

# Missiology

M.TH- THESIS

The Parousia-Expectation:

*Does it have any effect on mission?*

*A Historical-Missiological Perspective of the Pentecostal Movement*

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

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*Does it have any effect on mission?*  
*A Historical-Missiological Perspective of the Pentecostal Movement*

By



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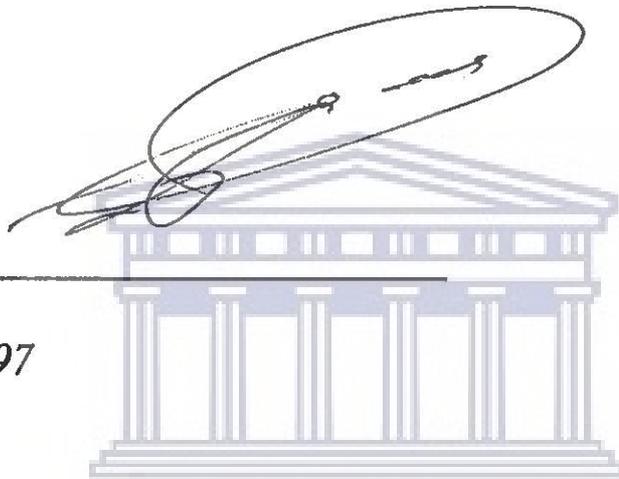
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## DECLARATION

I, Edwin Isaacs, declare that "*The Parousia - Expectation: Does it have any effect on mission? A Historical-Missiological Perspective of the Pentecostal Movement*" is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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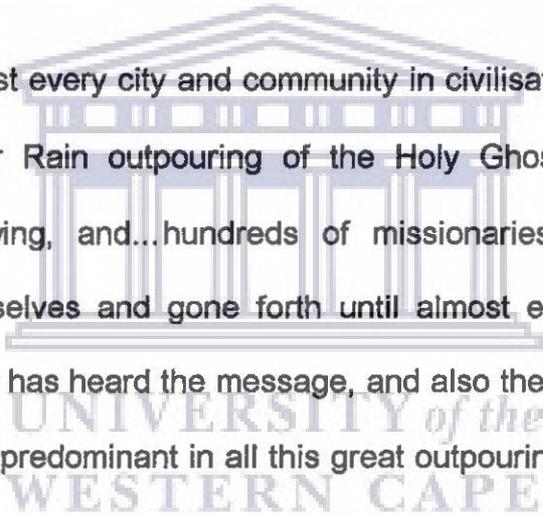
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nearly 90 years ago a new religious movement came into existence, generally described as the Pentecostal Movement (Hocken 1986: 18). Central to the thinking of this movement was the idea that the second coming of Christ is at hand. The spirit of millennialism was very high and all over Christ was expected to return imminently. Everyone was interested in only one thing, and that was the coming of Christ. Anderson records the following information of a convention of the Pentecostal Movement held in 1914,



Almost every city and community in civilisation has heard of the Latter Rain outpouring of the Holy Ghost, with many signs following, and...hundreds of missionaries have consecrated themselves and gone forth until almost every country on the globe has heard the message, and also the prophecy which has been predominant in all this great outpouring, which is "Jesus is coming soon" to this old world in the same manner as He left it to set up His Millennial kingdom... (Anderson 1986: 79).

The central theme of the movement was clearly and accurately pinpointed as "Jesus is coming soon". Anderson further says that even the Azusa mission's paper noted that the prophecies spoken in unknown tongues and visions by the believers witnessed overwhelmingly to this fact (1986: 79).

The worshippers of the Pentecostal Movement enthusiastically looked out for the coming of the Lord and witnessed tirelessly about this.

The phrase "Jesus is coming" seems to have been the centre of this group's kerygma. This phrase was even used as a form of a watchword. Any spiritual blessing is thankfully greeted with the popular saying "Jesus is coming soon" (Anderson 1989: 80). This expression was used by the believers either to mean "goodbye" or "if I don't see you again here, surely then at Christ's return.

Not only did the daily relationships of individual Pentecostals reflect their pre-occupation with Christ's speedy return, but even in their worship ceremonies one notices the same expectation. As has been said the phenomenon of glossolalia was very common during times of worship. The fact that almost every glossolalia had an eschatological dimension speaks clearly about the nature of these gatherings. One can with no doubt draw the conclusion that the collective eschatological mood of these people was surely fanned by utterances about Jesus' soon return. It seems that the phenomenon of glossolalia and the aspect of the "soon coming of Christ" were both integral parts of Pentecostalism (Anderson 1989: 96). However Anderson records that of these two "the soon coming of Christ" received prominence over-above the former. The consistent dominant theme of the early Pentecostal Movement was "Jesus is coming soon." The place of

glossolalia was secondary and it was rather seen as confirming the fact of Jesus' imminent return (1989: 96).

These few remarks give us preliminary indication of the sentiments which characterise the Pentecostal perspective on Christ's second coming. It can be inferred that the Pentecostals had an expectation of the second coming of Christ which was very unique. The parousia-expectation of this group poses certain questions which would reward further investigation. Does the parousia-expectation have positive effects or negative effects? What are the results of fervent and enthusiastic parousia-expectation? In contrast, what are the results of a negative and cold attitude toward the parousia-expectation? Is there a connection between deep spiritual awareness and an extreme parousia-expectation? Is it true that a weak spirituality is the result of indifference and apathy toward Christ's second coming? The above considerations led to the following question which is the focus of this research: ***"The parousia-expectation: Does it have any effect on mission"?***

Chapter 2 will especially concentrate on the aspect of the unique parousia-expectation of the Pentecostals. In particular in this chapter an attempt will be made try to find out place of the parousia-expectation among the Pentecostals and what its effect was on this movement's perspective on mission and evangelism. The history of the Pentecostal Movement will also be referred to because this may clarify the current

developments. The fact that the beginning of the twentieth century coincided with the emergence of African-American Pentecostalism will of course be of significance to this study. Because modern Pentecostalism can be traced back to African-American Pentecostalism (Hollenweger 1972: 22-23), some conclusions will be drawn from that era. It is an almost impossible exercise to study any aspect of modern Pentecostalism without going back to Pentecostalism as it was experienced at the beginning of the twentieth century. If this study should lead the conclusion that the place of the parousia-expectation was first or primary, the reasons for this will also have to be investigated. In this study clarity will be sought about the motives which underlay the Pentecostal Movement's eschatology. The driving force behind this movement's fervent expectation of Christ also needs to be investigated. A clear picture of the basic motive or motives of the Pentecostal parousia-expectation should facilitate an understanding of the Pentecostals' special preoccupation with the imminent coming of Christ.

In his *"Contemporary Missiology"* Verkuyl differentiates between two basic types of motives for fulfilling the missionary task: Pure and impure motives (1978: 163). In his discussion of the pure motives he refers to 1) the motive of obedience, 2) the motive of love, mercy and pity, 3) the motive of doxology 4) the eschatological motive, 5) the motive of haste, 6) the personal motive. About Paul he says,

...Paul in his letters indicates a certain duty which he feels toward the will of God (I Cor.1:17; Gal.2:7). He speaks of an inner necessity (I Cor.9:16) and of being under obligation to all people (Rom.1:14)( Verkuyl 1978: 163).

Verkuyl further contends that the motive of obedience is not limited to Paul but plays a definite role throughout the apostolic literature. The task of fulfilling mission is nothing more than obedience to the command of the Lord. Verkuyl agrees with Hendrik Kraemer and says that missiology must become more and more a *theologia oboedientiae* (in Verkuyl). These few sentences sum up what is meant by the motive of obedience. In his discussion of the motive of love, mercy and pity Verkuyl points out how Jonah was accused by God for lacking these qualities. On the other hand Paul is moved with compassionate love and pity for those who are still living in darkness (Eph.2:1-10). Repeatedly in various of his letters Paul mentions that he, too, in spite of his religiosity and legalism, was once such a rebel (like Jonah) against God, a criminal whose perverted piety cut right at the heart of God who revealed himself in Christ. Throughout his letters he shows his deepest appreciation of God's love for him. On this aspect of mercy Verkuyl further says,

One can see from a text like I Thessalonians 2:8 the depth of Paul's mercy: 'So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were

ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our very own selves...(1978: 165).

The motive of doxology is another motivational factor in the missionary task. Continuous praise of God's name is not something foreign in the writings of Paul. Paul also finds it inspirational to do something which will lead to the exaltation and glorification of the name of God. In the process of missionising, the name of God is uplifted and even popularised. Verkuyl says that Paul's main concern is that " '... the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph' 'through the whole world' and that '...every tongue [might] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father [II Thess.3:1; Phil.2:11]" (1978: 165). This motive of *gloria Deo* is not only present in virtually every theoretical treatment of the motives for mission, but has also inspired the life and work of many missionaries themselves over the centuries. But Paul has a personal motive also which underlines his missionary task. Verkuyl quotes Paul as saying "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings [I Cor.9:23]." Here Paul is referring to an established fact of human experience, namely, that he who rouses others to belief strengthens his own faith as well. Here Paul definitely has personal gain at heart which works positively both for him and the gospel itself; for him, because of the spiritual blessing and joy this proclamation experience brings; for the gospel, because the salvation plan benefits and the kingdom of God is extended.

Another pure motive Verkuyl identifies is the eschatological motive. This is effectively defined in the three words in the Lord's prayer "thy kingdom come". Paul and his co-workers were driven by one thing only and that is the desire for the fullness (*plēroma*) of the body of Christ. In the books of Ephesians and Colossians Paul emphasises how he wants all people to share in the "Body of Christ" (*soma tou Christou*). Missiologists like J.C.Hoekendijk and E.Jansen Schoonhoven note throughout their writings how important this motive was to the pioneer missionaries. The eschatological motive also played a major role in the mission of the Student Volunteer Movement.

The last pure motive Verkuyl identifies is the motive of haste. This motive is closely tied to the motive of eschatology. Mark uses the phrase "and immediately thereafter" no less than thirty times in his gospel in describing the events of Jesus' life. The viewpoint is that Jesus was very calm, yet at the same time intensely hurried, as he discharged his divine mandate in the cities and villages he visited. Paul, too, found himself driven by the same deep compulsion to get the message out quickly. Of all the motives mentioned above, the eschatological motive and to a lesser extent the motive of haste will be of especial interest for the purpose of this thesis. This does not mean that the others will be ignored in favour of these two. Certain of the other motives could also have played an important role in the thinking of the Pentecostals although probably not a primary role. The eschatological motive will definitely be touched on slightly in order to see

how it functioned in the parousia-expectation of the Pentecostals and whether it benefited the missionary enterprise.

The missionary zeal and ardent expectation of Christ, as found among the Pentecostals at the beginning of the twentieth century, are very impressive and appealing (DPCM 88: 264). What was the effect of the Pentecostal Movement on mission and what is its contribution to Christianity with regard to growth and expansion? Is the same passionate and enthusiastic expectation of Christ by the Pentecostals still evident? What has been its impact on missionary zeal? What was the intensity of the expectation of Christ and is there any lesson therein for the Pentecostals of the late twentieth century and other Neo-Pentecostals or Charismatics? Another secondary question is whether it is possible to keep the same level of a fervent expectation of Christ, perpetually, without the possibility that this expectation will at any stage or point in time wane or possibly cease to exist totally. Anderson notices that in the very early stage of the existence of the modern Pentecostal Movement there were already signs of a dramatic downward trend in the parousia-expectation of the Pentecostals. It seems that one's attitude toward eschatological expectation determines one's attitude toward mission. This matter will be looked at thoroughly in this study. *The main focus in this thesis is to take a look at the fervent parousia-expectation as a dynamic catalyst for missionary and evangelistic activity and the eschatological factors which underscore such an expectation.* The intention is not to do a critical analysis but to do a

descriptive assessment of the Pentecostals and the nature of their parousia-expectation.

Chapter two will concentrate on the missionary programmes of the Pentecostal Movement and the extent to which the Pentecostals were influenced by their theology of the parousia or second coming of Christ. If it is true that a fervent parousia-expectation has a positive effect upon missionary action, then it seems likely that a waning expectation of Christ might have the opposite effect. It might be that there is a concern that the Pentecostals do not have the same level of enthusiasm and interest for mission anymore. The same zest and urge which Paul had for missions are perhaps no longer found among the faithful followers of the Pentecostal movement today. Perhaps the manifestation of the kind of boldness of Paul (Rom.1:16) and the eagerness of Peter (Acts 1:15; 2:4; 3:12; 4:8) no longer exist. But these assumptions will have to be taken notice of, although they will not necessarily be thoroughly investigated. If it is true that the missionary spirit of the Pentecostals has diminished, it will be a great pity for the church in general, particularly if we bear in mind what effect Pentecostalism has had on the history of the church. Karl Barth grappled with the same problem of sluggishness, lack of zeal and inertia of the church (cf. Verkuyl 1978: 167).

What is the root cause of this traumatic phenomenon of missionary apathy? If it can be proved that there was a season of sluggishness in the

history of the Pentecostals, then something must be done to rectify the damage. Failure on the part of the Pentecostals can also mean it is a failure for missions. It seems that mission blossoms and succeeds when the spiritual mood and motivation of a church group are healthy. The opposite can also be true, if a church group's faith and trust dwindle, then the same can happen to mission.

Mission is similar to be the heartbeat of any church group. Just as the bloodstream in the veins of the body secures and brings life, so does mission in any church. Mission has the ability to confirm that a church is alive, active and on the move. It cannot be allowed that any church group should fail here, and especially not at this vital stage of history as the beginning of the third millennium approaches. The church exists because of mission. The opposite is true also, mission exists because of the church (Ladd 1989: 153). There are many ways to measure the effectiveness of the evangelistic activities of a church group. One of these must surely be mission. A healthy, strong, vibrant and dynamic church group is a group where the missionary machines run overtime. One needs to look no further than the first Christian church which provides a perfect model of such a church, undoubtedly a Pentecostal church (NBC 1994:1071). It may be inquired whether the earnestness and enthusiasm of the Pentecostals for mission is not a reflection of, repetition of, or a mere nostalgia for, the Pentecostal experience of the first Christian community? Certainly, this and other issues pertaining to the Pentecostals' mood for the parousia-

expectation and the spreading of the good news will have to be investigated. If there is perhaps a lack of missionary zeal in the Pentecostal Movement, then it needs to be ascertained whether this is not just the symptom of a much deeper problem. This lack is possibly the outward reflection of an inner disease, the manifestation of the real crisis. If there are signs of complacency, non-commitment and inertia, than we need to determine whether they have something do with the movement's lack of parousia excitement. Troeltsch and Bloch (Bosch 1991: 504) say that missionary idleness and spiritual lukewarmness are merely the logical consequences of a lack of enthusiastic expectation of the parousia. It will also have to be ascertained whether Christ really expected His followers to have a fervent expectation of the parousia and how this can affect the Pentecostal Movement positively during this dispensation. If the Pentecostals were expected to be enthusiastically awaiting Christ, how did this affect their lives? Most important of all, how did this expectation affect their missionary activities, outreach and evangelistic programmes? More specifically, how did the Pentecostals' expectation impact on the drive and zeal with which they were supposed to embark on the task of mission? As part of the larger body of Christ, the Pentecostal Movement must be constantly aware of the main reason of their existence, namely to evangelise, to proclaim the gospel of redemption and even, if possible, to convert the world to Christ. The followers of Christ, the Pentecostals too, must make disciples for Christ wherever they go.

In response to the question about when He will return, Jesus' reply to the disciples was this:

...And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then comes the end.  
(Matth.24: 14)

In this statement, the last things (*ta eschata*) are clearly connected to mission (Henry 1960: 63-64). The order of fulfilment is clearly spelled out: mission takes place first, then comes the end and not in the opposite order. The implication is that the parousia will and can only take place once the missionary task is completed (Henry 1960: 63-64). It is so that the first Christians were delighted and filled with excitement at Christ's promise to return imminently. This promise raised many expectations among the Christians, but in the interim, before His coming, they had to get involved with mission (Henry 1960: 63-64). It seems that during the first Christian era, the entire process of mission was at its height. The first Christian community, the ideal of any religious body - the Pentecostals included, was very active in mission (Carver 1979: 159). The way in which the first church was involved in mission is best described by Ernst Bloch as revolutionary action at its best (in Bosch 1991: 47). But what was the driving force behind the missionary zeal of the Christians of the first century and is there a possibility that it can be linked to the parousia?

One can find many reasons to explain the phenomena of missionary zeal. But what is relevant to this discussion is the question whether a genuine seriousness about the second coming of Christ is able to boost missionary action and evangelisation. Was this the case with the Pentecostals and can any religious body use this as model to put more fervour into its missionary programmes? Another point which Bloch (Bosch 1991: 499) raises about the parousia is that '...the eschatological office was mostly closed for the nineteenth century' (Bosch 1991: 499). The presumption is that the parousia-expectation was at its lowest ebb during this time, while at the beginning of the twentieth century the parousia-expectation revived. The general feeling is that during the twentieth century, Christians have been very much aware of the coming of Christ and the offices of 'date-setters' have been open around the clock. It is interesting to notice that the beginning of the twentieth century was also precisely the time when modern Pentecostalism started.

These facts bring to light another important aspect, that of the phenomenon of a clearly fluctuating mood which prevailed and even dominated certain centuries in the church in general, and also in certain church groups. But can the Pentecostals be positively excluded from this aspect and were they undoubtedly consistent in their expectation of the parousia and in their missionary activities, too? If this is found to be their case, then the implications for the message of the Gospel should be considered carefully.

It is hoped that this study will provide some answers to this and other questions. These questions become more and more important especially if it is borne in mind that the third millennium is approaching. Throughout this century the Pentecostals seem to have been waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ. This has not happened yet and no one knows when it will happen. About the first church, which is presumed to have been the ideal of the Pentecostal Movement, Joachim Jeremias says this,

... the primitive church saw itself midway between two crises, one belonging to the past, and the other to the future. Standing thus between the cross and Christ's return, the church looked to Jesus' guidance, and found itself forced by the changed conditions to interpret those of His parables which were intended to rouse people to a sense of the gravity of the moment, as directions for the conduct of the Christian community (Jeremias 1966: 33).

Jeremias' statement applies to the Pentecostal Movement too. It is quite clear that the first Christians were bound to proclaim the message about the Cross and about its victory which ended in the glorious resurrection of Christ. On the other hand, they were faced with the realisation that He might return at any moment (Jeremias 1966: 33). The primitive church was not only faced with the past-future dilemma; it also realised that it was a part not only of the history and events of this earthly realm, but also of the

heavenly. It is in the context of these facts that one must understand the interest of the first believers in the second coming of Christ. While, on the one hand, the early church was faced with the promise of Christ's imminent return (Act. 1:8) (Munck, 1967: 7), on the other hand, it had to be involved in mission (Matt. 24:14). Even as the followers of Jesus Christ embarked on evangelisation, they expected the imminent return of their Master. The indications are that the followers expected Him very soon, even within their lifetime. The Pentecostals' concentration on the coming of Christ has been noted above and Christ was expected to come within their own life-time.

The question is whether the Pentecostal Movement's enthusiasm and missionary zeal were the result of its fervent parousia-expectation, or are there other likely explanations for its enthusiasm? It would make sense to use all available energy, time and effort to spread the message of Christ if there was certainty that His parousia was going to take place, and more so if there was certainty that it would take place within the believer's lifetime. Robinson says that the second coming of Christ is but one element in a whole complex of ideas which together made up the hope of the early church in general, which can be extended to include the Pentecostal Movement (Robinson 1979: 16). A definite answer has to be found for the question whether the notion can be accepted without doubt that it is the expectation of Christ's prompt and imminent return that fuels any missionary flame. It can be assumed that an extensive missionary programme had been embarked on by the early Christians prior to the

programme had been embarked on by the early Christians prior to the parousia and that the likelihood of the imminent return of Christ impacted positively upon those Christians' missionary appetite. But in the mean time, as they expected the parousia, they also had to prepare themselves for the possibility that the enthusiastically awaited, imminent parousia could be delayed or even completely postponed. Is there not a possibility that the Pentecostal Movement has encountered the same problem as the first church centuries ago? And did the continuous delay of the parousia not impact negatively on the Pentecostal Movement? If there is or was a problem in this regard, is there not a way out? It is important to remember that the delay of the parousia could have either a negative or positive effect upon an individual's social world. The delay of the parousia could possibly have a tremendous effect on both the social and spiritual life of a believer. It is essential to note what the behaviourists have to say about the behaviour of believers regarding the parousia and especially how this was manifested in the behaviour of the Pentecostals. Can their behaviour, their lifestyle and their thoughts provide indications that they were serious about this matter of the parousia? The primary commission of the church, and for that matter of the Pentecostals, is to evangelise and to take the Gospel across all boundaries of the world. If this is the case, how does the expectation of the parousia affect the primary mission of the Pentecostals? This research attempts to throw light on these questions.

There also seems to be a positive tension between evangelisation and missionary work, on the one hand, and the parousia, on the other (Saayman & Kritzingen 1996: 73-82). An enthusiastic expectation of the parousia can have a positive influence on evangelisation or missionary work. The opposite can also be true: apathy towards the coming of Christ may possibly dampen the missionary spirit. The eschatological views of some of the contemporary theologians will also be discussed briefly. The purpose will be to see whether their eschatological models can be positively applied to the Pentecostals' understanding of the parousia and to see what would their advice to this zealous group of Christians would be.

It will be noticed that material of some Reformed theologians has been used. The reason for this is that these theologians may help to shape – or at least refine – one's thoughts about the parousia-expectation. The intention of this thesis is not to draw a comparison between the Pentecostal tradition and the Reformed tradition. Neither is a thorough discussion of the Reformed tradition offered; the focus is on the Pentecostal tradition.

## 2. THE PENTECOSTALS AND THE PAROUSIA - EXPECTATION

### 2.1 THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

#### 2.1.1 Charles Fox Parham and the beginning of Pentecostalism

Although there were various small Pentecostal experiences (like baptisms in the Holy Spirit accompanied by glossolalia utterances) just before and after the beginning of the twentieth century, the origin of the Pentecostals is generally traced back to two incidents very early in this century (Frodsham 1946:15-17; Kendrick 1961 :34-36). Some writers prefer to link the origin of the Pentecostal Movement to Charles Parham's Bible College at Topeka (Kansas) (Nichol 1966: 26). Others prefer to link this Movement's origin to the Azusa Street revival of William J. Seymour (Nichol 1966: 32).

From the age of fifteen, Charles Parham was a lay preacher in the Congregational Church. He became discontented with his complacent, prosperity-minded, cold formalistic Church and its members. Because of this situation, he realised that something drastic had to be done about the meagre and empty spiritual life of his people. He then realised that the answer to this problem would be a divine endowment of the Spirit (Nichol 1966: 26). This led to the opening of his Bible College at Topeka (Kansas) in September 1900 where the teaching focused on holiness and a search

for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (DPCM 1988: 660). Every one of his students was charged to study the Bible individually in order to see if there was some sort of special indication that a person had been baptised with the Holy Spirit. Their analysis led to a unanimous conclusion that on each occasion in the Apostolic times when the Holy Spirit baptised believers, there was an outward manifestation, namely, speaking in tongues (Hollenweger 1972: 22). Enthused about their new discovery, they all embarked on a search for the same experience of Pentecost as in Acts 2. On New Year's Eve, as Parham relates the incident, some seventy outsiders and forty students gathered for the traditional "Night Watch" service. A woman, called Agnes Ozman, requested to have hands laid on her so that she might receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Uncertain of himself and hesitantly, yet faithfully, Parham prayed for her and the results thereof Parham records as follows,

I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days. Seeing this marvellous manifestation of the restoration of Pentecostal power, ...we decided as a school to wait upon God. We felt that God was no respecter of persons and what He had so graciously poured out upon one, He would upon all (Nichol 1966: 28).

As a result of the experience of the woman mentioned above, all the other students of Parham felt motivated and encouraged because they too had long desired to undergo the same experience. Even Parham himself had not yet gone through that experience although he was the leader and the one who had prayed for Mrs. Ozman. He too was still in search of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not long after this time, both Parham and his other students were likewise baptised with the Holy Spirit, with the accompanying sign of glossolalia (DPCM 1988:660).

Of absolute importance for the sake of mission and evangelism is the fact that many, who went through this experience, felt uniquely empowered, and immediately went into missionary and evangelistic work. Nichol says that Pentecostals have always equated the impartation of the Holy Spirit with the reception of power, a dynamic to assist them to witness more effectively. And, they never considered it to be a superfluous mystical experience that was given to titillate the seeker (Nichol 1966: 29).

It will also be noticed that the Holy Spirit experience of Parham and his followers not only filled them with a special sense of urgency for mission and evangelism, but also with a new awareness of the last days. It is undoubtedly clear that Parham and his followers linked their spiritual experience with the *eschaton* (Nichol 1966: 29). They felt that the Lord's coming was at hand, and, in the light of this fact they believed that Joel's prophecy was coming to fulfilment, and therefore the gospel should be

preached with greater urgency to every creature. It seems that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was not seen as an end in itself but a means to the end. Parham and his students, in order to be better equipped for service probably, longed for this empowerment or endowment with the Spirit. If it is so that they were filled with a greater sense of urgency for the gospel as a result of the "spirit baptism", then we must admit that mission and evangelism are the ultimate beneficiaries of this whole phenomenon.

### **2.1.2 William Joseph Seymour and the beginning of modern Pentecostalism**

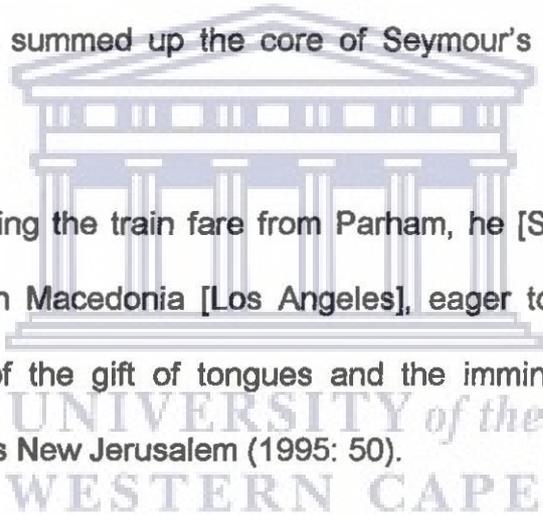
Among the students of Parham was William Joseph Seymour, a Negro from Centerville, Louisiana (Hollenweger 1972: 22). He was a Baptist preacher of Holiness persuasion who had been born a slave in Louisiana and had been saved and sanctified under the "Evening Light Saints" (Anderson 1979: 60). Stocky and somewhat dishevelled in appearance, customarily quiet and unassuming, but fervent in prayer and preaching, Seymour had a vaguely unsettling effect on others. This effect was enhanced by the blindness of one eye (Anderson 1979: 60), the result of smallpox which he contracted while he was in Indianapolis (DPCM 1988: 780). But irrespective of his physical defects and oratorical deficiency, Seymour became a zealous "seeker" (Anderson 1979: 60) of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Responding to an invitation, Seymour went to Los Angeles sometime in January 1906. He could not have known that this move would

mark the start of the renowned Los Angeles revival (Nichol 1966: 32). On the day of his induction service, Seymour preached a simple sermon from Acts 2:4 with the title "Anyone who does not speak in tongues is not baptised in the Holy Spirit", although he himself had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. While many, specially the older section of the Holiness Church, claimed to have had "the baptism of the Holy Spirit", Seymour insisted that theirs was only one or other "spiritual" or "sanctified" experience, but definitely not that of the Spirit's baptism (Hollenweger 1972: 22).

Consequently, Seymour was expelled from that church and had to make an alternative plan. Later Richard Asberry offered him a place at 214 Bonnie Brae Street, where he continued his services which focused on Holy Spirit baptism followed by speaking in tongues (Nichol 1966: 32-33). After several weeks of prayer meetings in the Asberry home, Seymour and his followers received, on Sunday 9 April 1906, the sought-for tongues experience, an event that sparked an intense spiritual revival (DPCM 1988:780; Nichol 1966: 32-33). For three days and nights they shouted and praised God. People began to come from everywhere, forcing Seymour and his followers to procure an old frame building (once a Methodist Church) on 312 Azusa Street in the industrial section of Los Angeles (Nichol 1966; 33). The building supplies that cluttered the walls were pushed aside; planks were placed upon empty nail kegs to provide seating space for the multitudes who came at ten o'clock in the morning,

and often remained until three o'clock on the following morning. By May 1906 more than a thousand people were trying to enter the small 40-60 foot mission to witness the scenes of revival (DPCM 1988: 780). The experiences of the Azusa Street revival were such that a reporter wrote, "Pentecost has come to Los Angeles" (Anderson 1979: 67). People of various races attended the services, disregarding the discriminatory laws, which existed in America at the time. Nowhere were racist divisions and prejudices to be seen; everyone was just excited about what was going on at Azusa Street (Hollenweger 1972: 22).

Harvey Cox best summed up the core of Seymour's message when he says that,



Borrowing the train fare from Parham, he [Seymour] set off for his own Macedonia [Los Angeles], eager to preach the good news of the gift of tongues and the imminent coming of the glorious New Jerusalem (1995: 50).

Seymour and his followers were ardently searching for the "tongues experience" (Cox 1995: 50). In the "tongue experience" they would find spiritual fulfilment and empowerment. And this is exactly what happened during the renowned Azusa Street revival. The tongue experience was not only a type of divine enduement and refreshment, but was understood by Seymour and his followers to be an eschatological sign. It was a sign of the last days. The tongues experience, as an eschatological sign, points

forward to the second coming of Christ. But not only that, it provided Seymour and his followers with a fervent "primal hope" (Cox 1995: 111). This "primal hope" is needed in the interim while Christ's coming is awaited. This "primal hope" was kept high by the "tongues experience".

But all did not end with the new glossolalia experience and renewed eschatological hope. The Azusa Street revival erupted into an explosive worldwide mission. Many of the followers of Seymour became the founders of large influential congregations and ministries in the United States of America (DPCM: 34). Conservative religious groups which existed at the time of the Azusa Street revival, underwent a complete change. The whole of Los Angeles was affected by what was happening in one of the city's most insignificant streets. Even South Africa was not left unaffected by the revival at Los Angeles. The arrival of John G. Lake and Hezmalhalch, disciples of Seymour, in Johannesburg testifies to this fact. Furthermore, a South African by the name of David Du Plessis was indirectly influenced by the Azusa Street revival.

### **2.1.3 David Du Plessis: Commissioned by the Holy Spirit**

David Johannes Du Plessis was born on 7 February 1905 in a town called Twenty-four Rivers near Cape Town (DPCM: 250). His parents became Pentecostals under the influence of John G. Lake and Hezmalhalch, two missionaries to South Africa mentioned above. In the earliest ministry in the AFM (Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa) David Du Plessis was a

teenage street preacher. In the middle 1920's, seeking fulfilment of his call to full-time ministry, he variously served part-time and full-time pastoral roles (including a period of employment in the railways) in the towns of Benoni, De Aar and Pretoria. On 11 April 1930, at the age of twenty-five, he was ordained as a Pastor in the AFM church. Spittler says of Du Plessis that he played a leading role in the AFM, the strongest Pentecostal church in South Africa (in DPCM: 251). He edited *The Comforter/Die Trooster*, the bilingual monthly periodical of this denomination. For twenty years, from 1936 to 1947, he occupied the position of General Secretary of the AFM.

One morning in January 1936, while he was busy at his office in Johannesburg, something happened which would have a profound effect upon the life of David Du Plessis. The office door was opened suddenly and in burst Smith Wigglesworth, a Pentecostal evangelist from Bradford, Yorkshire. Although Wigglesworth was responding to an invitation from Du Plessis, he offered no formal greeting, but instead lifted Du Plessis from his seat, pushed him against the wall and placed his hands on his shoulders. Hocken says that Du Plessis knew instantly that this was a prophecy. The prophecy reads as follows,

There is a revival coming that at present the world knows nothing about. It will come through the churches. It will come in a fresh way. When you see what God does in this revival you will then have to admit that all that you have seen previously is a

mere nothing in comparison with what is to come. It will eclipse anything that has been known in history. Empty churches, empty cathedrals, will be packed again with worshippers. Buildings will not be able to accommodate the multitudes. Then you will see fields of people worshipping and praising together. The Lord intends to use you in this revival. For you have been in Jerusalem long enough. The Lord will send you to the uttermost parts of the earth. If you are faithful and humble, the Lord will use you and if you remain faithful and humble, you will see the greatest events in church history (Hocken 1986: 19).

Referring to this incident Hollenweger says that Wigglesworth continued to tell Du Plessis various other visions he had had the same morning (1972: 346). The experience that morning was overwhelming. The revival predicted in the prophecy would be so powerful that any previous Pentecostal revival would be overshadowed by it. Even the Pentecostal movement would pale beside the revival which God was to bring to the churches. The term 'churches' in this vision presumably refers to any ecumenical church outside the traditional Pentecostal churches. Another piece of the same vision, mentioned above, is found in Hollenweger's *The Pentecostals* and it reads as follows,

...You will bring the message of Pentecost to all churches... You will travel more than most evangelists do...God is going to

revive the churches in the last days and through them turn the world upside down...(1972: 346).

This vision is clearly connected to the last days and presumably to the second coming of Christ. The main role player in this vision is Du Plessis. He would play a key role in a complete new Pentecostal experience, which would go beyond the traditional Pentecostal boundaries. It is also evident from the content of the vision that this new Pentecostalism in the ecumenical churches is depicted as an eschatological sign. Wigglesworth makes it undoubtedly clear in the vision that all of this would take place as a sign of the Spirit's operation in the last days. The mission of Du Plessis, therefore, should be seen as a direct command of God and also as something, which would take place in the last days. After World War II, Du Plessis again met with Wigglesworth in England and discussed this vision (Hocken 1986: 19). During that discussion Wigglesworth said these words to Du Plessis,

I feel the time is very near. I am not going to live much longer. I have asked the Lord if I could have a part in this or help you and the Lord said, 'No, you will not be alive when this begins', After I pass on, then I believe the Lord will speak to you (Hocken: 1986: 19-20).

Not long after this meeting, Wigglesworth died. When he passed away on the 12 March 1947, he was eighty-seven years old. Right after this, the

vision immediately started to work in the life of Du Plessis. After a serious accident at a railroad crossing in West Virginia, Du Plessis spent a long period in hospital where he contemplated the vision intensely. One day, during a time of prayer and devotion, he heard a voice addressing these words to him,

The time for the fulfilment of the prophecy Smith Wigglesworth gave you has arrived. It is time to begin. I want you to go to the leaders of the churches (Du Plessis 1977: 157).

These words led to a spontaneous discussion in prayer, between Du Plessis and God. He became convicted of his prejudice and bias toward 'the other churches'. His negative attitude toward the historical church became an inner conflict, which he had to deal with before he could really be the person who would bring Pentecost to that church (Du Plessis 1977: 157). These were the very same churches against which he had preached. Du Plessis developed a personally antagonistic attitude toward these churches because they had put 'his people' out of their fellowship. Because of this exclusion a separate Pentecostal Movement had developed (Du Plessis 1977: 157). These are the thoughts, which went through Du Plessis' mind while in discussion with God concerning the prophecy of Wigglesworth. God's answer to him was this,

I never gave you authority to justify anybody. I only gave you authority to forgive. And if you forgive, you will love them. And if

you love them, you will want to forgive. Now you can choose (Du Plessis 1977:158).

Du Plessis obviously chose to love and to forgive. Immediately after this special encounter with God in prayer, the prophecy of Wigglesworth began to be fulfilled. Du Plessis' ecumenical vocation had begun. By the turn of 1950 he was well known and was a very popular figure among the Pentecostals.

After twenty years of service as General-Secretary of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa, during which he played a prominent part in the first Pentecostal World Conference in Zurich in 1947, Du Plessis was named secretary of the Conference with the responsibility of organising the second Pentecostal World Conference in Paris in 1949 (Hocken 1986: 61). He was forced to resign as General-Secretary of the AFM in order to execute his new responsibility. Du Plessis served as organising secretary for the PWC for nearly a decade, from its 1949 meeting in Paris to its 1958 meeting in Toronto. He resigned after the 1952 London meeting but was requested to serve again following the 1955 Stockholm conference (DPCM: 252).

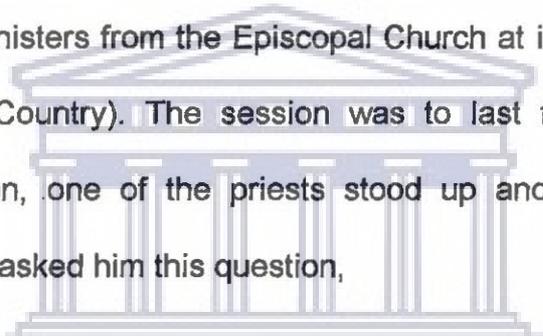
In 1951 while he was in Dallas, Du Plessis heard an inner summons to visit the offices of the World Council of Churches in New York. At this point he was not really ready for a Pentecostal initiative in the mainline churches (Hocken 1986:61). Nevertheless, he went to New York, unannounced and

uninvited, and was allowed to speak to some of the hierarchies of the WCC and to address an audience (DPCM 1988: 252). This became the beginning of an extensive programme of involvement with the ecumenical churches. After hearing some hard words for Latin American Pentecostals from John Mackay, president of Princeton Seminary, Du Plessis wrote to Mackay, and the two became friends.

Mackay was Du Plessis' introduction to organised ecumenism. As president of the International Missionary Council, Mackay brought Du Plessis to the 1952 meeting at Willingen, West Germany, and had him address 210 delegates (DPCM 1988: 252). Probably because of Du Plessis' interviews with more than half of the global ecclesiastical representatives, most who had never seen a rational Pentecostal, he there earned the title "Mr. Pentecost". It is here that he also met W.A. Visser t' Hooft who invited him to the 1954 World Council Assembly at Evanston, Illinois (DPCM). By 1959 Du Plessis was giving lectures at major theological centres such as Princeton, Yale, Union, Colgate, Bossey, Drew, Chicago, Connecticut, and others (DPCM; Sherrill 1975: 62). Three Roman Catholic pontiffs John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II received Du Plessis. While both Du Plessis and Donald Gee (a prominent figure in the Assemblies of God in America) were invited to the WCC Third Assembly at New Dehli, Gee declined in deference to the concerns of Pentecostal brethren. But Du Plessis went which clearly manifests his attitude with regard to the ecumenical movement (DPCM). Spittler records that Du

Plessis attended all six assemblies of the WCC, from Amsterdam (1948) to Vancouver (1983), which were convened during his lifetime. He was also invited to the third session of Vatican II (1963-65). Spittler further says that the crown of Du Plessis' ecumenical achievements lies in the development of the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, one of the wide series of discussions with separated brethren which resulted from his presence at Vatican II (DPCM).

Du Plessis was not an acknowledged theologian. He left no tightly argued theological work behind. One day he was invited to be the guest speaker to a delegation of ministers from the Episcopal Church at its headquarters at Seabury House (Country). The session was to last for thirty minutes. During the session, one of the priests stood up and in a reasonably vehement manner asked him this question,



Mr. Du Plessis, do you suggest that you, the Pentecostals, have the truth and that all other churches not (Sherrill 1975: 62)?

Du Plessis responded by using a parable about a piece of frozen beef such as his wife had in her kitchen. He told his audience that the theologians would be able to analyse that piece of beef and state various facts about certain technical aspects such as the breed and age of the slaughtered animal, the weight of the beef, its vitamin content, etc. But when his wife took the same piece of meat, marinated it and put it on the fire, then

something else would start to happen. When the their child got the smell of the meat, his immediate response would be, "What a delicious smell, Mummy. I want some". Du Plessis concluded this parable by saying "Gentlemen, you (the Ecumenical movements) and us (the Pentecostals) have the same truth. The difference is simple, "You have it on ice; we have it on fire". At this the priest who asked the question nodded, he got the answer (Sherrill 1975: 62).

#### **2.1.4 Parham, Seymour and Du Plessis – further reflections**

We now need to reflect on the three personalities we have discussed above. Parham and his students started teaching classes in an effort to search for a for a new experience of the Spirit or the "tongues experience." From a starting point of spiritual poverty and lukewarmness their persistent waiting eventually resulted in the experience of the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2. Once Parham and his students had received the Holy Spirit, they immediately felt tremendously empowered. The former meagreness and apathy were suddenly gone and they themselves became aware of a boldness they had never known before. But that was not all. Parham and his students felt uniquely empowered for mission and evangelisation. At the same time they were filled with a new awareness of the second coming of Christ. Their awareness of the *eschaton* was revitalised and at the same time their motivation for mission received a tremendous boost. It needs to be noted that these two, the renewed *eschaton* awareness and the

revitalised missionary action, functioned almost concomitantly. Parham and his students were now actively involved in missionising because the *eschaton* was at hand. *What is interesting to notice here is that the eschaton now becomes an agent in the service of mission.* The fervent parousia-expectation of Parham and his students became a motivating agent for mission. Although we have seen that these two, mission and the *eschaton*, functioned together, we cannot say that the entire renewal process started with them. It seems rather that it is a process which started somewhere else, but resulted in them.

From our discussion above, it is quite clear that in the entire process, four components are involved, namely, spiritual poverty, Holy Spirit experience, renewed missionary motivation and a renewed *eschaton* awareness. The process started with spiritual poverty and starvation, which lead them to serious search and introspection of their inner selves. This led to a desperate search for a new spiritual experience. This spiritual restoration and renewal boosted mission and at the same time the participants found themselves occupied with a unique sense of an expectation of the coming of Christ. The conclusion to be drawn from the discussion above, is that the entire process had a very unhappy start with a very happy ending. Whether it will always take place in this order and whether all these elements will always be present in such a process, is difficult to say. But what can be said is that all of this started at a time when there was much doubt surrounding the spiritual condition of Parham and his followers. The

conclusion that can be drawn from all that has been said above, is that the response of the Parhamites to the question of the title of this thesis would definitely be a positive "yes". For the Parhamites, a fervent parousia-expectation undoubtedly impacted positively on missionary action.

**Seymour** and his followers also looked forward to a "tongues experience" to fill the gaps resulting from spiritual poverty and emptiness and to end their spiritual thirst and hunger. He did not look forward to it as a spiritual elevator for the individual or for groups, but as an eschatological sign. The conclusion can be drawn that the "tongues experience" was for Seymour and his followers a sign of the last days, which would mean that the second coming of Christ was at hand. In their theology, the "tongues experience" and the *eschaton* functioned together. The *eschaton* is awaited for. If it does not take place within a certain time, problems would certainly arise for Seymour and his people. And, in order to be able to wait and keep on waiting should any delay take place, they needed something else; what Cox described as "primal hope". It seems, from the discussion above, that the "tongues experience" functioned more or less as a catalyst in the entire process. The "tongues experience" produced primal hope, the very substance which is needed to make waiting and extended waiting possible. The conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that the "tongues experience" is the source of eschatological hope which maintains the vitality of *eschaton*. This seemed to be the experience of Seymour and his followers. But something else also happened. A new sense of missionary

awareness can also be detected among these people. The fact that many new congregations, ministries, para-churches and churches emerged because of the Azusa revival is convincing evidence. This revival was not only a national phenomenon but also touched the international arena, South Africa included. There must be some reason for this. Could it be that the "tongues experience" of the Seymour movement had a hand in it? Because before this experience and the revival experience, there was no possibility that Seymour and his followers could influence their own community (Cox 1995). Socially they were too inferior and insignificant. But the same thing cannot be said of these people after their sought-for new experience. It seems that the "tongues experience" played a major role, although not the only one, in all of this. There was an extensive missionary programme and a remarkable evangelistic enthusiasm present among Seymour and his followers. The same thing was observed among the Parhamites. Where did this new missionary zeal and enthusiasm of Seymour and his people suddenly come from? It seems that the "tongues experience" not only provided them with a spiritual upliftment, but also with tremendous power and drive for mission. The "tongues experience" not only played the role of a spiritual elevator but also the means of enduement and empowerment for effective missionary activity. Mission and evangelisation were also the beneficiaries in the whole process. The Seymour movement did originally have a parousia-expectation. However, it was an apathetic, cold expectation. Once it became a parousia-expectation filled with warmth and

excitement, produced by the “tongues experience”, they were filled with “primal hope”, indispensable for making the wait for the second coming of Christ much <sup>more</sup> worthwhile. In agreement with the Parhamites, Seymour and his people would definitely say that a fervent parousia-expectation influences missionary activity and evangelisation positively.

But it seems that things worked slightly differently in the case of David Du Plessis. It seems that the prophecies of Smith Wigglesworth played a role in Du Plessis’ life right from the outset. Du Plessis vacated his positions in the AFM-Church out of consideration for the prophecies of Wigglesworth regarding his life. The starting point in his ministry was the *eschaton*, and because of this, he committed his entire life to mission, not only on a national, but even on an international level. He was commissioned through the prophecies to take Pentecost to the Non-Pentecostals as a sign of the last days. Again, in the case of Du Plessis, it can be observed that the *eschaton* and mission functioned together although the process did not start in the same order as it did with Parham and Seymour. The conclusion though is that even in the life and ministry of David Du Plessis there was certainly a lively and effective parousia-expectation. Moreover, this fervent expectation was the driving force behind the missionary journeys and campaigns throughout his life.

## 2.2 The Parousia-Expectation

A closer look needs now to be taken at the aspect of the parousia-expectation. According to Robinson, the concept of the Second Coming or Second Advent is not primarily a biblical expression (1979: 17). He argues that this concept probably only made its appearance during the time of the Church Fathers after 100 A.D (Robinson 1979: 17). His contention is that the word in the New Testament nearest to the idea of the Second Coming is the term "parousia" (Robinson 1979: 18; I Cor.15:23, James 5:7, 2 Pet.3:4, 1 John 2:28). For Robinson the term "parousia" has various meanings: "revelation", "appearing", "manifest", "seeing". For the purpose of this thesis, the term will be used as meaning "the expectation of the coming of Christ from heaven to the earth in manifest and final glory" (Vos 1979: 74-75).

The event of the parousia is associated with various other events which will take place at the same time. Firstly, the word is connected to the concept of the "the day of the Lord" (1 Cor.1:7, 1 Thes.4:15-5:11, 2 Thes.2:1, 2 Pet.3:1-10, Acts 2:20, 2 Pet.3:12) (Frame 1912: 164-171). The expression "the day of the Lord" is a general and comprehensive expression for the consummation of God's purpose, alike in victory and in judgement (Frame 1912: 164-171). This expression conveys the idea that the parousia is the day of the Lord, and therefore the day of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the term "parousia" is also connected with "the day of judgement" (Acts 10:42) when

God will finally judge the world (Acts 10:42). Thirdly, the term "parousia" is associated with "the end of all things" (1 Peter 4:7; Reicke 1964: 121-122) and "the last hour" (1 John 2:18, 1 Peter 1:5; Reicke 1964: 121-122). Fourthly, the concept "parousia" is used in connection with "the ingathering of the elect" (Mark 13:26-27, Matt.24: 30-31).

There is another meaning of the term parousia which is worthwhile mentioning here. During the second Christian era this term was part of a very popular expression, *he deutera parousia*, which was used with regard to the second coming of Christ (Carver 1979: 149). This phrase, however, is not a biblical phrase; it is not found anywhere in the bible. Carver says that the nearest approximation to this phrase is found in the book of Hebrews signifying effectively that Christ would "appear the second time" (Hebrew 9:28; Carver 1979: 149). But this promise has the word *ophthesethai* rather than *parousia*. The central idea of the term *ophthesethai* is visibility, and it can mean personal presence, but personal presence is not the essential meaning of the word. Carver contends that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews intended to convey the idea of Christ's personal presence, but which could mean visibility at a distance as at the trial of Stephen in Acts 7:56 (1979: 149).

Carver further identifies seven different ways in which Christ can come or can be present. Firstly, Christ comes into a person's heart and life in some manner when he repents and believes in Christ as his Saviour (Rev.3:20).

Secondly, Christ referred to His coming through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In preparing His disciples for his death, Christ informed them that He would not leave them comfortless or as orphans, but that "He" would come to them (John 14: 18). Thirdly, there is also a sense in which death involves a coming of Christ to the one dying (Acts 7: 59). Fourthly, although there is disagreement regarding which texts speak of Christ coming in judgement on the Jews in A.D. 70, there is general agreement that such a coming is implied in the Gospels, and that it was fulfilled in due course. Fifthly, there is also the possibility of a secret, invisible for some and visible for others, second coming of Christ. Sixthly, some pretribulationists and rapturists believe in two future comings of Christ. The first will be the rapture of the Church to heaven. Thereafter, after seven years, Christ with his Church will return again, this time to establish the millennial kingdom. Lastly, some amillennialists and post-millennialists hold to one future second coming of Christ at which time all the dead will be resurrected, all the living will be changed, and there will be a single judgement of all who have ever lived.

Berkouwer speaks about Christ's presence , on the one hand, in the sense of experiencing it in this dispensation, and, on the other hand, in the sense of His physical appearance at the expected *parousia*. Berkouwer further contends that the perspective on the *parousia* originates with the community of believers, who have constant communion with their Lord (1972; 142-143). The aspect of the presence of Christ in the sense of the

coming of the Holy Spirit, the presence in the sense of Christ being in someone's heart and the aspect of Him returning soon to be with the Church, are more in line with the general thinking of the ordinary Pentecostal. *The origin of the Pentecostal Movement, as seen above, can therefore undoubtedly be traced back to its special emphasis on the parousia and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Each one of these two just mentioned constitutes one or other form of the presence of Christ, although each is totally different in form.*

It will be helpful at this stage to take a look at some aspects of the doctrinal roots of the Pentecostals. Nichol quotes Louis Gasper as saying that in matters of doctrine, Pentecostals can be described as Evangelicals whose theology is akin to Fundamentalism (1966: 3). Fundamentalism is that militant movement which arose after World War I, and was designed to purge American Protestantism of all those followers who refused to subscribe to orthodox beliefs, such as biblical inerrancy, virgin birth, atoning sacrifice of Christ's death, literal resurrection, and second coming of Christ (Nichol 1966: 3). Ellingsen says that,

...Fundamentalism is a distinctively American phenomenon, that it is not at all indigenous to Europe or the rest of the world. In large part this is a function of the originating context of the Fundamentalist movement and its overriding concern to restore the "old-time religion" in the face of the peculiar form of the

American confrontation with the new Enlightenment modes of thinking (1988: 57).

Synan, on the other hand, describes Fundamentalism as a movement among theologically conservative Protestant churches that reached its height in America during the 1920's and survives in resurgent post-World War II fundamentalist and evangelical churches and movements (DPCM 1988: 325). According to Synan, this movement began in England in the wake of the French Revolution. When Pope Pius VI was exiled in 1798 and a new regime installed in revolutionary France with a new calendar and the seeming overthrow of the established order, some Christians believed that they were living in the last days before the end of the age. English Evangelicals thus began to seek explanations for these events in biblical prophecies relating to the end times. It was then that some of the Fundamentalists saw in the Scriptures the teaching of the imminent rapture of the church at the second coming of Christ which would occur before the millennium (DPCM 1988: 325). They saw biblical prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to the Holy Land and a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit "on all flesh", with the restoration of the charismata, as signs of the last days. They expected these signs to take place within their lifetime. The Pentecostals adopted most of the teachings of the Fundamentalists concerning their practices and beliefs. The vast majority of Pentecostal movements regard themselves as Fundamentalists with a difference. Especially influential to the Pentecostals was the teachings that the pre-

millennial rapture, divine healing and glossolalia are sure signs of the last days. Although it is possibly wrong to regard the Pentecostals as a Fundamentalist group, there is definitely a strong element of Fundamentalism in the doctrine of Pentecostalism. It is also quite clear that the doctrine about the second coming of Christ received remarkable pre-eminence among Pentecostals.

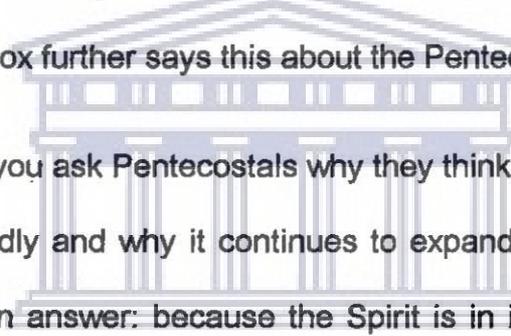
Anderson says about the Pentecostals that they see themselves as a millenarian movement with the purpose of preaching the Gospel in order to hasten the second coming of Christ. The Pentecostals are basically a second coming movement (Anderson 1979: 80). There is also a strong connection between the pneumatology and the eschatology of the Pentecostals. Wilson says that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is seen by the Pentecostals as an important sign of the end, and that they have a sense of urgency which is an important motivation for missionary endeavour and evangelism (DPCM 1988: 267). *This sense of urgency for mission is the main reason why the Pentecostals are the fastest-growing segment of Christianity, something which they attribute to the work of the Holy Spirit.* Wilson continues by saying that the terror of impending doom and the imminent Blessed Hope have been the heart of the Pentecostals' evangelistic appeal. Another positive contributing factor is their belief that Christ will not return until the gospel has been preached to the ends of the earth (DPCM 1988: 267). They have a duty, therefore, to facilitate his return by spreading the gospel. Since the end is near, they are indifferent

to social change and have rejected the reformist methods of the optimistic postmillennialists and have concentrated on 'snatching brands from the fire' and letting social reforms result from humankind being born again (DPCM 1988: 267).

The Pentecostal perspective is that history seems to be running downhill and that the world is at the point of collapse (Anderson 1979: 80-81). The Pentecostals believe in an imminent, apocalyptic return of Christ (Anderson 1979: 81). Through the years, God has dealt with man in various ways, but with little success until the first coming of Christ. Christ instituted the Church, and charged her with the task of propagating the true faith. But very soon after the Apostolic age, the Church gave way to paganism and the heresy of Roman Catholicism (Anderson 1979: 83). During the time of the Reformation some truths which the Church had lost earlier, were restored to her. Luther was used to restore the doctrine of justification by faith alone; Wesley discovered the doctrine of sanctification; the Holiness Movement revived healing as part of the gospel; and now (presumably with Pentecostalism) the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues, has been restored. Yet, despite the restoration of the Apostolic faith, Christendom and the world are rejecting it, and falling into still greater apostasy and sin (Anderson 1979: 83).

For the Pentecostals the sign of the second coming of Christ is everywhere in evidence: wars, earthquakes, plagues and pestilence, immorality, crime,

vice, divorce and remarriage, disrespectful children, increasing education, more rapid modes of transportation and communication, the growth of huge organisations in business, labour and religion, and the spread of radical ideologies, etc. (Anderson 1979:83). The Pentecostals spare no effort to interpret the present day events in the light of their eschatological perspective of the world. The worldly conditions above characterise the sentiments of the Pentecostals about the parousia. It is against this background that the parousia-expectation of the Pentecostal Movement needs to be understood. The Pentecostals, especially the American African Pentecostals, have always had an extra dose of millennialism in their veins (Cox 1995: 21). Cox further says this about the Pentecostals,



When you ask Pentecostals why they think their movement grew so rapidly and why it continues to expand at such speed, they have an answer: because the Spirit is in it. .... But as I have pondered these questions from a more pedestrian perspective, it has occurred to me that there is also another way to think about why the movement has had such a widespread appeal. It has succeeded because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called 'primal spirituality', that largely unprocessed nucleus of the psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of purpose and significance goes on (Cox 1995: 81).

## 2.3 The Student Volunteer Movement and the Parousia-Expectation

In his *“Contemporary Missiology”* Verkuyl refers to the missiologists J.C.Hoekendijk and E.Jansen Schoonhoven as writers who perceived the eschatological motive as very active in the Student Volunteer Movement (1978: 167). The basic driving force behind the Student Volunteer Movement was a fervent expectation of Christ who was expected to return soon. The Student Volunteer Movement, an American-based missionary agency, roused many American and European students, during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, to offer their lives for worldwide mission (Bliss 1979: 23). The influence of this movement on world mission was so profound that it deserves the description of “the greatest missionary movement since Pentecost” (Verkuyl 1978: 180). During its inception in 1886, the movement’s aims were formulated as follows,

As an evangelical and ecumenical gathering of disciples and workers, we invite all who believe in Christ to unite in the communal task of bringing God’s word of salvation to humanity living amid spiritual and moral chaos. Our purpose is none other than the evangelization of the world of mankind in this generation (Verkuyl 1978: 180).

The members of the Student Volunteer Movement took the phrase "Evangelization of the world in this generation" from the vision statement by John Mott and made it their watchword (Mott 1905: 2). John Mott, first leader of the movement for its first thirty years made a strong plea to students to volunteer to become part of this global task of evangelising the world for Christ (in Winter & Hawthorne 1981: 261). Another popular expression of Mott is "the decisive hour of Christian missions" (1910: 280). He regarded the time as short and promoted the execution of the task of evangelization by the church with much greater urgency than before. It is clear that Mott's motivations for world evangelization and mission had eschatological overtones.

#### **2.4 Salvation-history and the Parousia- Expectation**

The theory of "Salvation-history" is the fruit mainly of the theological labours of Cullmann (Saayman 1987: 9). Cullmann's eschatological model focuses on the "already" and the "not yet" which he explains by using the example of a war. He argues that in any war there is the decisive battle which takes place at the initial stage of the war. This initial battle secures the victory to the one side although it may happen that one or more other small fights will have to take place before a final victory can be declared. The celebration takes place only after the final victory, although it is possible that victory over the enemy can be certain after the decisive battle right at the beginning. Cullmann is convinced that the incarnation of Christ

is the decisive battle in the war so that Christ's eschatological salvation "already" exists. The ultimate victory will, however, only reveal itself in the parousia, so that the real eschatological salvation is "not yet" there (Saayman 1987: 10). The idea derived from Cullmann's theory is that the Christological Salvation-history starts with Christ's incarnation (the "already") and forms a continuous line which ends with the parousia (the "not yet"). If this is a correct understanding of Cullmann, then he can be interpreted as meaning that, with Christ's first coming, victory was set in motion.

The success of this model of Cullmann lies in the fact that it succeeds in bringing meaningful content to the interim period which lies between the first and the second coming of Christ. It must be realised that the "delayed parousia theory" lies somewhere between these two epochs. Any extra seconds, minutes, hours or years which Christians must wait longer for Christ, fall within the period of Salvation-history. Any extra time created, therefore, by the delay of the parousia is "victorious" time. In terms of Cullmann's model, the present epoch is characterised by the Lordship of the ascended Christ over the church and the world. In the church, where His Lordship is recognised, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit reign already. For the entire world (cosmos), His lordship will only become a reality with His second coming.

Karl Hartenstein and Walter Freytag's thinking about mission was influenced by Cullmann's theory of eschatology. According to their point of view, the central event in Salvation-history between Christ's first and second coming is the proclamation of the gospel to the nations, i.e. mission. The time between Christ's resurrection and the parousia is given meaning by the gathering of the congregation which waits for Christ's coming (Pretorius 1987: 10). Bosch says about the Salvation-historical eschatology of Cullmann that it puts a special emphasis on the reign of God as a hermeneutical key. And equally fundamental to it is the idea of the reign of God as both present and future (Bosch 1991: 503). This implies that we are living between two times, Christ's first and His second coming. And this is the time of the Spirit, which means that it is the time for mission. As a matter of fact, mission is the most important characteristic of any activity during this interim period. Bosch quotes Hoekendijk who said as long ago as 1948 that "history is kept open by mission" (Bosch 1991: 503). Mission is regarded as a preparation for the end. In Cullmann's writings, mission is presumed to be a precondition for the end (referring to the parousia). In keeping with this, he interprets the references to *ho katechon* and *to katechon* ("the one who restrains," and "that which restrains") in 2 Thessalonians 2:6,7 as references to mission. Until the missionary task is completed, it is delaying the end. Referring to 2 Peter 3:9, J.N.D.Kelly says that Peter's application of the idea of global repentance to the particular problem of the delay of the parousia seems to

be an inspired insight of his own. Nevertheless, it is an insight which enables the church to understand its mission as being, in this span between the resurrection and the second coming, to proclaim the divine love and lead men to repentance and faith (Kelly 1969: 363). The author of Luke-Acts has also incorporated this idea in the dynamic speech of Peter, Acts 3:19-21:

Repent, ...that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, (20) and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you... (21) He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything...

J.B.Payne comments on this aspect and says that "the universal proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom must precede the end, and will presumably hasten it (Matt.24:14; cf Acts 3:19-21). Conversely, the sins of men delay the second coming (II Pet 3:9)."

H.Conzelmann's (Conzelmann 1982: 137 - 169) comments on the parousia deserve mentioning at this point. The key word in his approach is *Heilsgeschichte*, variously rendered into English as "the history of salvation," "redemptive history" or "salvation-history." Conzelmann's hypothesis starts, in effect, from the assumption that the primitive church did expect an imminent return of Christ. A strong eschatological fervour animated the earliest Christians, but this was in danger of being replaced

by disillusionment as the years went by and the parousia was delayed beyond all expectation. The result was that apocalyptic excitement had to be replaced by a faith adapted to life in a world that went on in much the same way as it had always done. Luke decided to take on this challenge for the church. Conzelmann wants us to understand that Luke structured his material in such a way that the parousia was regarded as "sudden" rather than "soon" and was transferred to the indefinite future rather than expected imminently (1982: 95-113). According to the theory of Conzelmann, the period of delay which the church was then experiencing was not to be regarded as a period of negative significance before the parousia or a useless waiting and sighing in the hope that the time would pass sooner. Instead, it was a time of positive content, a vital stage in the divine plan of God. It was an interim period in which God was actively working through the church, which was guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, until the parousia took place (Marshall 1970: 77 - 78). A.L. Moore says there is enough evidence in the New Testament to show that the early church understood its faith and life in terms of a Salvation-history. He argues that the early speeches of Acts (Acts 2:14-36;, 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 7:2-53; 8:31-36; 10:35-43) reveal a major emphasis upon past events, especially the death and resurrection of Jesus of which the disciples were witnesses and which formed the fulfilment of the promises contained in the past Salvation-history (Moore 1966:82). *From the above*

*discussions it is clear that the early Christians expected Christ to return very soon.*

The theory of the imminent return later came under threat because Christ's coming was delayed. It was then that some of the New Testament writers started to re-interpret the events of early Christianity. Realising this, some scholars developed the Salvation-history model to explain in a scholarly way the disillusionment of the primitive church with the delay of the parousia. The positive aspect of this Salvation-history model is that it puts meaning into the period between the first and second coming. Its message to the church is: there is no need to feel disappointed, because the interim period is an opportune time for mission and evangelisation; it is the dispensation of the Spirit and the church. Victory has been set in motion, so the church should be more than victorious and should not live like a defeated army, although the final or ultimate victory will come with the parousia.

The Pentecostals will feel reasonably comfortable with the Salvation-History model. Every extra day, resulting from Christ's delay, is seen by the Pentecostal community as an opportunity for evangelisation and mission. The time before Christ's return is always regarded as positive time to be used to the glory of God. For the Pentecostal, the "absence" of Christ, is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Each day before the coming of

Christ is seen as an opportunity to be used further by the Holy Spirit, who is also acknowledged as an evangelist or missionary.

## **2.5 Realised Eschatology and the Parousia-Expectation**

The school of thought of "realised eschatology" (Dodd 1963: 79 - 96) was the fruit mainly of the theological labours of Charles H. Dodd (Erickson 1987: 30). "Realised eschatology" sees the eschatological motif as permeating the entire Scriptures, and especially the teachings of Jesus Christ. This model takes a preterist approach to the events of Christ's life, which means that the fulfilment of the apocalyptic is regarded as taking place contemporaneously with the scriptural account of it. In terms of this approach the last times would already have arrived when the Scripture writer described them. The idea of futurity in connection with the teachings of Jesus is challenged by this eschatology. Dodd does not speak of future events which were not yet unfulfilled; the "things which were to come" had already come. According to Dodd's interpretation, the day of the Lord has already come. He quotes various passages from the New Testament to support his contention, namely, "the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt.12:28); "this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16); "we all are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor.3:18); "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col.1:13); "He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit"

renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5); "...have tasted... the powers of the age to come" (Heb.6:5); "you have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable" (1 Peter 1:23); "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining... it is the last hour" (1 John 2:8.18).

Dodd's point of view is that the new age is already here, and that the kingdom of God is already established. Eschatology has been fulfilled or "realised." What was future at the time of the Old Testament prophecies has become present. Instead of looking for two comings of Christ, it should be understood that there is only one (which has already taken place). Dodd argues that the kingdom of God is not a matter of expectation, but of fulfilment and realisation (Berkouwer 1981: 103). Expectation should be replaced by realised experience. This was evident in the early Christian community's awareness of the fact that a new age had dawned. This was abundantly clear from the presence of the Holy Spirit (Dodd: 1962: 24). The old apocalyptic scheme of things (of the Old Testament) had been nullified through the coming of the Messiah and the revelation of the Kingdom. Dodd contends that the eschatology which Paul had preached was realised eschatology (Dodd 1962: 24). Eternal life is already here and now, made possible by the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church (Dodd 1962: 24).

The focus of Dodd's eschatology is clearly on the first coming. This eschatological model actually rebukes the primitive church for wasting its

time waiting for a parousia which would never come, and which will never come. By excluding a parousia from his eschatology, Dodd succeeds in cancelling the possibility of a parousia for which Christians would waste valuable time which they could have spent in other ways. Berkouwer says,

To accept 'realised eschatology' as the correct interpretation of the New Testament has, of course, important bearing on one's quest for the meaning of the present dispensation (1981: 104).

The complaint against "realised eschatology" is that it deprives eschatology of its quest for urgency, and the church of zeal and enthusiasm. Some critics suggested that Dodd had overstated his case. The value of "realised eschatology" for mission lies in the fact that it states that mission does not announce the end, but is in itself an eschatological entity (Pretorius 1987: 10). Erickson says that the strength of this model is its tenet that much of the eschatology of which Jesus spoke, was already fulfilled or being fulfilled within His time. However, its weakness lies in the fact that it disregards some texts which cannot be regarded as already fulfilled (Erickson 1987:34).

The ideas of "realised eschatology" would be less acceptable to the Pentecostal. It seems that Dodd's eschatology suffers from a lack of a future eschatological dimension. *As noted already, the imminent expectation of Christ is central in the thinking and practices of the Pentecostal movement.*

## 2.6 The Parousia Parables

Jeremias refers to the parables in Matt.24: 32-25:46 as the parousia parables because in them the primitive Church's concrete situation with regard to the coming of Christ is reflected. About the Parable of the Burglar (Matt.24:43, Luke 12:39), Jeremias said that it was "applied by the Church to its own changed situation, which was characterised by the delay of Christ's return, and that the result was a somewhat changed emphasis" (Jeremias 1966: 36-37). Here, Jeremias is quoting Dodd as pointing out that these parables represent a shift in the thinking of the primitive church. The parable of the burglar was directed at the second coming of Christ, which requires the church to be watchful and circumspect in order that it should not be caught unaware. The idea of the suddenness of the parousia is clearly reflected in the unexpected breaking-in of the thief. Although every Jewish citizen could be aware that a thief could break into his house at any moment, it was not possible to know precisely when it would take place.

The second parousia parable is that of the Parable of the Ten Maidens (Matt.25:1-13) who must wait patiently because the coming of the bridegroom is delayed. Jeremias says the problem is not with the sleeping of the maidens, but with the failure of the five foolish maidens to provide oil for their lamps. Whereas the Parable of the Burglar focused only on the problem of circumspection, the second parable focuses additionally on this

problem, while a second problem is added and emphasised, viz., the lamps that were not filled with oil. The only thing that was lacking was the oil. According to Jeremias, the early church interpreted the bridegroom as Christ, and His midnight coming as the parousia, the second coming of Christ (1966: 36-37). But what could possibly be the signification of the oil? The Old Testament use of this word is in the context of anointing for kingship or for the service of Jahweh; in the former case, to be king of the people of Jahweh, in the latter, to be the prophetic voice of Jahweh as in the case of the prophets Isaiah and Amos. But this interpretation is not necessarily correct; others are also possible.

The third of the parousia parables to be discussed is the Parable of the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:33-37, Luke 12:35-38, cf. Matt.24:42). Jeremias says that the primitive church applied this parable to its own situation, lying between two crises and awaiting the delayed return of Christ. The church therefore expanded the parable by adding a series of new, allegorising features: the master of the house is going on a long journey (Mark); he tells all his servants to watch (Luke); he gives them authority before he leaves home (Mark); the day (not the night watch) of his return is uncertain (Matthew); the reward that he gives is selfless service to his own at the messianic banquet (Luke)(Jeremias 1966: 41-43).

The Parable of the Servant Entrusted with Supervision is another parousia parable used by the primitive church to describe its situation in relation to

the dilemma of the second coming of Christ (Matt.24:45-51, Luke 12:41-46). The servant was placed in a highly responsible position, and his master's unexpected return from a journey would show whether he was worthy of that trust, or whether he had been tempted by his master's delayed return to abuse his power by terrorising his fellow servants or by self-indulgence. This parable probably refers to the disciples who must not slacken in spirit or weaken in trust because of the delay of Jesus Christ's return (Luke 12:41).

The Parable of the Talents (Matt.25:14-30, Luke 19:12-27) is in the same class as the parable of the servant entrusted with supervision. This parable (as told in Matt.25:14-30) can be interpreted as a warning against laziness, laxity and even complacency and as an instruction to get involved and start working instead of waiting passively for the return of the master as did the servant who received one talent. *The message to the primitive church is clear: it must start to get actively involved with the business of evangelization and mission instead of passively waiting for the return of Christ.*

Jeremias says that the Lukan version is told against the background of a real event which took place during 4 B.C. At that time Archelaus journeyed to Rome to get his kingship over Judaea confirmed; at the same time a Jewish contingent went to Rome to resist his appointment. The bloody revenge inflicted on the people by Archelaus after his return had never

been forgotten, and Jesus seems to have used this occurrence in a crisis-parable as a warning against a false sense of security. Just as the return and vengeance of Archelaus overtook his opponents, so unexpectedly would destruction overtake Jesus' listeners.

These parables can be applied to the first Church. With regard to its duty to evangelise and to missionise, the church expected Jesus Christ to come back very soon. That is how it understood His teachings while He was still with the apostles (John 16:17-18). Although it was the promise of the two divine beings that Christ would return in the same manner as during His ascension (Acts 1:11), the early church looked for Him to return suddenly and imminently (NBD :344; Matt.16:28; 24:33; Rom.13:11f; 1 Cor.7:29; Jas.5:8f; 1 Pet.4:7; Rev.1:1). But it was deluded. Somehow, a misconception of the parousia made its rounds amongst the Christians. Luke and the other gospel writers accepted the challenge, as proved by the parousia parables, to redress the problem regarding the imminent return. The warning of the gospel writers is that the Church should not become relaxed and unwary because the parousia has not yet taken place. As part of the church's future, the coming of Christ must inspire the Church's present, however near or distant in time the coming may be (NBD). Jeremias says the primitive church applied the parable to its members (Luke 12:22 'to His disciples'; Matt.24:3). Indeed, Luke especially emphasises that the parables concern only the apostles, the responsible leaders of the community, for Peter's ensuing question, "Lord, are you

telling this parable for us or for all? (Luke 12:41)" is answered with reference to "us" by the parable of the steward who is put to the test by the delay in his master's return: "It is told to you because you have a special responsibility" (Luke 12:42-48). Thus the parable becomes a summons to the leaders of the church, in view of the delay in Christ's return, not to become slack; and with the help of Christological allegorising, the burglar becomes a figure representing the Son of Man. The ever-present awareness that the thief will come motivates the owner to be watchful and protect his property. In the same manner, the church is admonished to get rid of laxity and become seriously involved in the business of evangelisation and missionary action. The gospel writer is very much aware of the negative effects of the delay of the parousia. The disillusioned church community may lose interest in its missionary task. And it is possible that some Christians might even abandon the faith. The enthusiasm with which the first church community spread the missionary flame may be dampened and even be extinguished completely. Worst of all, the unbelieving world may scoff at the church because it cherished false hopes. Christ may be embarrassed and all the above things may lead to blasphemy against God. The parable of the Ten Maidens contains the same warning to be watchful with a new element added. It has been pointed out earlier that the focus in this parable is on the oil of the maidens. The main problem identified in this parable is the fact that some maidens' lamps were empty and, as a result, they were not able to

welcome the bridegroom when he appeared. The concept of oil in this text echoes Jesus' reply to the disciples in Acts 1:8. The five foolish maidens lacked the means of enablement to meet the bridegroom. In the same manner, the primitive church might have lacked the means of empowerment to embark on a global missionary action.

What the leaders of the church had to wait for in Acts 1, was the power and presence of the Holy Spirit before they could start to work. The purpose of the maidens presumably was to serve the bride while she was waiting for her husband-to-be. At his arrival, Jewish tradition required that the maidens bid the bridegroom welcome as soon as they heard the trumpets or voices which announced his coming. If Christ is the bridegroom, then the church is the bride. And if the church is the bride, then the servants of the bride refer to those responsible for serving, equipping, supervising and caring for the Church. The ten maidens are there for the bride, just as the apostles and the entire Christian community are there for the church which is the symbolic bride of Christ (Eph.5: 25-26).

The delay in the arrival of the bridegroom created problems for the five foolish maidens: their lamps went empty and there was no oil for refuelling. The problem with which the church has to contend with now, because of the delay of the parousia, is: what is it going to do in the meantime? The instruction is clear from the lips of Jesus Christ is clear that it must wait upon the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Adrio König refers to the Holy Spirit as the

eschatological gift (König 1989:146). It seems that the vacuum created by the departure of Christ is filled by the presence of the Holy Spirit. The essence of the parousia parables is to exhort the church to be watchful and not to become slack because of the delayed return of Jesus Christ, and to be watchful so that this event would not catch them by surprise.

Another parable which deserves attention is the Parable of the Great Supper (Matt.22:1-14, Luke 14:16-24). Both Luke and Matthew had in mind the vast missionary task of the primitive church when they wrote this parable. The common feature of both versions is the invited guests' refusal of the invitation and their replacement by anyone who could be found. In Jeremias' mind, the church was in a situation that demanded missionary activity. The church interpreted the parable as a missionary command, and applied it in accordance with its own missionary situation. The presumption is that at the time of the writing of this parable the early church was already aware of its task of worldwide mission, with the emphasis on the gentile mission (Luke). This shift in the thinking of the church could possibly be ascribed to the fact of the delayed parousia.

### **3. THE PAROUSIA-EXPECTATION AND MIS.**

#### **3.1 THE HOLY SPIRIT, MISSION AND THE PAR EXPECTATION**

##### **3.1.1 Pentecostal mission theology**

Pentecostal mission theology is generally described as a “theology on the move” (McClung 1986: 159). The character of this theology is more experiential than cognitive, more activist than reflective. Early Pentecostals were characterised by an “urgent missiology” that caused them to seek immediate world evangelisation in the light of their conviction of the imminent return of Christ. McClung says that for this reason systematic theologising, research, and writing on the world mission of the church were postponed in the early years of the movement (cf. DPCM 1988: 607). Only in recent years have the Pentecostal Missiologists started to write a more formalised “Pentecostal missions theology” (Hodges 1972: 50-63). The theology of the Pentecostal Movement, says McClung, like its history, personalities, and politics, is far from being monolithic, typical, or generic (1972: 160). Nichol shares the same sentiment when he says that “the river of Pentecostalism flows from many streams and tributaries” (1966: 55). Nevertheless, it must also not be forgotten that, from its inception, this movement has had underlying theological assumptions that have formed the impulse for its missionary expansion.

McClung identifies five theological themes that relate to missions (cf DPCM). Firstly, Pentecostals are well-known for their "Literal Biblicism". They have been marked by their exactness in following a literal interpretation of Scripture, so much so that they have been characterised as "people of the Book." For Pentecostals, the issue of biblical authority is non-negotiable and is the starting point for missions theology and strategy. The Pentecostals believe that if the Bible says "Go into the world..." and records the actions of the early church obeying this commission, then this is a command and a model to be taken literally for this generation.

Secondly, Pentecostalism is "An Experiential Christianity." In his "A Man Called Mr. Pentecost", Du Plessis describes this experiential Christianity as "truth on fire" (1977: 181-182). In spite of accusations against them of shallow hermeneutics and subjectivity, Pentecostals have remained insistent that God is to be personally experienced through the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals the line between doctrine and experience is very thin. If the Holy Spirit is the originator and impetus of the world mission, and if Christians are to experience the Holy Spirit personally, then the natural outflow of this personal experience is involvement in the world mission of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, the theme "Personality and Power of the Holy Spirit" is also closely related to Pentecostal mission theology. The average Pentecostal sees the Holy Spirit as personally active, living in and directing his servants in world

evangelisation. Missiologically speaking, the Holy Spirit is not just a force or influence but is also personally and powerfully active on the frontiers of mission. Damboriena says about Latin American Pentecostalism that its beliefs and practices cannot be understood until people grasp,

..the centrality of the Third Person of the Trinity in their theology and in their lives. To them Pentecost is not a mere historical event that took place two thousand years ago, but an always renewed presence of the Spirit in the world. The Holy Spirit is now, as then, the “creator” and the “vivifier” of men (1969: 87).

In spite of being criticised as fanatical, Pentecostals understand the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an indispensable endowment of power for world evangelisation and insist that it is normative and imperative for each believer to seek for a “personal Pentecost.” The Pentecostal takes unequivocally the Holy Spirit as mentioned directly and indirectly in all the Great Commission passages in the Gospels and the book of Acts.

Fourthly, there is a strong “Christology” present in the mission theology of the Pentecostals. Early Pentecostalism is replete with a strong Christology. Those who criticise the Pentecostals for over-emphasising the experience of tongues and of the Holy Spirit have very little understanding of Pentecostalism. Pentecostals see Christ as personally involved in world evangelism in the whole process of empowerment of the Christian. He is

seen as the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and therefore actively involved in mission. Pentecostal Christology can simply be summed up as Christ the Redeemer, Christ the Sanctifier, Christ the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and Christ the soon-coming King.

Fifthly, an "Urgent Missiology" is an integral part of Pentecostal mission theology. Eschatological urgency is at the heart of understanding the missionary fervour of early Pentecostalism. Damboriena says that "eschatology" belongs to the essence of Pentecostalism (1969: 82). Pentecostal missiology cannot be understood apart from its roots found in pre-millennialism, dispensationalism, and the belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ (McClung 1986: 8-10; 51-52).

### **3.1.2 The Holy Spirit's Role in Mission**

Allen Roman Tippett, evangelical author, once said that "The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the coming of a missionary Spirit" (Tippett 1987). Jongeneel argues that the Holy Spirit is both a sent and a sending person (Jongeneel 1992: 232). He further presents the Holy Spirit to us as a "missionary Spirit, a "Missionary", a "Spirit of witness/witnessing", as "God the evangelist", "chief actor in the historic mission of the Christian church", "supreme strategist of world mission" and "Lord of the harvest". He acknowledges the Holy Spirit as being sent by the Father and the Son. At Pentecost it was revealed that the Holy Spirit had power to send out both congregations and their members. People like Adolpe A. Tanqueray (a

Roman Catholic author) accept the fact of the Holy Spirit as being sent, but do not accept the notion that the Holy Spirit is a sender too. Jongeneel, instead, feels more comfortable with Berkhof's and Tippett's notion that the Holy Spirit is a sender, too.

Pentecostal/Charismatic authors, like Pomerville and Taylor, have a remarkable appreciation of the role of the Holy Spirit as a missionary. Taylor defines the sending Spirit as "director of the whole enterprise" (1973: 3), and Pomerville as "the initiator, motivator, and superintendent of mission" (1985: 190). For a Reformed theologian like Jongeneel, to understand the Holy Spirit as both *sent* and *sending* is more important than just acknowledging him as a person. Pentecostal pneumatology goes further than just a cold candid acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit as a person. In the act of waiting upon the *glossolalia* and upon enduement from the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal recognises the Holy Spirit as the One sent for empowerment to do effective mission. As has been seen above, the person who distinguished himself with this belief in the Holy Spirit was David Du Plessis (cf. 2.1.3).

### **3.2 The Parousia-Expectation and "Presence"**

The church finds itself existing between two very important events of church history, namely, between the first and the second coming of Christ. The first coming has already taken place, which means that Christ was present with the church. This presence of Christ can be confirmed by

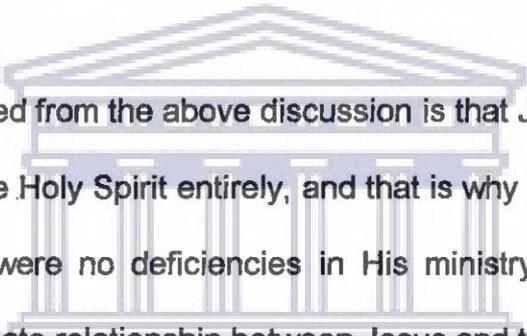
various historical events. Then there is the second coming which has not yet taken place. The question now is whether Christ is to be regarded as present? Or, is it correct to refer to Him as absent instead? Is the present time a period in which He is in heaven at the Father's right hand, interceding for humanity and so not here among humankind? Is the present time an interim period during which the world must depend on the witness of the believers, if it is to come to Him? Are the believers now inhabiting the time of which Jesus said: "the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and on that day they will fast (Mark 2:20)" (König 1989:138)?

The expectation of the parousia is all about the "personal" presence of Jesus Christ. His departure signified His personal absence, yet the gospel writers continued to refer to Him as present with us ("..and surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt.28:20). His disciples were the ones who saw Him with their own eyes taken away from them up to heaven (Acts 1:11). Where Christians assemble to worship in "His Name," Christ will be present (Matt. 18:20). Paul writes about Christ's living in the hearts of believers (Eph.3:17). Does Scripture not contradict itself here? Berkouwer contends that the "presence" which the parousia is referring to is different from the "presence" described by the verses above. The parousia presence describes Christ's personal reappearance in glorified form. The *Christus praesens* described in the verses above

apparently points to a particular mode of Christ's presence (Berkouwer 1981: 142-143).

From the discussions above one gets the impression that the departure of Christ definitely left a vacuum which needs to be filled somehow. This leads to the eschatology of the Holy Spirit in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Expectations of the Holy Spirit's coming in the end play an important role in the Old Testament prophets' messages. Jewish prophecies expected the outpouring of the Spirit on all mankind, not in a proportional quantity or in a limited form as happened when the Spirit occasionally came on individuals in the Old Testament. The messianic prophet Isaiah connects the Spirit with Christ, the one who anoints for service (Isa.11:1-2, 42:1, 61:1). Jesus Himself recognised Isaiah's prophecy and explained to the crowd that it has been fulfilled in Him (Luke 4:18). The prophet Joel, in contrast, prophesied about the massive dynamic outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joël 2:28,29) which Luke reports to have been fulfilled (Acts 2:16-21) during the Pentecost feast. Berkouwer comes to the conclusion that "Two things emerge therefore from Old Testamentic expectation: that the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of Jewish eschatological expectation, and that there is a connection between this outpouring of the Spirit and the coming of the messiah" (Berkouwer 1981: 139). Van Ruler observes that the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit is many-faceted and that the Holy Spirit works in a unique way through Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry (Van

Ruler 1974: 165). The Holy Spirit was actively involved in the person of Jesus Christ, from His birth, right through His ministry, until His resurrection. It is the Spirit that takes the initiative at Jesus' birth, baptism, and temptation (Matt. 1:20, 3:16, 4:1, Luke 4:14); Jesus casts out evil spirits by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28); and in the Spirit He rejoices (Luke 10:21); through the Spirit Jesus offers Himself to God (Heb. 9:14); the Spirit is involved in His resurrection (Rom. 1:4, 1 Peter 3:18); in the Spirit He preaches to the imprisoned souls (1 Peter 3:19); through the Spirit He commands His disciples after His resurrection (Acts 1:2) (Van Ruler 1947: 165).



The picture obtained from the above discussion is that Jesus Christ utilised the presence of the Holy Spirit entirely, and that is why His ministry was so powerful. There were no deficiencies in His ministry; it was complete. There was an intimate relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The being of the Holy Spirit was prevalent in the ministry of Jesus. It was stated above that the ascension of Jesus Christ signified His absence from the church. But König says that "Christ's ascension does not mean that Christ went away and now is absent" (1989: 139). Luke refers to the ascension (Luke 24) but succeeds in the book of Acts to picture Jesus as still working actively through the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:47, 9:5, 16:14). In the interim, then, Christ is present, but uniquely in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is frequently referred to as "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of the

Lord," or "the Spirit of His Son." (Rom.8:9, 2 Cor.3:17, Gal.4:6, Phil.1:9, 1 Peter 1:11).

*It can therefore be concluded that Christ is present in, and works through, the Holy Spirit in such a way that the presence and work of the Spirit is the presence and the work of Christ.* The danger of focusing too much on the parousia of Christ, is that the presence and work of the Holy Spirit can be completely disregarded or undervalued. Although it is scripturally correct for the Church to wait on Christ fervently, it is incorrect to yearn for His parousia in such a way as to forget totally about the Holy Spirit. Ignorance of this unique relationship between God the Son and God the Holy Spirit may leave the church feeble and weak in its ministry, with only a fervent wait for the parousia left over. The disciples and their contemporaries experienced the presence of Jesus Christ in His humiliation. The Book of Acts gives an extensive account of how the primitive church experienced Him in the Holy Spirit.

The original meaning of the Greek word "parousia" is "presence" or "coming" and refers to Christ being present in glorified form (Robinson 1979: 17). The disciples and those with them cannot be blamed for looking for an imminent return by Christ. Although they had seen the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through Christ, they were not exposed personally to that power. Only when the Spirit eventually arrived, and after the personal ministry of the Spirit to the church, did their perception about

Christ's presence change. Through the Spirit, Christ is present among believers although not in glorified form, as would be the case during and after the parousia. Adrio König says that the eschatological character of the Spirit is that He is the guarantee we already have of salvation which must still be completed with Christ's second coming (König 1989: 147). The idea obtained is that Christ's presence can "already" be experienced, although "not yet" in the glorified form. It is this "already-not yet" thought that is prevalent in the eschatological model of Oscar Cullmann (Pretorius 1987: 10).

*At this stage it has been established that Christ is present through the Holy Spirit. This conclusion assist the quest to understand the role of the Spirit with regard to mission and evangelisation. Boer contends that proclamation and mission is the work of the Holy Spirit (Boer 1964: 36). The Spirit is the one who continues the mission which Jesus Christ set in motion before His crucifixion. Christ pointed His disciples to the Holy Spirit as a substitute for His (Christ's) presence (John 16:7). He also pointed His disciples to the Holy Spirit as the one who would continue and even complete the mission of Christ (Acts 1:8). The Spirit is instrumental in the task of universal evangelisation. It is the Holy Spirit who causes the church to proclaim the gospel throughout the world, to bring sinners to faith, to achieve the goal of God in the lives of people.*

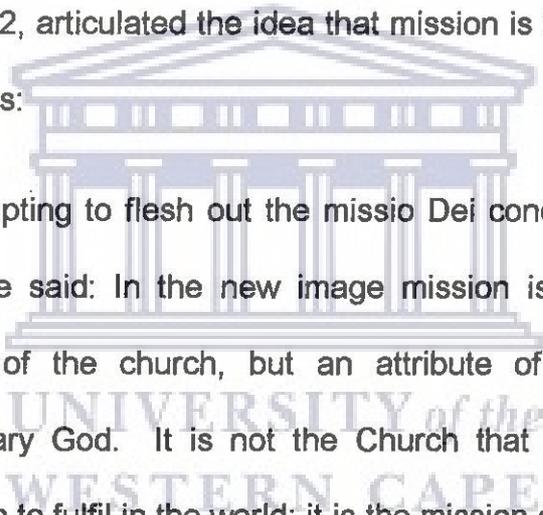
That the work of the Holy Spirit forms the chief executor of the salvation plan of God is evident in its activity in, especially, the book of Acts. That is why some scholars find it difficult to decide whether the book of Acts should be regarded as a record of the acts of the Apostles or rather the acts of the Holy Spirit. The point is that it would be difficult for anyone to deny the active involvement of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation. He initiates and facilitates mission and evangelisation. By virtue of this argument, the church is the agent of evangelisation and mission, with the Holy Spirit chiefly in charge. The church acts only as the mouthpiece of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who speaks, not with His own mouth but with the mouths of those who have been through the redemption-experience. The role of the Spirit seems to be more to equip or enable the church instead of the church working in its own strength. When the Spirit filled Peter, the latter became the bold orator who delivered an address that brought up to 3000 converts. Before the Spirit did that, Peter was a very scared, feeble character who could not even debate with a little servant girl (Matt.26:69).



The Holy Spirit initiates mission, inspires the church for mission, equipping it mainly for the purpose of missionising and evangelising. But this missionising work is such that the Holy Spirit does it in relationship with the church. There is an interesting kerygmatic partnership between the two, in which the Spirit fulfils the role of the initiator and the church the role of the agent of proclamation. The role of each is such that the one is dependent on the other. This partnership between the Spirit and the Church in the

missionary enterprise can be described as a partnership between God and man, the Holy Spirit representing the divine and the church, humanity. God and man are involved in the Christianising of the world. They participate not as equals but in such a way that the divine role is much more prominent than the human role. The Holy Spirit furthers and represents God's initiative to save the world.

Mission is God's initiative. Theologians like Karl Barth and Karl Hartenstein prefer rather to regard mission as *missio Dei* (cf. Bosch 1991:389). Karl Barth was the first theologian who, at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, articulated the idea that mission is the activity of God himself. Bosch says:



In attempting to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. It is not the Church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission and not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love (1991: 390).

Jesus Christ, then, is God in the flesh (John 1:14); the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is God who works in and through individuals and through the corporate church body. Mission was interpreted as being derived from the very nature of God, manifested and being manifested to the church. The eschatological character of the Holy Spirit, then, is that He is the guarantee to the church for the completion of the salvation plan started by Christ (2 Cor.1:22; 5:5; Eph.1:14; König 1989: 147). Jesus Christ ascribed His ability to execute His mission to the empowerment and presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ left and, at the same time, promised the Spirit who would continue what He had set in motion. The Spirit eventually arrived as the Spirit of Christ (Rom.8:9, 2 Cor.3:17, Gal.4:6, Phil.1:19, 1 Pet.1:11). However, although Christ is absent in physical form, He is present here on earth through His Spirit. In this sense then, the mission of the Holy Spirit is the mission of Christ.

This raises the questions, "When does mission expire?" and "Until when is the gospel to be preached?" Before acceptable answers for these questions can be obtained, a recapitulation of what has already been said about the parousia is necessary (cf. pp 25-26). Firstly, the word "parousia" is connected to the concept of "the day of the Lord" (1 Cor.1:7; 1 Thes.4:15-5:11; 2 Thes.2:1; 2 Pet.3:1-10; Acts 2:20; 2 Pet.3:12). The expression "the day of the Lord" is a general and comprehensive expression for the consummation of God's purpose, alike in victory and in judgement (Robinson 1979: 19). So, this expression connotes the idea

that the parousia is the day of the Lord, and therefore the day of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the word "parousia" is also connected with "the day of judgement" (Acts 10:42) when God will finally judge the world. Thirdly, the term is associated with "the end of all things" (1 Pet.4:7) and "the last hour" (1 John 2:18, 1 Pet.1:5). Fourthly, the concept "parousia" is connected with "the ingathering of the elect" (Mark 13:26-27, Matt.24:30-31). Fifthly, the parousia is also connected to the closing down of God's missionary office to the world (Matt.24:14). The Great Commission (Verkuyl 1978: 166) to proclaim the gospel expires with the second coming of Jesus Christ, this time as the glorified one.

The above connotations of parousia mean that the Holy Spirit has only time until the unfolding of the day of the parousia to act as the initiator and executor of the extensive programme of universal mission and evangelisation. The church, too, as the agent of mission and proclamation, also has only as much time as the Spirit for mission. Boer's exegesis of Matt.24:14 leads him to the conclusion that mission in itself is a sign of the end (1961: 99). God's plan of salvation ends with the second coming of Christ. And those who are responsible for mission and evangelisation have only until the parousia for proclamation. In the book of II Thessalonians, Paul refutes the theory that the parousia had taken place already. Some of the Christians of Thessalonica thought that the end of time had already taken place. Paul attacks this misconception and explains that only when "that which restrains" (2 Thes.2:6; *to katechon*) and "he who restrains" (2

Thes.2:7: *ho katechon*) are removed from the earth, that "the lawless one" will be revealed (Erickson 1987: 137). Erickson says that "to katechon" refers to the church and that "ho katechon" refers to the Holy Spirit. If Erickson's exegesis is correct, then it means that the Antichrist will only be revealed when both the Spirit and the church are out of his (the Antichrist's) way. The assumption of Paul is probably that both the Spirit and the church will be withdrawn from the world during the event of the parousia (Ladd 1978: 66-67). If this is true, then it means that the two major agents of mission and evangelisation have closed the missionary office. It must therefore be assumed that either the plan of salvation, or a certain stage of it, ends with the parousia. Can it be stated without any doubt that the road of mission ends at the parousia?

### 3.3 MISSIONARY ZEAL

There may be extensive plans and programmes for mission. There may be many projects and strategies for mission. But these are useless if they are not accompanied by the necessary inspiration, motivation and interest which provide the nerve and empowerment to execute the missionary task. About plans and strategies Thomas Wang (born in Peking, and international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism) says the following,

As we draw near to the close of the century, significant things are happening around us. Gigantic plans of evangelism on a

global scale are being creatively conceived, planned and, to a degree, executed by different groups within Christendom. There are so many plans, in fact, that even if one or two of them succeed in all their objectives, they will truly turn the world upside down (in D.B.Barrett and J.W.Reapsome 1988: ii).

T.Y.H.Wang's concern is certainly not with the plans and programmes for mission, but something else. There may be a time framework and the intention of global evangelisation. But if the church lacks motivation and inspiration, then plans and programmes become mere empty formulae. The dynamics of global evangelisation require the church to be motivated and enthusiastic about the task of mission. At the centre of Paul's motivation for mission lies an absolute 'sense of gratitude' (Bosch 1991: 138). Deep at the centre of his being there is a genuine sense of appreciation towards Christ. There is an unquenchable urge in Paul's soul of love and thankfulness towards his master for what He has done to him. Bosch puts it aptly when he says the following about Paul,

He goes to the ends of the earth because of the overwhelming experience of the love of God he has received through Jesus Christ. 'The Son of God...loved me and gave Himself for me', he writes to the Galatians (2:20), and to the Romans he says, 'God's love has been poured into our hearts' (5:5). The classical expression of Paul's awareness of God's love as a motivation for

mission is to be found in 2 Corinthians 5. In verse 11 he says, 'Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men'. As I have argued, 'fear' here refers to Paul's desire not to disappoint his beloved Master (cf. Green 1970:245). In verse 14 he then articulates the positive side of what he says in verse 11, 'For the love of Christ controls us' (1991: 138).

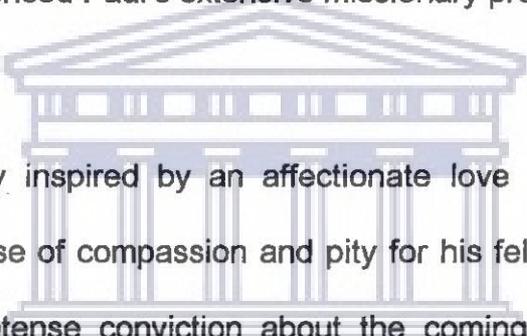
The sense of gratitude that can be detected in the behaviour of Paul is very uncommon and very deep. The results of this exceptional sense of gratitude can be examined: 1. Paul undertakes three spontaneous missionary journeys within ten years, something none of the first apostles ever dreamed of doing (I.L.Jensen 1981: 219); Considering the transport facilities of the time, to travel 9 500 miles within 10 years was a remarkable achievement in Paul's day. 2. He not only undertook extensive missionary journeys, but even took delight in suffering for Christ because of his tremendous compassion and love for his Master. Concerning his sacrificial sufferings for mission, Colin G. Kruse has this comment about Paul,

...Paul provides a list of his apostolic trials which may be divided into four sections: imprisonments, beatings and being near death, including a detailed explanation of what these involved (2 Cor.11:23b-25); frequent journeys, with a description of the dangers of travel (11:2b); toil and hardship, with an account the privations involved in these (11:27); and anxiety for all the

churches, with an example of what caused it (11: 28-29); and Paul's flight from Damascus from his persecutors. All these difficulties Paul has overcome in order to fulfil his commission (New Bible Dictionary : 1203).

It is appropriate at this point enquire into the driving force behind the endeavours of Paul for the gospel. Surely, there must have been a motive for Paul to engage in such an extensive missionary programme. It seems that what is involved here is what Verkuyl describes as the motive of "Love, Mercy and Pity" (1978: 165). It can be observed, in Paul's behaviour towards mission, that he is moved by enormous love and affection for "his beloved Master" (cf. Green 1970: 245). It is something which is Christ-directed. It becomes clear, from the above discussion, that there was a very strong and cohesive bond between Paul and his Master, a special love which he shared in a very unique way with Christ. This fiery love makes him to do things and is in fact the thrust behind his zeal for the lost. But this affection of Paul is not only God-directed, but also man-directed. Paul's love for the lost is expressed in the form of compassion and a sense of pity for those who are without Christ. The conclusion to be drawn from these discussions is that the more Paul's love for Christ increased, the stronger became his drive to be engaged in winning souls. And, conversely, the more he got involved in mission because of pity for his fellow unsaved human beings, the more his affection for Christ grew.

The result of this two way love-zeal dynamic is amazing: The missionary enterprise benefited from it. Reactively, the love of Paul for Christ is an ever-increasing driving force which pushes the missionary machine forward. Who would not be moved by these dynamic events in the life of Paul? It is impossible not to be filled with a new freshness of spirit and a special compassion of soul when confronted with stories such as these. This enthusiasm, special urge and zest which is found deep inside Paul cannot be ordinary or common. It is unique and exceptional. Certainly, the 'motive of love, mercy and pity', as Verkuyl describes it, was one of those factors which influenced Paul's extensive missionary programme during the first century.



Paul was not only inspired by an affectionate love and mercy for his Master, and a sense of compassion and pity for his fellow human beings, but also by his intense conviction about the coming kingdom (Verkuyl 1978: 166). Behind Paul's drive for mission was "an eschatological motive", to use Verkuyl's expression. In the recent report on the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (ERCDOM), both Roman Catholics and Evangelicals affirmed that one of the strong incentives to the task of mission is,

to hasten the return of the Lord - the eschatological dimension. We look for the day of the Lord when the natural order will be completely redeemed, the whole earth will be filled with the

knowledge of the Lord, and people from every nation, people, tribe, and tongue will praise the triune God in perfection (Capp 1987: 113).

This report offers the conclusion that the eschatological dimension of mission points directly to the second coming of Christ. The apostle Peter shared the same view hundreds of years ago. And now, almost 2000 years later, the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Conference has arrived at the same conclusion. Whether the outcome of that Conference was but a ratification of what Peter had written years ago, and whether the Conference's decision was influenced by its exegesis of II Peter 3:9, is difficult to say. Peter, as the then leader of the primitive church, had to give an explanation to the faithful and enthusiastic followers of Christ why the parousia had not yet taken place after a waiting period of about 24 years (33 - 67 A.D. - from the start of the primitive church to the last year of Peter's life) (Robinson 1979: 24). To say to the followers that Christ has not yet returned because there are still many souls lost, is a very easy solution to prevent them further questions. It must still be determined whether the thinking of II Peter 3:9 was the generally accepted thinking as part of the theology of the first Christian community.

Mission has many ramifications or dimensions which exceed the limits for discussion within the framework of this thesis. For the purpose of this thesis the focus will be on the eschatological dimension of mission. If one

of the incentives of mission is to hasten the return of the Lord, then this means that mission has a direct effect on the parousia. According to Matth.28: 19 mission and evangelisation are the obligation of the church. But if mission is linked to the parousia, then it becomes clearer that the church has a role to play in determining the destiny of the parousia. It also means that the church is equally responsible with Christ for the time when the second coming is going to take place.

Did the entire Christian church really entertain the idea that mission determines the early return of Christ? The apostle Peter wrote the second epistle just before his and the apostle Paul's death in 68 A.D (CBH :567). At this point it can be assumed that it was important for the once pre-eminent Apostle to put the second coming of Christ into perspective. At the time of writing this epistle, Peter was already aware that only a short period of time remained before his death. His "bodily tent" would soon be put aside, and that he knew because of a divine revelation (2 Peter 1:4). His imminent death, and the fact that many false doctrines and philosophies had penetrated into the church, may have influenced Peter to write this letter (2 Peter 3). It is at this crucial stage that Peter informs his readers that the message about Christ should first be preached to the entire world, and then Christ will come (2 Peter 3:9). The author of the first gospel, John Mark, shares the same view, although the information in the Markan document differs slightly from that in the Petrinial document (Compare Mark 13:10 and 2 Peter 3:9). In Mark's opinion, the gospel

should be preached to "all nations" whereas Peter says that God's concern is that everyone should repent. Mark's missionary dimension is holistic in the sense that it includes "all nations". However, Peter's missionary dimension is also holistic in the sense that it includes every individual soul. But it is not improbable that the one report could be interpreted as either an affirmation or reinterpretation of the other standpoint. According to tradition, Peter and John Mark were very closely related to each other (Interpreter's Bible 1951: 631). It is recorded that Peter stayed with the mother of John Mark after his release from jail (Acts 12). If Mark and Peter lived in the same house for quite a number of years, then it is very probable that Mark either received all his information from Peter or he was at least influenced in his theological thinking by Peter. We must bear in mind that Mark wrote his gospel approximately 18 years before the apostle Peter wrote his epistle in 67 A.D. The indications are, from the literature of some of the church fathers (e.g. Papias), that Peter was the main source of the information of Mark's gospel (Interpreter's Bible : 632). *This means that at the time of the writing of Mark's gospel, the idea of mission to the ends of the earth before the parousia, was already part of the theology of the primitive church.*

P.L. Capp says that the above idea is generally entertained in all four of the gospels and in Acts, and he quotes Goerner as saying that this is "the master plan of the Messiah" (Capp 1987: 113). If the information is correct and the argument beyond criticism, then it can safely be concluded that the

early Christian church did, at least for the latter part of its ministry, believe in the Christianising of the world before the unfolding of the parousia. About this aspect Erickson (Matt.24:14)(1987: 24) says that one of the prophecies of the end time "is that the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world before the end will come". This does not affirm that all will believe or even that all will be evangelised, but simply that an adequate testimony will be preached to all of the world's nations (Erickson 1987: 179). To the disillusionment of many, the parousia did not take place within their lifetime. Ben Witherington says, "certainly some believers in the early church believed in the immediate return of the Lord. This caused problems when some died prior to the parousia. If there was a problem about the delay in the parousia, then it was already evident in Paul's earliest Epistle" (Witherington III 1992: 25). The conventional interpretation of I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 had assumed that there were some of the Christians who would definitely survive until the parousia and even that Paul would personally live to see the parousia take place within his lifetime. It is beyond doubt that the idea of the imminent return of Christ did exist during the time of the first church. About Paul's eschatology Schweizer boldly states: "From his first letter to his last Paul's thought is always uniformly dominated by the expectation of the immediate return of Jesus, of the judgement, and the Messianic glory" (1982: 25). The day of the Lord (referring to the parousia) is described as something that comes "like a thief in the night (1 Thes.5:3)." There are indications from II Peter

3:1-4 that false teachers started to scoff about the second coming of Christ, because many people died who were zealously waiting upon the parousia, but in vain. "The parousia had been expected during the lifetime of the first Christian generation, but that generation had now passed away and still nothing had happened yet," says R.J. Bauckham in his commentary on II Peter (1983: 295). The early Christian community cannot be blamed for expecting its Master to return as soon as possible, even within its lifetime. And if even some of the apostles believed this, they can be excused because they were much closer to Jesus. In fact, it was to them that He promised that He would soon be back (John 14:3, 16:16-20). The logia of Jesus "after a little while, you will see me again" and "like a thief in the night" could surely have resulted in His apostles' belief of "an imminent return". The conclusion at this point is that the idea of "an imminent parousia" did exist during the time of the primitive church, although some theologians warn against exaggerating this belief (Dodd 1963: 33). M.J.Erickson quotes J.B.Payne as saying that the following passages clearly support the idea of the imminence of the parousia (1987: 24; Matt.24:42-25:13; cf. Mk.13:33-37 and Lk.21:34-36; Lk.12:36-40; Rom.8:19,23,25; I Cor.1:7; Phil.3:20; I Thess.1:9-10; Tit.2:12-13; Jam.5:7-8; Jud. 21; and Rev.16:15). Each passage stresses one or more of the following factors: the importance of watchfulness, the uncertainty of the time of coming and, as a necessary corollary of the latter, the possibility that He could come now, although it is certainly not the case that He must.

### 3.4 THE IMPACT OF THE IMMINENT THEORY ON

#### MISSION

The question to be addressed now is: "What was the impact of the belief of the imminent return of Christ on the Great Mission as recorded in Matt.28:19?" Did the aspect of the imminence of the parousia have any positive value for mission? The miraculous resurrection which had recently taken place, the regular appearances of Jesus to many within the ten days after His resurrection, His bestowal of power and authority on His followers must all have had a tremendous effect upon the faith of the first Christians. And especially the eschatological message of the heavenly saints must have had a tremendous bearing upon the force with which the first Christians would spread the gospel (Acts 1:11). Phillip L.Capp quotes Saunders as saying that,

Proclamation of the Gospel to all nations...is understood in the New Testament as an essential element in God's plan for the redemption of humanity in the eschaton... It was a world-wide mission because it was a world-wide Gospel... The eschatological enthusiasm of the earliest Christians formed the basis and impetus for the Christian mission (Capp 1987: 113).

The idea of an imminent return was a catalyst to the small group of adherents in spreading the message about their departed Saviour. The

vast numbers of proselytes who accepted this new faith, within a very short period of time, confirm this fact (Acts 2: 41, 4:4, 6:7). The spreading flame of the gospel which in itself was a result of the imminent parousia, compensated for the disappointment of a parousia which did not evolve in the time of the pioneers of Christianity. The positive aspect of the belief in Christ's early return, was that it added the element of seriousness and eagerness to mission and evangelisation. If the primitive church had had no eschatological enthusiasm, the zest and zeal with which it preached the gospel of Christ would have been lost. If there had been no "imminence theory" the spirit of the first church would have been dampened and the aspect of the urgency of a salvation in Christ would never have existed. Although many believers of the first century never lived to see the strongly expected parousia within their lifetime, yet they could rejoice in the fact that many souls found a new way of life because of the early believers' fervent and enthusiastic labour. If the heavenly family celebrates the victories of the missionaries and the evangelists, then it is not wrong to talk about soul-winning as the eschatological blessing of mission or the blessing of the expectation of the imminent return of Christ. Paul's missionary activities must be an inexhaustible source of motivation to any dedicated missionary who wants to be actively involved. Bosch describes his impression of Paul's enthusiasm for mission in this way,

He worked day and night, he writes to the Thessalonians, that he might not burden any of them while he preached to them the

gospel of God (I Thes.2:9). The thrust of the argument lies in the last part of the phrase just referred to; he forfeits his right (for this is what it is; cf 1 Cor. 9:4 - 12) in this respect, so as to make the gospel he proclaims more credible. He asserts this in yet another way in I Corinthians 9:19, 'For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more' (cf Haas 1971: 70- 72). Necessity is laid upon Paul: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!' (I Cor.9:16)' (1991: 133).

Green (1970: 236-255) gives an excellent description of the missionary zeal of Paul. He says that Paul's motivation can best be ascribed to these three factors: a sense of gratitude, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of concern. But D.J.Bosch says that "This is a hazardous enterprise, since Paul's world of thought is exceedingly complex. It is therefore impossible to select one single element as the fundamental motif of Paul's theology" (1991:137). Bosch suspects another motif could possibly be Paul's conviction that mission paves the way for God's coming triumph. In Bosch's mind Paul should be understood within the context of the Jewish apocalyptic. But Paul goes further than this: he appeals for an apocalyptic that is Christocentric. It seems that his thought makes provision for an apocalypse that flows with and links into the Christ-event. He prefers to talk about a new apocalypse which is inaugurated by the Christ-event. It is a new apocalypse which does not cancel the old one but continues it in a completely changed form. The death and resurrection of Christ marked the

inclusion of the future new age into the present old age. Bosch wants us to understand that Paul's eschatology is shaped and influenced by Jewish apocalypticism, although Paul succeeds in breaking away to introduce a new form of eschatology for the primitive church. Embedded in the eschatology of Paul is an imminence motif on which his expanded missionary programme was possibly founded. The apostle Paul did not lack passion for mission and neither did he come short of a compassion for the unsaved. For Bosch, passion for the coming of God's reign goes hand in hand with compassion for a needy world (1991: 137).

### **3.5 THE PAROUSIA AS A MISSIONARY ACCELERATOR**

Mission and evangelisation are the ultimate purpose of the first coming of Christ. There is something positive about the belief in the imminent return of Christ which compensates for the disappointment in its delay. And, if the belief in the imminent return is employed in such a manner as to benefit the ultimate purpose, why should it be discarded or disregarded? The "imminent return theory" was possibly an effective tool which the evangelist and the biblical missionaries used to expedite their task. It can be accepted that Peter, Paul and all the other New Testament leaders of the first church were very certain of their calling by Christ. Peter's ministry was predominantly for the Palestine Jewish community and Paul is convinced of nothing else but the fact that he was called as an apostle to a ministry which extended far beyond the Palestine Jewish boundaries. It makes

sense that any missionary or evangelist would make use of any means in order to achieve his purpose. The purpose of the first Christian community was not only to make the gospel known as a story that every one should hear, but to bring the hearers to repentance. However, if the preaching about hell and judgement proves to be ineffective, then Jesus and His contemporaries cannot be blamed if they invented the "thief in the night" and "last days" formulae to expedite their mission. What would indicate that the "imminent appearance theory" was possibly utilised as an effective tool to the benefit of the message of Christ, by the first century saints? It is evident, from Matthew's record, that the majority of the conservative Palestinian Jews refused until the end to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah (Matt.28:11-15). But if Jesus' personal ministry couldn't reach many Jews, nor possibly His resurrection, then at least His miraculous removal from the world should start to ring in the ears of even those who could never believe in Him before (Acts 1:11). In Peter's famous apostolic speech of Acts 2, Luke shows us how Peter skilfully utilised the idea of the parousia to recruit new converts (Acts 2:20). It seems that the message of the resurrected and ascended Jesus, and the fact that He would come back (this time as the judge), had a tremendous effect on Peter's audience, so much so that as many as 3000 new converts were recruited that day. The doctrine of the imminent return of Christ, as a successful eschatological tool for mission, cannot easily be denied or ignored.

It is appropriate that attention should now turn to the Lausanne Movement and the functioning of the parousia-expectation in this movement. The majority of the Lausanne Movement consists of Evangelicals. The Pentecostals inherited many of their ideas and beliefs from the Evangelicals. Ellingsen underscores this fact when he says that the "Pentecostal churches, are more readily identified with the Evangelical Movement" (1988: 143).

### **3.6 THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT**

#### **3.6.1 LAUSANNE I: The Lausanne Covenant**

During July 1974 at a meeting of the International Congress on World Evangelization, a declaration on world mission was issued (Douglas 1975: 3-9). The declaration consists of fifteen clauses which serve as an expression of the spirit which existed during the conference. A brief summary of these clauses follows: 1) Mission is emphasised as a mechanism to fulfil God's purpose in general. 2) The Bible as the authority for the missionary message. 3) In the third clause the uniqueness and universality of Christ are the central point of discussion. 4) Here the emphasis is on the nature of evangelism 5) The Christian has also a social responsibility 6) Under the title "The Church and Evangelism", the church is looked at as that body which is at the very centre of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the gospel. 7) This clause stresses the importance of co-operation on all structural levels to

the benefit of evangelisation. 8) In this clause churches are described as being in an evangelistic partnership. 9) This clause stresses the urgency of the evangelistic task 10) The tenth clause focuses on evangelism and culture 11) Theological training and education of church leadership became a very important part in the programme of evangelisation of the world. 12) In its program of evangelisation, the church must always be aware that it finds itself in a spiritual conflict with evil forces. 13) Under the title "Freedom and Persecution", the congress gives appreciation for the freedom to proclaim the gospel, while at the same time, it grieves over the fact that in some countries missionaries and others must face persecution. 14) The Holy Spirit is recognised as a powerful companion in the tremendous task of world mission. 15) This clause emphasises that mission must be done within the belief the of return of Christ (Scherer & Bevans 1992: 253).

It will be advantageous to take a closer look at clauses nine and fifteen in the light of the theme of this study. In clause 9 reference is made to the more than 2 700 million people (constituting more than two thirds of mankind in July 1974) yet to be evangelised. An excerpt from the clause reads as follows:

We are ashamed that so many have been neglected; it is a standing rebuke to us and to the whole church. There is now, however, in many parts of the world an unprecedented

receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. ...Missionaries should flow ever more freely from and to all six continents in a spirit of humble service. The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the good news. ... (Scherer & Bevans 1992: 253).

One of the main speakers at this congress was the renowned world evangelist Billy Graham who played a very important role in setting the vision and planning of this specific congress. The title of his opening speech was "Why Lausanne?" His address was permeated by the answer to this question, namely, "Let the earth hear his voice" which was also the theme of ten-days congress (Douglas 1975: v). Certainly, this congress succeeded in re-emphasising the urgency of the missionary task of this generation. What was also impressive was the sincerity and genuineness about world evangelization which prevailed during the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Switzerland.

The fifteenth clause of the Lausanne I declaration also needs to be examined because it bears much relevance to the theme of this study. The whole clause, with sub-title "The Return of Christ", reads as follows:

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in power and glory, to consummate his salvation and his judgement. This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the interim period between Christ's ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the people of God, who has no liberty to stop before the end. We also remember his warning that false Christs and false prophets will arise as precursors of the final Antichrist. We, therefore, reject as a proud, self-confident dream the notion that man can ever build a utopia on earth. Our Christian confidence is that God will perfect his kingdom, and we look forward with eager anticipation to that day, and to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign forever. Meanwhile, we re-dedicate ourselves to the service of Christ and of men in joyful submission to his authority over the whole of our lives (Douglas 1975: 8-9).

it is clear that the central theme of clause 15 is the return of Christ. The expectation of the parousia is definitely implicated in the above few lines of clause 15. The phrase "This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations" is a very important acknowledgement that a fervent parousia-expectation has a tremendously positive effect on mission and

and evangelisation. Whereas clause 3 speaks about "The uniqueness and universality of Christ", clause 15 speaks about the coming of Christ. The implication of clause 3 is that the church has a unique product and that there is a global need. The product is worth marketing. Clause 15, in turn, speaks about Christ, whom the church preached, who will be seen and met visibly. What is important in the whole Lausanne I declaration is the fact that it has very strong and obvious eschatological overtones. In this document, then, mission is very closely connected to the parousia-expectation (Douglas 1975: v).

### **3.6.2 LAUSANNE II**

During 11-20 July 1989, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization convened the Second International Congress of Evangelization at the International Conference Centre in Manila. Over 3000 delegates from 170 countries attended this particular congress (Scherer & Bevans 1992:292). This congress produced what was popularly called the Manila Manifesto. Lausanne II had two major themes, namely, "Proclaim Christ until he comes," and "Calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world." These two themes were built into the Manila Manifesto as twenty-one affirmations which became the official declaration of that congress. It was also decided at that congress that the Manila Manifesto should never be published separately from the Lausanne Covenant (see

3.1.1 above). It will suffice to quote only the last three affirmations of the Manila Manifesto:

"19) We affirm that world evangelization is urgent and that the reaching of unreached peoples is possible. So we resolve during the last decade of the twentieth century to give ourselves to these tasks with fresh determination. 20) We affirm our solidarity with those who suffer for the gospel, and will seek to prepare ourselves for the same possibility. We will also work for religious and political freedom everywhere. 21) We affirm that God is calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. So we determine to proclaim it faithfully, urgently and sacrificially, until he comes" (Scherer & Bevans 1992: 294).

This declaration was made in view of the challenge of "AD 2000 and beyond" (Scherer & Bevans 1992: 303). In the Manila Manifesto, further reference was made to the world population of 6 billion of which only 2 billion confessed Christ. Of this 2 billion, 500 million were a potential missionary work force. Then there are the uncommitted. Mission is totally not on their agenda. They make a Christian profession, but have never committed themselves to the task of mission and evangelisation. They urgently need to be evangelised (Scherer & Bevans 1992: 303). Then, there are the unevangelised who have only a limited knowledge of the gospel but have never had a valid opportunity to respond to it or to make a proper commitment to Christ. But what is really an area of concern, is the 2

billion who has never heard about Christ. This situation poses a tremendous task for the church. To reach the unreached by the beginning of the third millennium, would be a difficult and almost impossible task. This document regards it as a shame to the church that close to the end of the second millennium, two thirds of the world has still not heard about Christ. What a crisis and an embarrassment to the church. The church should embark on mission with much more urgency and zeal in view of the fact that time is limited and because of the work still to be undertaken. The message of Lausanne I and Lausanne II is very appealing to the church: Proclaim Christ until he comes.



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#### **4. CONCLUSION**

From the discussion above, it has become clear to us that the church, and the world also, lives between two horizons, that is, the first coming and the second coming of Christ. There is general consensus that the former has already taken place, and that the latter is yet to take place. It is still keenly anticipated by some individuals and denominations. There are indications that for some Christians and Churches there is no such thing as a second coming of Christ. Therefore, these persons and institutions have no place for the word *parousia* in their vocabulary. But this was not the focus of this thesis. This thesis specifically concentrated on those persons or institutions which already firmly believe in the second coming of Christ, irrespective of differences of opinion on this event. Even the Pentecostals, on whom this study concentrated, cannot claim to be united with regard to a system of belief about their eschatology.

Chapter 2 examined the Pentecostal movement from a historical perspective. The main interest here was to see whether there is a fervent eschatological expectation functioning in the movement. Parham and his followers, for instance, were concerned about the aspects of personal holiness and the lack of a deeper spiritual experience conjointly with the speaking in tongues. They embarked on a new spiritual journey which lead them to interesting discoveries. A new dimension was opened up for them which was instrumental in starting a new revival. Their yearning and

consequently, search for a deepened spirituality benefited them tremendously. But, besides the motive of spirituality, it was observed that something else also developed within the "Parhamites". They had a fervent expectation that Christ was coming soon. Their experience of the Spirit was interlinked with their belief about the *eschaton*. They felt that the Lord's coming was at hand, in the light of their belief that the prophet Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled. They saw the experience of tongues as a sure sign of the end. The *glossolalia* and the *eschaton* correlated positively with each other. *Glossolalia* has come and is a forerunner and starter of the eschaton-era. A fervent parousia-expectation was definitely active within this movement. It was, thus, because of this expectation, too, that they waited and studied the Word for many days. It is also true that this parousia-expectation did not occur during the spiritual experience of the "Parhamites" only, but even before this experience. It seems that the initial cause of this new spiritual experience could have been their eschatological enthusiasm. They looked out for Christ. Their longing for Him made them to wait upon Him, which led them along a road of unlimited discoveries with regard to their spiritual life. If the assessment of the story of Parham and his followers in this study is historically correct, then the following conclusion is justified: A fervent parousia-expectation expands the spirituality of an individual or an institution or any Church organisation. But the functioning of the parousia-expectation did not end here. It went beyond initiating a new spiritual experience, the Pentecostal experience.

The "Parhamites were not only filled with a deepened spirituality because of the *eschaton*, but they were also filled with a greater missionary urgency. To reiterate: the Pentecostals never saw the tongues experience as an end in itself but as a means of enduement to do something. Acts 1:8 was always the favourite proof for their argument. The empowerment or enduement by the Spirit was probably regarded by Parham and his students, as better equipping them for service. They were filled with a greater sense of urgency for the Gospel and for the task of mission and evangelism. The question that arose is whether the function of the parousia-expectation ended there. When they had received the desired tongues experience and when they were eventually endued for more effective individual and mass evangelism and mission, was the work of the *eschaton* finished? On the contrary, no. The level of their eschatological mood heightened and increased remarkably.

It has been noted that the awareness of Christ's imminent return functioned actively in worship and praise during the spiritual gatherings of the Pentecostal groups, the "Parhamites" included. In their prophetic utterances, especially, fellow believers were encouraged by the popular phrase "Christ is coming soon". Even in the believers' *kerygma*, the parousia-expectation operated freely, and with great urgency. The awareness of Christ's imminent coming received a fresh spur in their *kerygma*. From this discussion, it seems that a lively eschatological awareness has a positive influence on liturgy and *kerygma*. With liturgy

and *kerygma*, therefore, the *eschaton* is not also in conflict but rather in partnership to the benefit of mission and evangelistic action.

The Azusa mission of William Seymour is a perfect example of the above statement. The existence of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa can be traced back to the Azusa mission of Seymour (Burger 1987: 152-193). John G. Lake and T. Hezmalhalch (founders of the AFM of S.A.) were disciples of Seymour. Many other disciples who were part of the Azusa mission became dynamic leaders in various other denominations, churches, para-churches and missionary agencies in America and elsewhere. The Azusa mission was a revival which affected the entire world (DPCM 1988: 31-36). It seems that the eschatological expectation which influenced Parham and the Azusa Street mission, was by no means an insignificant one. The revivals which can be identified with Parham and Seymour had a far-reaching influence in the missionary world.

The witness of the "eschaton-mission" in the life of David Du Plessis is astounding. He initially adopted a negative attitude toward all non-Pentecostal organisations. Pride and arrogance crept into his life to such extent that no other religious group, except the Pentecostals, was good enough for him to associate with intimately. Du Plessis was not the only one who suffered from this sickness, probably many other prominent Pentecostal leaders did too. Poloma refers to this inclusiveness,

David Du Plessis's interdenominational work suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Assemblies of God bureaucracy. Acting in response to a prophetic word promising that the Spirit of God would work dramatically in mainline denominations (a prophecy he was given by fellow evangelist Smith Wigglesworth in 1936 while he was still very much a parochial Pentecostal in his homeland of South Africa), du Plessis became active with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical ventures. This activity eventually resulted in his dismissal from the Assemblies of God in 1962, the denomination with which he held ordination papers after his move to the United States" (Poloma 1989: 131).

In this paragraph we notice that the leaders of the Assemblies of God in America suffered from the same symptoms from which Du Plessis had been cured years before after the renowned Smith Wigglesworth's prophecy. Du Plessis's written response to the Executive Council reveals more of the leaders' attitude toward non-Pentecostal Churches or movements,

"...Your letter (terminating his position as ordained Pastor of the Assemblies of God)...came to me as a shock. I never expected such action from my brethren under these circumstances. For days, indeed ever since that night when over the phone my wife informed me of the verdict, I have been praying to find the

showed me the whole picture. ...In June my brethren gave me the choice between ceasing this ministry of Pentecost in ecumenical circles, and withdrawing from the Assemblies as a minister. The Spirit bade me go and I dared not agree to stop this ministry, and again I did not want to withdraw from the Assemblies of God, for that was the only link with the Pentecostal Movement. I feel that the Pentecostal revival outside the Churches is the same as, and partly the cause of, the Pentecostal revival now inside the Churches (referring to non-Pentecostal Churches)... Kindly take note that I intend to work with my brethren in the Assemblies and all Pentecostal movements, just as much as, and maybe more than, in the past. The will of God is unity in the Spirit, and that is far greater unity than General Council, World Council, or any council (in Poloma 1989: 132).

Pentecostals should be very thankful to Du Plessis that he allowed the Spirit to change his attitude. Once his attitude was changed, the scene was set for the Spirit to use him to broaden the vision of the Pentecostal mission. Pentecostalism seems to be a mighty force which can bring new meaning to mission. The very moment when the eyes of some of the Pentecostal leaders were opened, such as Donald B. Gee, the President of the Assemblies of God, mission was boosted tremendously in a

Pentecostal way. Pentecost does not belong to the Pentecostals only, but to all Churches, to the nations.

But we must not forget that Du Plessis' mission to take Pentecost to the Churches (non-Pentecostal Churches), took place in the context of a eschatological expectation. There was a clear eschatological dimension within his mission. This is clearly detectable within the prophecy of Smith Wigglesworth to him while Du Plessis was still at the head office of the AFM of South Africa. The driving force behind Du Plessis was the prophecy. Again, the parousia-expectation was actively involved in Du Plessis' mission. A fervent eschatological expectation definitely has the potential to boost missionary expectation.

Like the first century Christians, the Pentecostals awaited the return of Christ with much anticipation and zeal. Their belief in Christ's return was so firm that not one of them expected to see death. Rather, they expected to see Him very soon. They lived to experience one thing only, that is, the fulfilment of the parousia dream. The Pentecostals anticipated Christ with a living and vibrant parousia-expectation. The eschatological expectation of the later revivalist movements was characterised by similar enthusiasm and excitement. The conclusion is that these movements were immovable in their faith in the parousia. Their waiting for both the spirit-experience and Christ's return was positively anticipative waiting. It was a waiting filled with meaningful content. That was how they thought Christ would like them to

wait upon him, and for that matter how any Christian should. But this attitude poses a problem: Can it really be said with confidence that there is a similar anticipatory mood among the Pentecostals of the latter half of the twentieth century? Whether there is or not, the message should be passed on clearly to the believers of the present dispensation that Christ should be expected only in the manner of the Pentecostals of the early nineteenth century. The latter could not wait to see the face of their Master again. Their waiting was filled with excitement, ebullience and anticipation. If that was the mood of the Early Pentecostals more than six decades ago, how much more should it be with the church which is much more nearer to the end-event. Or is the situation in the church as Karl Barth assessed it; he cited sluggishness as one of the major sins of the church today (Verkuyl 1978: 167). If that is a correct assessment of the spirit of the church's waiting, then the warning is clear, the attitude towards Christ's parousia has to be adjusted. A high anticipatory mood is an expression of the church's readiness and receptiveness for Christ's coming. The opposite mood conveys the opposite message that the church is not ready. An atmosphere of readiness for the parousia needs to be created.

Another positive outcome of the Pentecostal movements of Parham and Seymour, was the great interest in mission and the proclamation of the message of salvation. The attitude of these two men toward mission was total, single-minded dedication. They were involved in mission with such urgency and intensity as if each day were their last opportunity for

spreading the message. They missionised with urgency because they awaited Christ enthusiastically. This urgency is one of the positive effects on mission of a fervent expectation of the parousia. If this is the case, modern churches and movements have a lesson to learn from the experience of earlier Pentecostal movements. An encounter with the history of these movements has the ability to rekindle a new interest in the parousia.

Alongside all these positive elements in the parousia-expectation and missionary attitude, there was also disappointment. Some of the founders of modern Pentecostalism died against their expectation that they would be privileged to be part of the parousia experience. There was no parousia for them. For them Christ came only through death. It is at this juncture that the eschatology of Luke (Schweitzer 1982: 46) began to play an important role. The time between the first and second coming of Christ was now re-interpreted as Salvation-history. Paul and John had taken it even further and had re-interpreted the parousia-event as something which takes place in the life of every individual believer.

Both the first and second coming of Christ are pictured as very important events in the history of mankind; the one signalled a dramatic turning point in the history of mankind, the other will probably bring the closure of that history. The next event which will probably bring about a complete shift or change in history, is called the parousia, although for some Christians the

parousia probably does not exist. There are indications that at least a considerable number of Christians are patiently waiting for the unfolding of this event. The parousia is not looked at, by some, as the closure of one chapter in man's history, but as the start of a new and better era.

It seems, from the assessment above, that God has a foreordained plan of salvation. This plan appears to be "Salvation-history" or "Redemptive-history." Man needs a long period of time to make history (2 Pet.3:10). God needs only a day or more. It appears that the mystery of God's salvific plan unfolded only after the disappointment of the delayed parousia. Luke and Paul especially made worthwhile efforts to re-interpret this aspect of the parousia for their contemporaries and therefore also for modern believers. This age needs a Luke and a Paul to focus the church's eyes on mission, as the eschatological act of both the Spirit and the church, in the interim between the first and second coming of Christ.

It was also noted that the parousia-expectation functioned actively within the Lausanne Movement. Like the Lausanne Movement, the church needs to have a lively and vibrant parousia-expectation. Or is the church guilty of not having any sort of expectation of Christ? How is it possible to reconcile the conflicting situation of a church that preaches a Christ whom it does not expect to come again? There is much to be learned from the Lausanne I & II declarations.

## **SUMMARY**

**The parousia-expectation: Does it have any effect on mission? A historical-missiological perspective of the Pentecostal Movement.**

*By E.Isaacs*

The purpose of this study was to take a critical look at the missionary zeal of the Pentecostal Movement of our time. The concern was that many Pentecostal Christians no longer have a satisfactory level of enthusiasm and interest for mission. There are signs of a lack of boldness for mission in the Church today. The impression also is that the missionary spirit of some Christians has diminished. In the study it was noted that some missionaries grappled with the same problem as did Karl Barth, namely the problem of sluggishness and a lack of empathy in the church. A crisis for missions seems to be looming, if in fact conditions are not already in a worse state. It seems clear that if the church fails in mission, it fails ultimately. Mission is the heartbeat of the church. In this study, it has been noticed that this lack of missionary zeal could possibly be the symptom of a much deeper problem; the manifestation of the real crisis, which is the lack of an enthusiastic expectation of the parousia. Therefore, the main interest of this thesis was to take a look at the parousia-expectation and its effect on missionary zeal. It has also been noticed above, that the last things (*the eschaton*) are clearly connected to mission. The order of fulfilment was spelled out clearly: mission takes place first, then shall the end come, and

not in the opposite order. Their belief in mission as a way to hasten the return of God resulted in a positive urgency for mission. This is the type of urgency which the first Christians also had. The hypothesis of this thesis is that waning missionary zeal is directly related to a apathetic parousia-expectation.

In the light of these observations is the intention to investigate the parousia-expectation of the South-African Pentecostal Movement and to analyse critically its effect on missionary zeal. Faith "in the last things" (to eschaton) influences the believer's perspective about mission. This fact is confirmed the short historical overview of the origin and development of the Pentecostal churches. Individuals like C F Parham and W J Seymour of America, and D Du Plessis of South-Africa have played a vital role in the development of the parousia-expectation of the Pentecostals. From the biblical and theological discussion it became clear that completion of the missionary task definitely comes first, the the parousia. The early Chrostitians rejoiced in the promise of the second coming, and expected it fervently while committing themselves to the task of mission and evangelisation. This became specifically clear to them when the imminently anticipated parousia was delayed beyond reasonable expectation. The positive side of the delayed parousia lies in the fact that the delay provides vast opportunities for missionary activity. On the negative side, the prolonged wait of the believers resulted in uncertainty and various other problems in and for the church. The question of the delay of the parousia

has provoked heated theological debates over the years. The church has been waiting since the time of the first Christians, and is still waiting. For how long will the church still have to wait? This research lead us to this conclusion that there exists a positive tension between mission and the parousia-expectation: an enthusiastic anticipation of the parousia has the potential to give rise to vibrant and determined missionary activity. The opposite effect could also be true: apathy towards the coming of Christ has the potential to delimit missionary vision.

### **KEY WORDS**

1. MISSION

2. MISSIONARY ZEAL

3. PAROUSIA

4. PAROUSIA-EXPECTATION

5. ESCHATOLOGY

6. PENTECOSTALISM

7. GESCHICHTE

8. MISSIONIZE

9. HISTORY

10. MISSIONARY ZEAL



## OPSOMMING

**The parousia-expectation: Does it have any effect on mission? A historical-missiological perspective of the Pentecostal Movement.**

*By E.Isaacs*

Die doel van hierdie studie is 'n kritiese beoordeling van die missionêre ywer van die eietydse Pinksterbeweging. Daar bestaan die bekommernis dat 'n beduidende Christene net nie meer die nodige ywer vir en belangstelling in die sending openbaar nie. Die gebrek aan sendingywer by die kerk kan terruggevoer word na 'n veel dieper probleem naamlik, die gebrek aan 'n vurige toekomsverwagting by die Pinkster gelowige en selfs by die hele kerk. Die indruk is dat die missionêre passie by Christene aan die kwyn is. Karl Barth het die probleem van lusteloosheid en traagheid uitgewys as een van die groot sondes van die kerk. Waar dít die geval is, beteken dit dat die missionêre funksionering van die kerk in 'n krisis is. Faal die kerk in hierdie opsig, dan word dit in sy wese aangetas. Die hipotese of navorsingsveronderstelling van hierdie skripsie is dat 'n afnemende sendingywer direk verband hou met 'n afname in parousieverwagting in die kerk.

In die lig van hierdie waarnemings word in hierdie skripsie gepoog om die parousieverwagting in die Suid-Afrikaanse Pinksterbeweging na te gaan en die effek daarvan op die sendingywer krities te beoordeel. Die geloof in

"die laaste dinge" (to eschaton) beïnvloed die gelowige se perspektief op sending. Hierdie feit is wat die Pinksterbeweging betref, bevestig uit die kort historiese oorsig oor die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van die Pinksterkerke. Persone soos C F Parham en W J Seymour van America en David Du Plessis van Suid-Afrika het 'n beduidende rigtinggewende rol in die ontwikkeling van 'n Pinkster parousie-verwagting gespeel. Verder het uit sowel die bybelse en die teologiese bespreking, geblyk dat die voltooiing van die sendingtaak die parousie voorafgaan. Die eerste Christene het hulle verbly in die belofte van die wederkoms en het met groot verwagting daarna bly uitsien terwyl hulle ook die sending met alle erns bedryf het. Die erns van die sendingopdrag het juis duidelik geword toe dié wederkoms teen alle verwagting in, vertraag is. Terwyl sommige ongeduldig en onseker begin raak het, het ander hulle met groter toewyding aan die sendingtaak gewy. Die wagtyd is gesien en aangegryp as 'n verdere werkgeleentheid.

Die wagtyd van die kerk duur voort en so ook die debat oor die wederkoms. Die vraag is steeds hoelank dit sal duur voordat die belofte van die wederkoms vervul sal word. Die bevinding van die studie was dat daar 'n positiewe spanning heers tussen parousie-verwagting en sending: 'n vurige parousie-verwagting stimuleer die missionêre ywer. Aan die ander kant versper 'n lou wederkomsverwagting lidmate se missionêre visie.

## SLEUTELWOORDE

1. SENDING
2. MISSIONÊRE YWER
3. PAROUSIE
4. WEDERKOMSVERWAGTING
5. ESKATOLOGIE
6. PENTEKOSTALISME
7. MISSIONEER
8. HISTORIE
9. GESCHICHTE
10. SENDINGYWER



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