted churches, and conquered more lands for God.

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**Church planting is an indispensable task or responsibility of Christians, and when they plant churches, they see to its growth. The fisherman will always use a bait to trap fish into their hook or net, so it is with church planting and growth. Social ministry is a beautiful tool, as are education, free health care, etc.; no matter how sufficient these strategies may appear, this paper argues that Pentecostal Manifestation is the most powerful tool to do missions. Social ministry may fail, but the power and gift of the Holy Spirit are infallible in ministry advancement.**

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The Azusa Street Revival (1906-1915) is a typical example of how the gift of the Holy Spirit was harnessed for church growth and planting new ones. Arun John underscores that the Azusa Street

<sup>28</sup> Krow, 63.

<sup>29</sup> Spirit & Truth, “Walking in Power: The Manifestations Of Holy Spirit.” Retrieved from <https://spiritandtruthonline.org/walking-in-power-the-manifestations-of-holy-spirit/>. (Accessed on 20/09/2023).

revival’s effect traversed worldwide like wildfire, reaching almost all parts of the world.<sup>30</sup> Gustav Niebuhr corroborates that the Azusa Street Revival has gained credence as the central event in the birth of Pentecostalism, which has become a worldwide Christian movement.<sup>31</sup> Adebayo underscores that before September 1906, many missionaries had been sent out as evangelists to the West Coast of the United States, and not less than thirteen were sent to Africa.<sup>32</sup> One could see how that singular event took dominance and influence in the expansion of Christianity today.

As much as the benefit and purpose of these gifts are understood by those who received them, they will not be taken for granted. The understanding drives the individual or group’s temerity to witness, which results in church planting. Caution must be placed here that abuse of the power of the Holy Spirit should be avoided because there are instances of it in the contemporary church. The biblical antecedent of such abuse and its consequence should be enough warning – Acts 8: 9-24.

### CONCLUSION

Church planting is an indispensable task or responsibility of Christians, and when they plant churches, they see to its growth. The fisherman will always use a bait to trap fish into their hook or net, so it is with church planting and growth. Social ministry is a beautiful tool, as are education, free health care, etc.; no matter how sufficient these strategies may appear, this paper argues that Pentecostal Manifestation is the most powerful tool to do missions. Social ministry may fail, but the power and gift of the Holy Spirit are infallible in ministry advancement.

Today, many churches invest a lot in building edifices and decorating them with expensive ornaments to attract members. Some hold multiple programmes occasionally; some even hold crusades at different parts of their enclave, all in the bit to multiply members or plant new churches. Irrespective of how good all these may appear if they are not accompanied by Pentecostal manifestation, the results might be superficial. Healing power, signs, wonders, miracles, etc., are highly recognised and sought after in some churches, which is why many churches have found it a powerful strategy for church planting and growth.

It is observed that every year, pastors graduate in their numbers at the different theological institutions, with a good number not having a place of service. Some spend years waiting for a call, some return to

<sup>30</sup> Arun P. John “Understanding of Divine Healing in the Classical Pentecostal Churches and Its Relation to the Church Growth in the Kerala Context.” Retrieved from <https://www.academia.edu/63401378/>. (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

<sup>31</sup> Gustav Niebuhr, “Miracle on Azusa Street.” Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/20/books/miracle-on-azusa-street.html>. (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

<sup>32</sup> Adebayo, 185

their former jobs, some start a new job, and some, out of desperation, constitute a nuisance in their local churches, etc. All these happen, though; there are lands to conquer for God: places where churches need to be planted, poor churches that need the services of a trained minister, and so on. Some of such people want to go to an "already made church"; some are unwilling to go to the village, and some are afraid to pioneer a new church. There is no doubt that their lacuna is that they do not possess Pentecostal power: the power for healing, signs, wonders, miracles, etc. Jesus pulled the crowd, and the apostles won numerous souls and planted churches even in remote areas; all these were possible through the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit that accompanied their teachings.

Having reviewed Pentecostal manifestation in the past and contemporary times, evaluated its effect on church planting and growth and how it can be acquired and utilised for church planting and growth; this paper, therefore, submits that if declining and plateaued churches and denominations whose presences have not been significantly felt should seek this power and prudently utilise it, they will experience incredible expansion. Hence, all believers, both laity and clergy, are encouraged to seek this power and gifts, correctly utilise them for church planting and growth, and see the tremendous expansion they will experience in the *Missio Dei*.

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