

PENTECOSTALS, TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- A RESEARCH OVERVIEW



Introduction

“I used to think the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought with 30 years of good science we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy... And to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation – and we scientists don’t know how to do that.”¹

Gus Speth, U.S. Advisor on Climate Change.

We live in a time with many global and local challenges. To deal with them, many different actors need to join hands, and changes need to take place both on structural and individual level. With this research overview, PMU and Pingst (the Swedish Pentecostal Alliance of Churches) want to achieve two things.² First and foremost, we want to encourage Pentecostal churches and their leaders to embrace current research and see the importance of their involvement in transformational work in their communities and countries. In many Pentecostal churches, the message about God’s heart for justice, restoration and righteousness is clear. The movement offers dignity to people living in poverty by conveying the message that they are created in the image of God and therefore have value and purpose. It also instils a sense of agency, helping people in poverty to move away from fatalism and the feeling that they are victims, to a situation where they become part of a community with a mission to change the world, and we are convinced that this transformational work of Pentecostals should be further spread and strengthened.

Secondly, we want to highlight the opportunities and possibilities for the donor community in international aid if they engage in a closer cooperation with the Pentecostal movement. The 2030 Agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targeted to end poverty and hunger, to protect the planet, to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. The expected cost to reach the goals by far exceeds the total aid given worldwide. Therefore, there is a need for a broad variety of processes and inflow of resources directed toward achieving the goals.³ New innovative partnerships through which we can reach the most vulnerable people living in poverty are needed so that no one is left behind.

Religious belief is such a determinant for people’s world view, identity, values, attitudes and behaviour, as well as the cultural expressions of a society, and there is a growing insight among development actors that the role of religion in processes of change must be further explored. Therefore, it is central to establish relations and innovative partnerships with progressive, legitimate and locally rooted religious forces, in order to achieve a good societal development.

The strong development and influence obtained by the Pentecostal movements, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa, has interested a number of researchers lately. In this document, we present an overview of current research on Pentecostalism. Most attention is given to research on Pentecostalism in Africa, given the huge challenges we see there in terms of addressing poverty. We hope that a better understanding of the Pentecostal movement will make it easier for the Pentecostal global community to increase its contribution in tackling challenges related to poverty, as well as environmental and other aspects of sustainable development. It is important to note that the Pentecostal movement is very diverse, which makes it important for donors and other actors to assess, in each specific case, which Pentecostal or Charismatic actor to strategically cooperate with.

With this overview, PMU and Pingst wish to highlight some positive contributions that have been noted by current research and thereby draw attention to the potential among Pentecostals to promote a fair and sustainable global development.



Progressive Pentecostalism is Christians inspired by the Holy Spirit seeking to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of people in their community.⁴

BENIN - PHOTO: Emelie Nestor

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PHILIPPINES - PHOTO: Linnea Jimenez

THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION

GLOBAL PENTECOSTALISM

The global Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is one of the fastest-growing religious movements in the world today and the major renewal stream of world Christianity.⁵ It is found in almost every country and has affected every denomination worldwide. In actual numbers, The World Christian Encyclopedia counted 644 million adherents in their 2020 publication, which means that approximately one out of every twelve persons on the globe is a Pentecostal or Charismatic Christian.⁶ The Pentecostal movement's growth has outpaced population growth for a number of years, so the present number might be significantly higher. The movement has its strongest presence in the Global South with 195 million adherents in Latin America, 125 million adherents in Asia and 230 million adherents in Africa. According to analysts the global figure is expected to rise to 1 billion by 2050.⁷

This is a movement that is taking on more and more of social responsibilities while already having extensive social impact in local societies.⁸ Dena Freeman at the London School of Economics claim that the Pentecostal movement has done more to reduce poverty in Africa than any other NGO or organisation.⁹ When Donald E. Miller and Tetsuano Yamamori examined social engagement in growing churches in developing countries, they discovered that a large majority of these churches were Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.¹⁰ They termed this spirit-centred Christianity coupled with social commitment "Progressive Pentecostalism", defining it as Christians who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus and seek to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of people in their community.¹¹ Vibrant worship is the very hallmark of this Christianity that has "developed as a non-western enterprise with Africa as one of its major heartlands".¹²

Pentecostalism is highly adaptable to the cultural context - a "religion made to travel" - and in many ways compatible with pre-existing local sensibilities and identities, lending itself to local ownership.¹³ Requesting God's best on earth activates Pentecostals for passionate service and every Pentecostal believer is encouraged to be involved in serving God in some way. Social scientists call this voluntary association, which is considered essential for development theory but also for mobilizing sustainable development practice. The belief that one can be restored in one's relationship with God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve the purposes of Jesus and bringing God's love to all people, exemplifies a thorough holistic approach where the spiritual, the physical and the social harmonize.

With its diversity Pentecostalism can be a positive force for development, but there are also challenges and flaws within this complex movement. One could easily criticize parts of the movement for being too otherworldly, materialistic, commercialized, hierarchical, superficial, individualistic, etcetera.¹⁴ The Pentecostal "track-record" was described by an NGO-consultant in a Roundtable discussion on Pentecostalism and development practices as "patchy - a mixture of spectacular success, dreadful failure, and a lot of mediocre work in between [but if some of the challenges associated with Pentecostal churches are addressed] they have the potential to make a huge contribution globally".¹⁵ Other researchers warn that Pentecostalism with its' prosperity gospel might foster wealth-accumulating individualism that is not environmentally sustainable and hinders wealth distribution.¹⁶ These are aspects of Pentecostalism that needs to be scrutinized, challenged and where action for change must be taken.

PENTECOSTAL BEGINNINGS

In a quote from the prophet Joel in the Bible, God promises to pour out his Holy Spirit on servants and slaves.¹⁷ This word took on a very particular meaning through the African American preachers, William J. Seymour, a son of former slaves, and Lucy Farrow, who was born into slavery. In 1906, they had both accepted a new teaching about being baptised with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Seymour came to Los Angeles to teach this message, invited by Richard and Ruth Asberry to hold meetings in their home at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. At first, these meetings were attended mainly by African American women and some men.¹⁸ Lucy Farrow came to help in ministry, and on the 9th of April a spiritual outpouring took place. There was massive interest in the meetings and therefore they moved to a warehouse-building on Azusa Street, which has given name to what is now known as the Azusa Street Revival.

The revival spread fast to many nations and most classic Pentecostal denominations of today can either trace their roots to Azusa Street or were strongly influenced by what happened there. People of all backgrounds prayed, sang and came to the altar together.¹⁹

The revival especially attracted people from the lower working classes, and anyone could participate if he or she submitted to the Spirit. Unfortunately, doctrinal differences within the movement soon led to a split. Strong cultural secular values distorted the original unity and a system of racism, colonial mentality and inequality between women and men started to influence the movement. The strong passion for borderless peace was replaced by patriotism and nationalism, and so on. However, the fact that the original Azusa Street Revival was an inclusive movement focusing on gathering people without distinction is still an important restoration narrative for Pentecostals worldwide.

At the same time, the Pentecostal movement has never been one single coherent organisation. Around the beginnings of the 20th century a number of independent Pentecostal churches were established in Africa and Asia. They were defining the beginning of what is today seen as a second group of Pentecostals that does not have any links to mission from Western nations.²⁰ A third group of Pentecostals was established in what is called the charismatic renewal, which was an acceptance of the teaching of baptism in Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues among older mainline churches from the 1960s and onwards. Today, Roman Catholic Charismatics are as numerous as

classical Pentecostals.²¹ A fourth group are the independent charismatic megachurches, also termed “Neo-charismatics” that surfaced in the mid-1970s. They are by many considered to be the fastest growing sector within the Pentecostals, but they are also controversial as many of these churches promote a prosperity gospel, a belief that God also makes the believers prosper materially.²²

While there is a large variety of Pentecostal expressions, Pentecostalism can be seen as a distinct Christian tradition alongside Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Protestants. It can also be seen as a diffuse movement that overlays Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, making it eclectic, pluralistic and manifolded but also modern and global.²³ Pentecostal theology is not “concentrated in a single doctrine but dispersed among a variety of Christian practices along a core commitment to the transforming and renewing encounter with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit”.²⁴ In the present document, “Pentecostalism” and “Pentecostal” are used in a broad sense and refer to all different groups mentioned above. However, the narrative has a classic Pentecostal perspective as PMU and the Swedish Pentecostal Movement have their roots in the Azusa Street Revival in 1906.

ACADEMICS AND PENTECOSTALISM

In a short time, Pentecostalism has grown fast in numbers of followers and geographical reach, has a global relevance and also gained increasing interest from an academic perspective. For many years, there has been a prevailing assumption in many Western societies, as well as within academia, that religion would decline and eventually lose its significance due to progression and modernization.²⁵ Instead, we have seen the opposite development and religion is now seen as an important factor for individual and societal change. This has led to a new interest in studying links between religion and development. The growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America, Africa and Asia have led researchers to seriously examine the impact of the movement and its activities, and scholarly interest in Pentecostalism has been growing both among scholars within Pentecostalism and among those studying the movement from an outside perspective.²⁶ In addition to theological, missiological, religious and church-historical studies, many studies on Pentecostalism have been made within sociology, anthropology, ethnology, economy, politics, environmental, philosophy and gender studies.

The new emerging field of religion and development is of particular interest for this overview. An example of the

interest in this field is the peer-reviewed journal, Religion & Development, which was first published by Brill in 2022. In the first issue, two out of five research articles focus on Pentecostal development and in the inaugural editorial it is stated that “contributions focusing on non-mainstream religious actors and new religious movements, such as Pentecostalism [...] are particularly welcome”.²⁷

Siding with post-secular studies some suggest that “Pentecostalism is avantgarde for a new way of thinking”.²⁸ It offers a sociological shift, breaking away from the dichotomy of church and state or religion and society as it claims that religion cannot be relegated to the private sphere. The boundaries considered to exist between spiritual-material, secular-sacred, individual-society, etc., are reconstructed with the result that the modernist conceptions of the world are rejected, and faith is again considered a vital component in society.²⁹ Rather than seeing development as an add on to Pentecostalism, it is actually a central and integral feature of Pentecostal faith, a foundational way of thinking.³⁰ Pentecostalism is a transforming movement and while being a subject itself, Pentecostalism also is becoming a lens or a discourse through which other fields can be studied.



PWC - PHOTO: Mikael Jägerskog



DR GONGO - PHOTO: Annelie Edsmyr

A transformative movement

TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES

The Pentecostal movement is characterized by the fact that members see themselves as bearers of a revolutionary message, which has the power to change both people and societies. This self-image and worldview often lead Pentecostals to break with inhibiting traditional cultural practices. The concept of change is characterized by the belief that established and transformed individuals also create change in society.³¹ Several recent studies have shown that the intervention of the Pentecostal message into severely deprived communities has unleashed powerful redemptive forces resulting in upward social mobility.³² In a report from South Africa, researchers found that with their faith, congregants in Pentecostal churches in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban had gained greater self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect, as well as a sense of personal agency. Among several other things, they had become more harmonious in family and other relationships including work relationships, improved work ethic and occupational success, gained an emphasis on the importance of education and become active in outreach and volunteer work in the community among the poor.³³

Engaging in activities such as reading and reflecting on biblical texts, praying together and for each other, often lead to changes where people begin to see themselves as valued individuals. Pentecostal believers thus seem to become natural and locally anchored agents of change. Their worldview, self-image and behavior change as they begin to see themselves as belonging to God's people. They leave fatalism and the sense of being a victim behind and instead they feel purpose and have agency. When becoming part of a community and culture with a vision of restoration, people experience a cultural revolution that also creates local development.³⁴

Pentecostals emphasize that the individual must take active ownership and control over his or her own life. This includes everything from cultural habits and social relationships to economic and spiritual spheres of life. Believers are expected to live a life free from evil, and abstain from things like alcohol, tobacco and extramarital relationships, work hard and do what is seen as right.³⁵ Pentecostals encourage one another to exert self-control, to set up goals and realize their life projects, and to plan and budget their time and money well. The Pentecostal message offers a spirit of entrepreneurship and optimism and is effective in bringing about dramatic changes in subjectivity, leading to equality

and agency were the Protestant principle of the priesthood of all believers also becomes a reality. The experience of speaking in tongues is therefore not only a symbol for erased ethnical, racial and/or class distinctions, but it serves as "a critique to ministries that tended to be overly mediatory and hierarchical".³⁶

In the process of change, it is central to break with the past and the concept of repentance is essential for increased control over one's life situation. Through this type of proclamation, individuals get a chance to see themselves as new creations in Christ Jesus.³⁷ They are valued beings, created by God and now belong to God's people, with gifts, capacities and agency. The idea of a God who can help and give hope creates an opportunity to dismantle mental blockings, while the inclusion in a community that has a clear mission in the world creates incitements for community involvement. An important aspect of the ability to bring about change is that the Pentecostal teaching can stimulate a change in the individual's self-concept and create a belief in the possibility of making life better through hard work and prayer.

In her research, Dena Freeman writes about "transformation of subjectivity" and defines three processes that are linked with each other, and which can lead to a radical transformation of people. These processes are embedded transformation and empowerment of the individual, a shift in values which offers moral legitimacy for behavioral changes that would otherwise collide with local practices and culture, and a reconstruction of social and economic relationships within family and society.³⁸

According to Freeman's research, the Pentecostal rhetoric seems to make people more engaged than the rhetoric of poverty alleviation used by secular NGO's. In research literature on Africa and Latin America it is often suggested that Pentecostalism makes people develop an approach that promotes stability. This means that Pentecostalism helps believers to handle poverty and adapt to the uncertain conditions of informal economies and the insecure and flexible neoliberal labor market.³⁹ Within Pentecostalism lies a possibility of transformed and empowered individuals and a communitarian counterforce that promotes well-being in societies. However, other researchers highlight that Pentecostalism need a more solid theological framework on sociopolitical issues to have an impact on development.⁴⁰

PENTECOSTALS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Focusing mainly on the materialistic aspects of life, Western development theories have not succeeded in resolving problems of poverty and underdevelopment. From a Pentecostal perspective, the cause of poverty is also spiritual, which implies that the solution must include a spiritual perspective.⁴¹ In Africa, the Pentecostal doctrine of salvation extends beyond an inner spiritual and moral renewal and righteous living, to include salvation as

” redemption from physical powers and structures that induce ill-health and poverty”.⁴²

The Pentecostal view of the concept of salvation is more than that, it is communal and holistic, and this makes Pentecostals much engaged in social and economic issues. To fight sickness, Pentecostals pray for healing, but they also start hospitals. To fight poverty, Pentecostals pray for financial resources, but they also start businesses, etcetera. Human beings are not by nature rational economic agents

but are also steered by things like beliefs, values and morality. While a modern secularized Western mindset has ridden itself of spiritual realities, Pentecostalism fits very well with, for example, African ontologies and sensibilities.⁴³

Some scholars argue that there has been a shift from “other-wordliness” to “this-wordliness” in the Western Pentecostal movements: “If renewal in the earlier Pentecostal community emphasised separation from the depraved and corrupt world, renewal for the present Pentecostal community—particularly in Western contexts—is about transforming the world”.⁴⁴ In Africa, Christian faith in Pentecostal churches “must always have a developmental agenda at its core because God delights in human flourishing”.⁴⁵ While some kind of improvement, well-being and idea of progress lies at the core of development, the concept is complex and connected with more of a discursal understanding than with a precise meaning.⁴⁶ As a materialistic economic approach is replaced by a more holistic one, the view that reduces religion to its surface elements—ignoring its deeper values—becomes increasingly criticized for its reductionism.

A modernist understanding of religion, which sees it merely as institutions and structures, fails to account for the supernatural and transcendent aspects that are central to beliefs and rituals. Without these elements, the institutions and structures hold little real meaning for the religious person.⁴⁷

In many cases Pentecostalism is a grassroots movement among people living in poverty, and as such when Pentecostals engage in development it can be seen as “development from below”. This is in contrast to government and international development agencies that engage with “development from above”.⁴⁸ Lindhart argues that Pentecostal churches “fosters sobriety, new economic priorities, discipline and initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, optimism [...] which enables converts to cope with poverty and adapt themselves to unstable conditions.”⁴⁹ The spiritualized worldview and language are challenges and obstacles for secular development institutions of the world, when engaging with, and trying to make sense of, Pentecostal-Charismatics.⁵⁰ As Kroesbergen et al states:

“Within global sustainable development programs, for example, religion in Africa is acknowledged as providing coping mechanisms in difficult circumstances, but it has proven difficult to take the perception of the world as inhabited with spiritual forces seriously and take this into account in cooperation.”⁵¹

By fostering strong personal moral commitments and taking the spiritual life of the individual seriously, Pentecostalism creates people-centered, transformative and sustainable development.⁵² Thornton argues that in the Dominican Republic: “Conversion to Pentecostal Christianity represents, in most cases, the only feasible way out of sworn lifelong allegiance to a gang“, and also offers a way out of toxic masculinity.⁵³ Atiemo writes that “alongside the concepts of cultural, economic, political and social capital, Pentecostalism also offers a “spiritual capital”.⁵⁴ Just as social capital, spiritual capital can be used or misused. Spiritual capital, however, has the potential to provide valuable contributions to sustainable development and to a holistic understanding of the concept of development.⁵⁵



PENTECOSTAL CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In the severe winter of 1914-15, the recently started Filadelfia Church in Stockholm provided warm breakfasts each day to more than three thousand hungry individuals. A few years later in 1919, after the war, they also provided relief for a thousand families in Vienna, Austria, due to the terrible situation there.⁵⁶ The Swedish Pentecostal movement is a classic example of how Pentecostals’ spiritual focus goes hand in hand with mobilization of resources in support of development work among marginalized and vulnerable people both locally and internationally. Other historical examples are Ramabai’s Mukti Mission in India in the early 1900s and Lillian Trasher’s work in early 20th century among children in Egypt who lost their parents. Since early on, “Pentecostals were involved in socio-political criticism, including opposition to war, capitalism and racial discrimination”.⁵⁷

Today, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are engaged in development work among people who are socially and economically marginalized in urban settings as well as in remote rural areas.⁵⁸ Many churches invest time and resources in improving life conditions in their local contexts, often with their own funding. This results in local ownership, grassroots-involvement, independence, empowerment and agency, not least in remote areas. Many churches see education as crucial and give financial support for school fees or run their own schools, provide skills training and foster entrepreneurship.⁵⁹

For many Pentecostal churches in Africa, local religious and cultural knowledge, cosmologies and spiritual dimensions are at the heart of their activities, thus contributing to the de-colonization of development.⁶⁰ In line with this, research suggests that religious actors, such as Pentecostal-

Charismatics, can use religion as a resource, rather than a problem, "in establishing co-ownership with local stakeholders".⁶¹ Instead of depending on external funding and support from the Global North, local Pentecostal churches build development from below. Studies show that Pentecostal churches can be more effective than Western secular NGOs, in bringing about social and economic development both in terms of results and economical resources.⁶² Pentecostal churches are embedded in local communities and enable their members to be involved in church activities and the key is transformational change from within. This results in “locally owned organizations, run by the people for the people, in a way that most development NGOs simply are not”.⁶³

A research project in Malawi compared cost effectiveness of a traditional NGO project approach with a church and community mobilization approach and found that the latter was 27 times more cost-effective while having the same level of positive impact on the quality of life in the community.⁶⁴ The church-communities also took more deliberate and direct action to care for the most vulnerable and had greater belief in being able to solve problems for themselves in the future.

Pentecostal churches all over the world implement activities that contribute towards sustainable development as they are outlined in the SDGs. Among many other things, churches offer scholarships for students, organize entrepreneurship workshops and have youth empowerment programs, establish schools, training centers, clinics and hospitals, implement decentralized livelihood programs focused on agriculture, build and manage universities, and offer micro insurance loan.⁶⁵



Pentecostalism and sustainable societies

PENTECOSTALISM AND DEMOCRACY

Democracy is an ambiguous concept, partly an ideal and partly a reality.⁶⁶ For several years modern democracy has lost ground globally and is struggling against more authoritarian systems, practices and states.⁶⁷ One of the challenges is that democracy must be understood as more than just a political method; it is also a culture in which citizens consciously participate in everyday democratic practices.⁶⁸ In a quite noticed academic work, Robert Woodberry empirically shows that a certain kind of Protestant mission (what he calls "Conversion Protestantism") has been very positive for the spread of democratic development in the world.⁶⁹ While this sort of protestant mission is highly endorsed within much of Pentecostalism, Woodberry also concludes that Pentecostalism itself has "moderate positive impact on the spread and stability of democracy".⁷⁰ While his critique is mainly aimed at corrupted Pentecostal political leaders, Woodberry recognizes that Pentecostalism "has expanded civil society among groups and in areas where civil society has historically been weak. It seems to limit corruption at a

non-elite level, lead to moderate economic and educational improvements among non-elites, and expand both religious liberty and the rights of organisations outside state control".⁷¹

There is plenty of room for improvements for the global church in many areas, such as gender equality, inequalities and climate change.⁷² With this said, Pentecostal churches can also contribute to building strong, autonomous civil societies, and support and give room for democratic values in several ways. For example, there are Pentecostal churches who train and mobilize people to vote in elections. Pentecostal churches also teach their members that they are made in the image of God; that all people have dignity and are equal in God's sight; and that therefore they have rights – regardless of social status, gender, age etc. These values are fundamental to building a democratic culture. Therefore, Pentecostalism contributes, at the very least, to preparing citizens who can exercise their vote in ways that promote egalitarian values.⁷³

In Pentecostal churches there is a "desire for education, a strong work ethic, individualism, and an affinity with democratic politics" and the "roles and contribution of women in society are recognised and expanded, as is the importance of education for children".⁷⁴ In many churches, members learn to "elect their own officers [...] to exercise leadership themselves [to] run meetings, to conduct business, to handle money, to budget, to plan, to compromise, to formulate and 'own' a course of action, to implement it, to critique results, to change direction in the light of experience".⁷⁵ In Africa, Pentecostal churches "add value through the great attention given to trust and community relations; through the important role played by the leadership; through local roots and sources of accountability; through a commitment to values compatible with democratisation, good governance, and other forms of sustainability, as well as participation".⁷⁶ The local churches and Pentecostalism's distinct ability to self-organise, contributes to building a democratic culture and form civil societies that, at least in some places, see Pentecostal

churches as "schools for democracy".⁷⁷ On the local level, leaders are accountable to their congregation, and members who do not approve of what is happening in their church are free to leave whenever they like.⁷⁸

Some Pentecostal churches also have a too strong hierarchical governing, often led by charismatic and strong leaders.⁷⁹ While a strongly centred leadership may release visionary and entrepreneurial power, it may also conflict with and sometimes hinder the development of deeper democratic practices.

There are huge challenges all over the world in fighting corruption, offering transparency, creating space for dialogue, seeking peaceful negotiations and building trust. Pentecostal churches may be an important actor who can contribute to strengthening these democratic key elements.



PENTECOSTALISM AND GENDER EQUALITY

The fifth SDG of the 2030 Agenda calls upon countries to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls along with harmful practices such as violence against women and girls, including trafficking and sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.⁸⁰ The Pentecostal movement started as a, for its time, relatively equal movement. Women, such as Lucy Farrow, were at the forefront of the revival in Asuza Street and the growing, early Pentecostal movement women served as teachers, missionaries, evangelists and apostles. In 1923, Aimee Semple McPherson founded the first Foursquare church in Los Angeles, USA. This has grown into a global denomination with more than 8.8 million members in over 67,500 churches across more than 150 nations.⁸¹ From the very start of Pentecostalism, women were active as both indigenous leaders and missionaries on every continent where the force of renewal was felt.⁸² The researcher Martin has claimed that “if there is a ‘women’s movement’ among the poor of the developing world, Pentecostalism has a good claim to the title”.⁸³

Today, most Pentecostal believers worldwide are women, but this is not reflected at the leadership level where a large majority are men.⁸⁴ Parallel to the positive examples of inclusion and women in leadership, Pentecostal churches also have a history of silencing women and hindering them from taking on leadership roles.⁸⁵ In addition, there has been a very strong norms and limiting gender roles for women as well as men.⁸⁶ Structures still exist that inhibit women’s involvements and contributions. At the heart of Christianity lay the concept of equal worth and a self-sacrificial giving to which men and women are called equally.⁸⁷

At the same time, global Pentecostalism addresses human rights violations and has ministries with the aim to reach for example women in prostitution or victims of trafficking.⁸⁸ The constant effort in Pentecostal churches towards economic, social and moral rehabilitation of families has meant that many men have stopped living irresponsible lives and started to care for their children and wives. A study from Colombia shows that Pentecostalism strengthens the status of women in their own homes. When men break with

the “machismo” culture, women’s voices and agency are strengthened.⁸⁹ In a study on the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God, both men and their families often succeed better financially when the men are converted to Pentecostalism as “money once spent on drinking and womanising is now invested in the home, particularly in education”.⁹⁰

In this way we can see that, in some cases, a “dangerous masculinity” is replaced by a “born-again masculinity” and circumstances for women and children, not least girls, are radically improved.⁹¹ Research in Brazil has also shown that “Pentecostalism re-directs women’s primary responsibility away from spouses and families towards God, which encourages individuation and ‘transforms women into active, responsible agents’”.⁹² In India, women within the Pentecostal movement can claim agency through renegotiated identity: “Pentecostal Dalit women are defining and owning a distinct identity as independent and active Christians”.⁹³

Another example of women’s liberation to agency in Pentecostal contexts can be seen in their freedom to run organisations and businesses. Studies of entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa show that small and medium enterprises are significant for boosting economies and economic empowerment of female entrepreneurs. In a study from South Africa, Pentecostal women have two key advantages, in church they gain familiarity with the masculine rhetoric of the corporate world, and they are not restricted to just being “wives, mothers, and homemakers but can also excel on their own in professional society”.⁹⁴ In Nigeria, some of the most successful Pentecostal entrepreneurs in the nation today are women.⁹⁵

This means that even though the Pentecostal church has a lot of gender equality work to do in terms of actively promoting women in leadership on all levels, as well as breaking with limiting and harmful gender norms, there is also a potential in the movement in terms of empowering women and strengthen their agency.⁹⁶



KENYA - PHOTO: Matilda Nyamai

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PENTECOSTALISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber observed that religious ideas drive economic change. He discussed how protestant ethics matched the logic of capitalism where rational work gives profit that is reinvested.⁹⁷ Amos Yong, a researcher on Pentecostalism, has found that Pentecostals believe that redemption leads to upward social mobility for the individual that could be said to take place with a “revised Protestant ethic that emphasizes a frugal lifestyle, disciplined habits of consumption, builds self-confidence, and thereby encourages risk-taking in business ventures”.⁹⁸ The Pentecostal faith can thus empower the individual, while encouraging creativity, entrepreneurship, pluralism, choice and competition, which are virtues that all fit with the market driven liberal economy of our time.

In South Africa researchers write that Pentecostalism “have indeed protected the family, the home, and the personal spheres of millions of people [and] has helped to insulate growing segments of the population from the effects of severe socioeconomic alienation”.⁹⁹ Another study concurs and shows that religion, and Pentecostal faith in particular, seems to protect people from political and economic stress, while at the same time churches in Latin America and Africa help their members to succeed financially.¹⁰⁰ Freeman’s sociological study agrees with Yong and finds that through promoting hard work, saving and limitations of unproductive consumption the Pentecostal faith “leads people to participate, and succeed, in the capitalist economy”.¹⁰¹ Charity and international aid can thus be replaced by social enterprises where economic agency is activated in individuals and in the local society. In churches, people can get information on how to look for a job, how to apply and how to handle an interview. They can also obtain basic administrative skills, and with more responsibilities even management skills.¹⁰² Pentecostal churches are also involved in crime prevention, and Pentecostalism can offer a sense of hope, purpose and mission that becomes a transforming power for people living in poverty.¹⁰³

In South Korea the economic growth of the nation started at exactly the same time as Christianity began to spread quickly.¹⁰⁴ In 1958 the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the largest single church congregation in the world with more than 800,000 registered members, was founded in Seoul.¹⁰⁵ Its founding pastor, David Yonggi Cho, preached a theology of the threefold blessing of salvation, financial prosperity and healing that “became an effective contextualization means of bringing Pentecostalism into Korea”.¹⁰⁶

In Africa, the Pentecostal emphasis on transformational leadership is a contributor to developing human capital which in turn often encourages economic growth. Prosperity theology is prominent in many Pentecostal churches, particularly in certain regions, but “(...) it is also important

to note that many Pentecostal churches have distanced themselves from this prosperity theme”.¹⁰⁷ The term “progressive Pentecostals” can both refer to groups that adhere to some form of prosperity teachings to a high extent and groups who oppose it.¹⁰⁸ There is of course a broad variety of economic thinking within the global Pentecostal movement as well.¹⁰⁹

Both positive and problematic aspects are found within this term, and researchers speak of a plurality of prosperity theologies.¹¹⁰ While there are clear examples of leaders who use their power to deceive congregation members of their money, many pastors and churches rather see wealth as a tool for serving the common good rather than personal enrichment.¹¹¹

Today, as the concept of prosperity theology put “significant emphasis on social and economic development”, it is striking how well Pentecostals adapt to the neo-liberal economic system and show ability to become both functional and thrive in modern socioeconomic life.¹¹² But as neo-liberal economy does not ensure economic growth to all and in the wake of the decentralization of service provision to meet conditions of the free market reform in neoliberal states, Pentecostals also address social needs of communities and individuals left behind.¹¹³ While valid criticism must be directed towards corrupted and selfish Pentecostal leaders growing rich at the expense of impoverished church members, prosperity gospel in some cases, contribute to real socio-economic development. In Nigeria, Pentecostal churches have initiated microfinance ventures, conference events, business schools and entrepreneurship education to build capacity in the small and middle-segment of businesses.¹¹⁴

While individual economic empowerment and entrepreneurship is connected with spiritual transformation some Pentecostal pastors recognize that collective prosperity will be attained only if the structural and environmental causes of poverty and inequality are addressed.¹¹⁵

Many Pentecostals seek a deeper commitment to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns in order to fight the negative aspects of materialism, individualism and over- consumption driven by neo-liberalism. And while maybe most Pentecostals accept the economy on its own terms and work within existing economical systems, there are also Pentecostals who want to transform the economy with the inclusion of a moral dimension leading to a value-driven economy and economic justice and thus making “shalom central to the new economy and community”.¹¹⁶ The concept of “shalom” will be elaborated below.



NEPAL - PHOTO: Matilda Nyamai



PENTECOSTALISM AND POLITICS

The involvement of Pentecostals in changing socio-political structures has long been a matter of quite some ambivalence. One perspective has been that “political structures are often seen as part of the ‘evil world’ with which Pentecostals are exhorted to have nothing to do”.¹¹⁷ Such position should be seen in the context of a historic reality where Pentecostals, often poor and coming from the margins of society, have experienced much distance, neglect and rejection from those in power. But as Pentecostalism has expanded in number of adherents as well as in width of social strata, their relation to political power has changed. Focusing on the empowerment of the individual, Pentecostals have become more engaged in thinking about political theology with the aim to transform entire nations.¹¹⁸

While it is not possible to distinguish a consistent doctrine around political design, Pentecostalism, like Christian faith in general is not apolitical by nature.¹¹⁹ In the book, *The Politics of Jesus*, one of the most influential theological works in the 1900s, John Howard Yoder points to the fact

that though not being a politician, Jesus still discussed issues of power, status and right relations in society.¹²⁰ Amos Yong refers to this as “prophetic politics”, claiming that Pentecostals are “indirectly political, but nonetheless political for all that”.¹²¹ This “prophetic politics” are manifested across the world, for example in Nigeria, where prominent Pentecostal leaders have spoken out against the corruption in the national oil industry and the governmental misuse of power.¹²² Prayer in the churches led to “prophetic politics” that in turn became political protest that brought change in the society. In another example from Nigeria, the Pentecostal churches are fighting “for the emergence of a more just and equitable society, where corruption will be banished, human rights promoted and peace and tranquillity well established”.¹²³

Studies in the Teso district of Eastern Uganda suggest that “sustainable change depended on local churches and organisations” rather than on state and secular agencies.¹²⁴ This places Pentecostalism in an interesting position in

terms of politics. While the prophetic task is to speak truth to power, there is an increasing number of Pentecostals who want to promote other Pentecostals to stand in elections.¹²⁵ This creates a tension between collective theological values held by the church with a universal understanding of what is on “God’s heart” and the individual Pentecostal politician who must manage with what is politically possible. Pentecostal individuals may also use their connections with influential churches for their own personal agenda. It is important to acknowledge that Pentecostal politicians are exposed to corruption as much as any other politician.¹²⁶

On the community level the “Christian citizenship” emphasizes morality and ethics and is primarily linked to the Biblical vision of Shalom.¹²⁷ In her book *Shalom*, the Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion, Grace Milton claims that the concept of Shalom characterizes the Pentecostal view on repentance, and that Shalom is God’s primary purpose for his creation. The Pentecostal vision of the good society thus stretches out from the Church and encompasses society at

large, as well as the whole creation. This view puts a limit to an overly nationalistic focus and problematizes political visions seeking national gains at others’ expense.

Pentecostals contribute to the development of new social and political landscapes in many countries today.¹²⁸ Heeding Jesus’ words in the Sermon of the Mount, Pentecostals believe that values such as justice, peace and lasting relationships are meant for society at large to enjoy.¹²⁹ This means that members of Pentecostal churches are sometimes encouraged to engage in politics. One example is the African Forum on Religion and Government (AFREG), founded in 2006 in Nigeria by a Pentecostal pastor with the vision “to see Africa transformed into a premier continent based on God-centred values”.¹³⁰ Participants from 27 African countries attended AFREG’s inaugural conference in Abuja, including the Nigerian and Burundian heads of states. Other similar initiatives have been started as well.¹³¹

PENTECOSTALISM AND ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In the Brundtland Commission’s report, *Our Common Future* from 1987, sustainable development is defined, as “development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.¹³²

In the environmental movement the Christian worldview has not seldom been presented with a biblical God who gave humankind the freedom to subdue the earth and “no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man’s purposes”.¹³³ Ecocriticism centers on humanity’s excessive exploitation of the earth’s resources. The idea of perpetual progress underlying this misuse of earth’s resources is however an Enlightenment idea, not a Christian thought. Among theologians, the concept of “subdue” or “rule” is instead linked to the idea of maintaining and nurturing rather than dominating and abusing.¹³⁴ Some theological ideas that are presently discussed e.g. in the *Australasian Pentecostal Studies journal*, in relation to ecology are the creation as a prophetic witness to God’s work in the world, the creation mandate for believers to stewardship and the need for Christ’s followers to participate in God’s work of reconciliation and renewal of all things.¹³⁵ An important aspect is the renewed eschatological discussion where hope for the coming Kingdom of God gives motivation to take action in the Anthropocene age.¹³⁶

However, there is also a multilevel ambivalence in relation to the ecological realities in the global Pentecostal community. In many contexts, Christians “are not environmental activists and environmental activists are not Christian”.¹³⁷ In American surveys Pentecostals are consistently found to be among the least concerned with ecological issues and similar results can be found in Australia.¹³⁸ In Western Europe, the Pentecostals also have a low profile regarding social justice and ecological care. Likewise, in Brazil “Pentecostal affiliation and doctrinal beliefs are not correlated with environmental concern”.¹³⁹ However, other studies indicate the opposite, as Smith and Veldman writes: “Moreover, in the 2014 data, church attendance was strongly positively associated with environmentalism among Evangelicals and Pentecostals— boosting the predicted percentage choosing the environmentalist option by nearly 20 percentage points”.¹⁴⁰

While neo-Pentecostal churches preaching prosperity-gospel may contribute to economic development in many nations, there is a clear tension between socio-economic development, requiring economic growth and extensive use of resources, and the urgent need for a sustainable use of resources in order to limit the climate change and care for the ecological systems.¹⁴¹ With growing awareness about the ecological crisis and climate change, Pentecostal theologians and thinkers have started to request a more “radical neo-Pentecostal environmentalism in the light of theological and ethical obligations”.¹⁴² Sometimes there is also a tension within Pentecostal movements where social mission agencies are actively and progressively caring for

creation, while the teaching from the pulpit is not yet as environmentally conscious.¹⁴³ There is also a generational divide, where young people are generally more aware of and affected by the climate crisis, and some research point to the need for ecotheology as a means of keeping congregations and families united.¹⁴⁴ As Jägerskog writes, the need for a holistic worldview-analysis is important and the concept of shalom is vital for a biblically based holism. This because its reconciliation includes the physical and emotional as well as the social and spiritual, hence embracing social justice, environmental justice, gender equality and peace.¹⁴⁵

Some Pentecostals have been engaged in ecological issues for a long time, like for example in Ecuador and Chile, where ecology has been of interest among Pentecostals for decades.¹⁴⁶ The Pentecostal African Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe have included “a religiously based ecological ethic” in their worldview since the middle of the 1900s.¹⁴⁷ In South Korea, an NGO founded by Pentecostal pastor Dr David Yonggi Cho, with the support of the city of Seoul, created a “model environmental garden in Seoul as an educative program to teach on environmental issues”.¹⁴⁸ Cho also included ecological thinking in his theology. In Ghana, pastors have publicly opposed practices such as illegal mining, not least due to degradation of the environment.¹⁴⁹ Another example is from the Church of Pentecost in Ghana (with some three million members, about ten percentage of the Ghana population), have run national campaigns with Bible studies targeting members and broader information to the whole community against environmental degradation.¹⁵⁰ In for example Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya, there are Pentecostal denominations that have planted trees, pioneered innovative sustainable farming methods and engaged local churches and schools in creation care for a long time.¹⁵¹ Some researchers point to Pentecostal contributions to biodiversity and ecosystem protection in the form of “sacred spaces” in for example Nigeria.¹⁵² Other scholars point to the unique potential of the Pentecostal movement to contribute to ecological restoration and: “that Spirit Centred Churches have a lot to contribute to this deep and holistic transformation towards sustainable lifestyles. In this spiritual tradition, people are not only taught with words, but they do experience change”.¹⁵³

Furthermore, scholars are noticing a growing interest among Pentecostals globally to form and expand groups aimed at enhancing eco-friendliness and equip churches and organizations to better care for creation. See for example the Pentecostal World Fellowship Creation Care Task Force (PWFCCTF) led by Pentecostal scholar Rev. Dr. Harold D. Hunter¹⁵⁴ and the Pentecostal Relief and Development Partners Creation Care Working Group.¹⁵⁵ This shift towards collaboration also includes ecumenical engagement from Pentecostals in for example Season of Creation, and active participation and presence at global environmental platforms and negotiation forums such as the UN COP meetings on Climate and Biodiversity.¹⁵⁶



BANGLADESH - PHOTO: Annelie Edsmyr

Pentecostal theologies and practices all over the world are rooted in the local context and spiritually motivated. Pentecostals have “begun to articulate a distinctive Pentecostal ecology” [with concern for the] “ecological and eschatological well-being of creation”.¹⁵⁷ Northcott and Scott argues that the ecological and climate crisis calls “for deep moral, psychological, political and spiritual changes”, and that there is a need for the Pentecostal movement to develop their theology and deepen their commitment. Through this developed theology and deepened commitment, the Pentecostals carry great potential, and hope, that can make an important difference to the environment and climate.¹⁵⁸

Many Pentecostal adherents are poor and live in areas affected by environmental destruction.¹⁵⁹ Just as Pentecostals have demonstrated strong solidarity with the poor, they may also rise to address environmental and climate-related challenges and take a firm stand in support of God's creation.¹⁶⁰ As has been expressed in this research overview, the ongoing destruction of natural environments can be understood in terms of a breakdown in the relationship between humans and creation. It has been suggested by many that we need not only peace on Earth, we also need peace with the Earth, and the two are closely interlinked.¹⁶¹

PENTECOSTALISM AND PEACE

In a recent report from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the authors highlight the “twin crises” of our time, stating that:¹⁶² “[...] between 2010 and 2020 the number of state-based armed conflicts roughly doubled (to 56), as did the number of operationally deployed nuclear warheads increased after years of reductions, and in 2021 military spending surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time ever.”¹⁶³

Pentecostals have a long history of taking a stand for peace. Before World War I the Assemblies of God in the USA declared that “we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life”.¹⁶⁴ Similar statements could be found in most other Pentecostal denominations at the time. Pacifism was seen as a moral sign of the restoration of the true apostolic faith. The church also saw that they had a prophetic mission to unmask social evils. Pacifism became a “moral critique of the existing sinful order” and a way to defend the inviolable value of human life.¹⁶⁵ The passion for Jesus as the Prince of Peace and his Kingdom was greater than any nationalism.¹⁶⁶ However, after World War II this strong commitment to peace was compromised, not least by nationalistic patriotism. The structured theological framework as well as peace practices were lost, but many Pentecostals are still

passionate advocates of peace.

The Panzi Hospital in DR Congo treats and supports survivors of sexual violence and in 2018 the Pentecostal pastor and gynaecologist, Dr Denis Mukwege, together with the human rights activist Nadia Murad, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Healing women who have been hurt by sexual violence is at the heart of Mukweges ministry.¹⁶⁷ In his Nobel lecture, Mukwege also challenged the unregulated materialism of our time, which fuels conflicts like the one in DR Congo:

” When you drive your electric car; when you use your smart phone or admire your jewellery, take a minute to reflect on the human cost of manufacturing these objects. As consumers, let us at least insist that these products are manufactured with respect for human dignity. Turning a blind eye to this tragedy is being complicit”.¹⁶⁸

An important aspect of peacebuilding processes is the inclusion of religious and spiritual capital that generate social capital. While social capital is largely about social

organisation, religious capital is visible in concrete actions and resources invested by faith-based communities. This is, in turn, driven by spiritual capital which supplies the motivational foundation in form of beliefs, conceptions and values.¹⁶⁹ Pentecostals base their actions for peace on a transformed self-perception by which they see themselves as people with God given agency. This means that they can act confidently in processes for building peace and generating trust.¹⁷⁰

In Kenya, the Free Pentecostal Fellowships (FPFK) employ several strategies to build peace. They have initiated livelihood projects to address the lack of resources and created platforms for dialogues.¹⁷¹ They have also constructed an Early Warning System (EWS) with peace monitors that alert peace teams in the event of escalating conflict. The peace teams in turn mobilizes law enforcement, local leaders and other peacebuilding actors to stop conflicts from turning into violence. In Nigeria, Pentecostals have taken on a mediation role in order to reduce tensions and prevent violence. The Young Ambassadors for Community Peace and Inter-Faith Foundation (YACPIF) was founded in the city of Jos by a Pastor of Assemblies of God who has trained thousands of people in conflict-resolution skills.¹⁷² Pentecostal responses to violence and violation of religious

freedom in Nigeria have included interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding initiatives, and programs that engage both Muslims and Christian youth.¹⁷³

Within the Pentecostal movement today, there is a raised awareness about the need to engage deeper in peace building, but much more needs to be done to recover and develop theological reflections and reactivate peaceful practices. In May 2024 researchers, theologians, and practitioners from churches in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Nordic countries came together to discuss the role of the church in peace building. In specific focus was the Pentecostal Movement. At the 2025 GlobPent Conference, the Institute for Pentecostal Studies based at Uppsala University takes the opportunity to bring together the field of Peace and Conflict research with research on Global Pentecostalism. The conference will discuss topics that relate to a broad understanding of Pentecostalism in Peace and Conflict, such as dealing with questions of core identity and identity politics, personal and collective faith, religious organizations and leadership, as well as challenges arising from external factors such as migration, religious persecution, poverty and climate change.¹⁷⁴



DR CONGO - PHOTO: Panzi Hospital



Concluding words

PENTECOSTALISM AND THE 2030 AGENDA

The discourse of development has shifted with Agenda 2030. From a narrow concept of development as only economic growth focusing on “developing countries” in the Global South, to a more holistic definition with room for challenges such as climate change, global health, increasing inequalities, conflicts and shrinking space for civil society. We also see a growing awareness of the fact that all societies in the world need to address these issues in different ways. We have moved from the concept of human development, in which human well-being and social transformation were central, towards a more holistic idea where the concept of sustainability is fundamentally rooted in an ecological sustainability widened to include economic, social, and political dimensions.¹⁷⁵ This radical shift requires reflections on what development means and to whom. However, the present secular discourse still misses the spiritual dimension of development to a great extent. Agenda 2030 and its resolution on the SDGs lacks a religious perspective.¹⁷⁶

A transformational paradigm shift is necessary in the social, ecological and financial realms. More than 80% of the world’s population are affiliated with a religion, and while a majority of North Americans and Europeans increasingly regard religion as playing a diminishing role in society, the opposite is seen in many other parts of the world.¹⁷⁷

New research indicates that the young generation in the West is more religious than the previous two, and men are increasingly interested in spirituality, erasing the previous discrepancy between men and women in that regard.¹⁷⁸ Professor Joel Halldorf argues that Swedish society and public discourse has moved from a clear secular bias towards a post-secularism evident in the increase of religious themes in for example the media landscape.¹⁷⁹ Fundamental values and spiritual orientations are at stake, which means that “the moral and spiritual basis for a new concept of development can only come from bodies which reach deeper than secular governmental agencies”.¹⁸⁰ Jørgen Thomsen points out that “[r]eligion, beliefs and ideas can promote change, but religion, beliefs and ideas can also block change [...] However, the fact that religion is ambiguous just proves that it is important: it can either be conducive to development or block development, but it is never irrelevant to development”.¹⁸¹

In recent years, many donors within development aid have started to give increased recognition to religion as part of development.¹⁸² With that said, there is a need to build knowledge and understanding among donors about faith-driven initiatives.¹⁸³ From an economic point of view, the expected cost to reach the 17 global development goals

in the 2030 Agenda by far exceeds the total aid given worldwide. The resources that can be mobilized by the faith-based organisations and churches are therefore absolutely necessary in order to reach the goals.

In the 2030 Agenda, the world is called upon to embrace sustainable holistic development. While Pentecostals have much to learn, they also have much to offer. To Pentecostals, real transformative change, spiritual as well as social, takes place when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ and is activated with and through a local church. Jesus came to earth with good news to the poor, liberty for the bruised and to preach the gospel to the whole creation.¹⁸⁴ This is also the Pentecostal passion, and as it has been shown in this research overview, Pentecostals are highly involved in many issues concerning the well-being of individuals, families, nations and the whole world, and this, often, from a holistic perspective.

Considering that 2030 is only a few years away, we have no time to lose. All constructive and progressive forces are needed for the world to succeed in the global fight against injustice and poverty. As PMU and Pingst, we are convinced that the global Pentecostal movement can and should play an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

About PMU

PMU is the Swedish Pentecostal Churches' development and humanitarian aid organisation. PMU is a rights- and faith-based organisation working in about 30 countries. PMU is part of the Swedish Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches (Pingst) and is also part of the global Pentecostal movement. The main mission is to mobilise international and Swedish partners in the work of reducing all forms of poverty, exclusion, upholding democracy and human rights. In humanitarian aid the goal is to save lives, alleviate suffering and restore human dignity. PMU's strategic priorities and contribution to Agenda 2030 is described in PMU's Compass.

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About Pingst Sweden

Pingst Sweden, the Swedish Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches (Pingst – Pingst fria församlingar i samverkan) is the national organisation of the Swedish Pentecostal movement. Pingst Sweden is part of the international Pentecostal movement and is a member of the Pentecostal European Fellowship (PEF) and Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF). Pingst Sweden's vision is to "Be known for our genuine love for Jesus and people, and to be a clear and respected voice in society and a movement that never stops growing". Nearly all of the Swedish Pentecostal churches are cooperating with sister churches abroad, in around 100 different countries, with church building activities, development work or with humanitarian interventions. In Sweden the Pentecostal movement has special branches for Rehabilitation of drug and alcohol addicts, Youth work, Training of pastors and other leaders, Church development, Education, Relationship and Social awareness.

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