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Celebrating 100 Years of Prayer for Christian Unity

“Full Communion”: A Pentecostal Prayer

BY HAROLD D. HUNTER

When I put together the first international conference of pentecostal and charismatic scholars at Brighton '91 – after being turned down by the WCC General Superintendent in his Geneva office to join along with Canberra and their theme ‘Come Holy Spirit’ – I developed a model that remains useful to this day. That is, when organizing a conference I always draw from four streams and five continents. The four streams in this paradigm are Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal. Obviously this does not account for the whole of Christianity and does not explain many important nuances but it provides a working premise.

Despite centuries of fragmentation, Roman Catholics and the Orthodox have managed to keep ‘internal’ divisions of the last century shrouded in thick clouds of mystery. Using the paradigm above, I can say that the division and fragmentation associated with Classical Pentecostalism is no worse than that known to Protestantism.

With the rise of conciliar ecumenism in the 20th century, ecclesial bodies that achieve organic unity are held in high esteem. Despite the lack of proper recognition, organic unity is also part of the story of Classical Pentecostals. In the USA, among the most representative examples are the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Open Bible Churches, the United Pentecostal Church International and the International Pentecostal Church of Christ.

This article addresses the question of how some Classical Pentecostal denominations that belong to the Pentecostal World Fellowship compare to the Canberra model of church unity made visible or, to use conciliar language, achieve full communion. Special attention will be given to the roll of prayer in a Pentecostal context.

Pentecostal Prayer

Prayer most common among early 20th century Classical Pentecostal denominations in the USA that belonged to the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) had much in common with many Christian traditions. The description that follows draws upon selective theological trends from the Pentecostal Movement as a whole and not celebrated epics like the Azusa Street Revival that ran in Los Angeles, California from 1906 to 1909.¹

Among those common elements is that Pentecostal prayer involved petition. Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to God’s will. Early Pentecostals were known to distinguish between the necessities of life and things on the periphery. Popular language like “needs” versus “wants” were invoked. So when petitioning a sovereign God, Pentecostals first and foremost prayed about necessities such as the conversion of unbelievers, healing of the body, transformation of communities, the resolve to be faithful to their calling, etc. On the one hand, Pentecostals acknowledged the many gifts of God in their lives while not

waiting passively for a mysterious intervention to resolve all their requests.

Despite exceptions from the start, it was mostly a later aberration that insisted that the outcome of an object of prayer depended solely on the “amount” or “strength” of the believer’s faith. The earliest Pentecostals were persistent in their prayers and would often stay with the ill at their bedside until a resolution was achieved. Testimonies were multiplied about the benefits of frequent prayer. However, the majority knew that no amount of prayer or faith assured a certain outcome. Their definition of faith in this context was often explained by Hebrews 11:6 and James 1:6f.

It was evident that humility was a mark of this genuine faith and that authentic prayer must be in accordance with the express will of God. Nowhere is

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this humility more frequently manifest amongst early Pentecostals than in their conviction of their unworthiness. The theme of unworthiness permeated early sermons, Sunday school lessons, small group accountability sessions, and exhortations to approach the altar completely aware of one's inability to earn God's favor.

The most central of all petitions is the petition of entreaty, that God in Christ will be merciful to us and forgive us our sins. This petition is called confession. The model prayer in Matthew 6:12 asks that we be forgiven our debts, while Matthew 6:14f refers to "trespasses" and Luke 11:4 says simply "sins." Holiness Pentecostals who advocated a sanctified life that freed one of knowingly committing overt sins were keenly aware of their many failures and shortcomings. The confusion for those looking in from the outside centered on not understanding

Visitors exposed to the entire congregation praying vividly out loud seemed chaotic. But there were always parameters in place that were grounded in well known Bible verses quoted frequently from pages of Bibles that aged prematurely due to their much use. Even in this environment the individual manner of expression was not suppressed as a more introspective worshipper could be side-by-side a demonstrative worshipper without one hindering the other.

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the unique doctrine of sin adopted by most Holiness Pentecostals.

A second major element of Pentecostal prayer has always been praise. This is seen in written prayers, but most noticed in the spontaneous prayers that dominated many worship services. This is particularly true of the final stage of Pentecostal worship services where seekers came to the mourner's bench or "altar" and knelt or draped themselves over the bench while encircled by a band of intercessors often dubbed "prayer warriors" who prayed with great passion motivated by deep devotion. These extended sessions sometimes went late into the night and other planned prayer meetings would last literally all night long. "Travailing at the altar" was a picturesque phrase that captures scenes repeated countless times among Pentecostals.

An obvious link for Pentecostals has been that prayer be inspired by the triune God. Yet this held true for written as well as spontaneous prayers, prayers barely uttered while sitting on a church pew with eyes wide open or more commonly those poured forth while standing or kneeling with eyes closed with words flowing freely. But it was the level of intensity of prayer that made terms like "hunger" and

"thirst" commonplace when depicting the enthusiastic state of a believer's search for dynamic spiritual encounters. This was particularly true for those Pentecostals who embraced an imminence oriented eschatology and stages of Holy Spirit fullness. Although not all worshippers indulged, many were moved to animated bodily responses like dancing, marching, and swaying or as it was originally called "shouting". "Shouting" is not to be confused with full throated vocalizations or crying and laughing aloud although such things were not unknown particularly in revivals and camp meetings.

For those who speak in tongues (e.g. glossolalia), they know that there are special times when the Holy Spirit groans for us, enables us to pray when we cannot pray on our own, and utters forth our prayer to the Lord in a heavenly, blessed way. All of these things were thought to be explained by canonical passages like Romans 8:26f. While not demeaning the faithful presence of the Holy Spirit, a premium was placed on surprises of the Holy Spirit that elevated one into "heavenly realms".

It is this dimension that some outsiders found unnerving. Visitors exposed

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to the entire congregation praying vividly out loud seemed chaotic. But there were always parameters in place that were grounded in well known Bible verses quoted frequently from pages of Bibles that aged prematurely due to their much use. Even in this environment the individual manner of expression was not suppressed as a more introspective worshipper could be side-by-side a demonstrative worshipper without one hindering the other.

As it is relevant to the findings of this study, it should be mentioned that some Pentecostal bodies were known not to undertake formal business whether internal or external without considerable prayer. True to their Pentecostal roots, some would move forward on a given order of business only when the prayer gave way to Pentecostal manifestations of speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues-speech, prophecy, 'demonstrations of the Spirit', visions, et al.

The International Pentecostal Holiness Church

In March 2000, a study group of the NCCUSA Faith and Order Commission commenced a study of a concept well known among conciliar ecumenists termed as "full communion". Apparently there was initially an expectation that this would be a rather straightforward process. However, the group quickly learned that the term did not have clear application for churches represented around the table. Some of the traditions used the term "full communion" but without a common meaning. Other traditions did not use such a term even if they were committed to the underlying principles associated with the term.

Space prohibits a thorough rehearsal of the findings of this commission. Fortunately, a good summary of work accomplished during the first quadrennial was published by O.C. Edwards in *Speaking of Unity* 1:1 (2005). Here the various groups studied were classed as either attempting to follow the Canberra model or found themselves asserting paradigms not associated with Canberra. The latter group included restorationists,

which is a good starting point to look at a Classical Pentecostal model.

Clearly, Pentecostal bodies that belong to the PWF fall into the category of those traditions outside the Canberra model. I would like to compare and contrast the findings of this study commission to the journey of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC). To facilitate this process, aspects of IPHC history will be treated using the following categories: organic union, affiliation, fraternal relations, and common mission.

Organic Union

The IPHC resulted from a merger in 1911 between the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church (FBHC) and the Pentecostal Holiness Church (PHC). Both groups started as Holiness bodies in the late 19th century. The Tabernacle Pentecostal Church consolidated with this body four years later. The United Pentecostal Association came in as part of a newly organized conference in 1924.

At the initiative of the group known as the Mutual Confederation Church led by Rev. A.M. Lopez with 43 congregations in Mexico and Texas, Bishop J.H. King organized these churches into an annual conference known as the South Texas and Mexican Conference when they met March 2, 1931 in Weslaco, Texas. Bishop King described Rev. A.M. Lopez as a "man of humility, intelligence and amiability of spirit" and reported that he "felt more of the glory of God in the Mexican churches that I visited than I have found anywhere in twenty-two years."²

A little noticed part of the 1911 merger is that when the first motion was put before the PHC in 1909, G.B. Cashwell submitted an amendment to include those Free-Will Baptists who were Pentecostals. The motion passed with the amendment, but apparently the Free-Will Baptists (FWB) voted against becoming part of the 1911 merger.³ It seems possible that among the issues that this would have brought to the surface was differing views on tobacco. The FBH were completely against any contact with tobacco whereas the PFWB history includes members

growing, selling and some even using tobacco. Prior to his Pentecostal experience, Cashwell was involved in the tobacco business and his mother used snuff all of her life.⁴

The 1911 merger is the foundational event for IPHC yet the IPHC Archives and Research Center lacks significant supporting contemporary documents in terms of committee minutes, correspondence, published accounts of the process, photos and the like. There is, however, considerable evidence about developments prior to the actual merger. A review will give us a context for how organic unity was achieved and hint at the role of prayer in the process.

Key factors leading up to the 1911 merger of the PHC and FBHC include the following:⁵

Both groups were Holiness bodies who adopted the Azusa Street message largely through PHC G.B. Cashwell's 1907 revival in Dunn, North Carolina. Both groups were avid readers of J.M. Pike's *The Way of Faith* and W.J. Seymour's *The Apostolic Faith*. Both officially codified this belief by changing their doctrinal statements to include initial-evidence Spirit baptism. Differences remained both inside PHC and FBHC and between them, but the leadership viewed the disputes as not central to the gospel message.

In April 1910, representatives from the PHC and FBHC met in Falcon for two days to tackle the thorny issues and to do so in full view of "spectators". The FBHC discipline came under close scrutiny, but after a day and a half consensus was achieved.⁶ The official delegates meeting in January 1911 easily adopted the proposed new discipline by a vote of 36 to 2.

The form of government adopted incorporated congregational and presbyterian elements whereas FBH had been rigidly Episcopal and Crumpler had expected strict compliance with his leadership. Again we see another matter considered as having legitimate diverse avenues of actualizing New Testament teachings and examples.

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The “Basis of Union” in the 1911 *Constitution and General Rules of the Pentecostal Holiness Church* was heavily indebted to FBHC documents. The discipline proposed by a joint committee adopted by the merged church was heavily indebted to the fundamentals as compiled by A.B. Crumpler at the beginning of the PHC.

The name chosen came from the smaller group. The fact that a group of FBH left and formed the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church (PFBHC) illustrates that some of them felt most strongly that their convictions had been compromised. Even if the PHC classed the issues as rules, the PFBHC saw them as doctrinal disputes that compromised scripture.

J.H. King while General Overseer of the FBHC adopted the Azusa St. message as a result of a revival at his Toccoa congregation led by PHC minister G.B. Cashwell who had personally gone to Azusa St. for his Spirit baptism.

When G.B. Cashwell started his paper *Bridgegroom's Messenger* in 1907 the corresponding editors were G.F. Taylor and A.H. Butler. A frequent and important contributor was J.H. King. This was at a time that the PHC considered Cashwell's magazine their quasi-official organ.

J.A. Culbreth, a legendary layperson for the IPHC, built an Octagon Tabernacle in Falcon, North Carolina. Culbreth started independent annual camp meetings in Falcon in 1900 that required huge canvas tents. Culbreth also established the Falcon Holiness School then an orphanage.

J.H. King was the invited speaker for the 1907 Falcon Camp Meeting. King returned as speaker for the 1908 Falcon Camp Meeting. He then determined to move to Falcon where he taught at the Falcon Holiness School and took charge of the orphanage. All this transpired while King remained general overseer of the FBHC.

When the FBH were between the publication of *Live Coals of Fire* and *Live Coals*, they used A.B. Crumpler's *Holiness Advocate*. Crumpler was the founder of the PHC who left in 1908 when the organization became completely Pentecostal.

B.H. Irwin, the founder of the FBH Movement, published *Live Coals of Fire* in the late 19th century, but the paper was discontinued when he was unceremoniously dismissed from the office of FBHC general overseer in 1900 for conduct unbecoming. The FBH Movement started by Irwin gave birth to the FBHA then the FBHC led by J.H. King, the predominantly African-American Fire-Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas, the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church (PFBHC) and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church [1948 name] centered in Independence, Kansas.

Obviously King's active role in Falcon developed strong bonds with the leadership of the PHC while ministers and members from both bodies did the same at major events and in their own communities. Both groups had several churches in the same region.

J.H. King wrote the foreword to G.F. Taylor's *Spirit and the Bride* that was released in 1908. Taylor became principal of the Falcon Holiness School in 1907. He also is the first recorded pastor of the PHC at Falcon.

The Falcon Publishing Company started by J.H. King in 1909 published *The Apostolic Evangel* edited from the first by King and eventually A.E. Robinson. Robinson had published *Live Coals* in Royston, Georgia that changed to *The Apostolic Evangel* in 1907.

Talks about consolidation gained momentum in 1910 – especially during the Falcon Camp Meeting – and the committee to move things forward included G.F. Taylor, F.M. Britton (then acting General Overseer of the FBHC while King was traveling around the world), and J.A. Culbreth. Those advocating the merger in 1910 included Taylor, S.D. Page, A.H. Butler, A.G. Canada, and C.B. Strickland.

The first general convention met on the Falcon camp meeting grounds.

This conclusively shows that the core leadership of both bodies had extensive exposure to one another. And one cannot downplay the important role of being able to bring the two groups together in

worship. This reality would weigh heavily on the membership at large but also those of influence for both the PHC and FBHC.

It is also evident that prayer was an integral part of the actual merger realized at Falcon in 1911. The *Minutes of the First General Convention of the Pentecostal Holiness Church* mention prayer throughout the proceedings on more than one occasion. And these prayers should not be taken as mere formalities to fill out an agenda, but as the opening section of this paper described, it would be best to see here impassioned pleas for divine guidance. Given what we know of the Falcon camp meeting along with FBHC and PHC revivals, it would be a mistake to think that those designated to facilitate the merger would be satisfied with perfunctory prayers.

While the Falcon camp meetings provided an important time for the groups to worship together each year, ample evidence abounds that these were people who knew how to travail, pray with passion, routinely hold ‘protracted services’, etc. until their human desires and wills were broken and they were open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Specific references to Falcon camp meetings may be found in periodicals of the time like the *Holiness Advocate* 1:7 (7/15/03, p. 3) and the *Apostolic Evangel* 1:1 and 1:18 (2/15/09, p. 8; 11/1/09, p. 8). Just prior to the January 31, 1911 merger, A.G. Canada held a revival attended by many of the major players in the final outcome. As Joseph Campbell comments, “The spiritual preparation which resulted from these services no doubt played a large part in bringing about the consolidation.”⁷

During the 1960s, a serious discussion about organic union developed between the IPHC and Church of God (Cleveland). A joint committee was appointed in 1959 by the churches to study this possibility and several meetings were held in Cleveland, Tennessee and Franklin Springs, Georgia. Talks eventually stalled on the point of merging, but relations seemed warm during the 1960s joint Holiness Conventions in Charlotte, North Carolina, Falcon, North Carolina, Doraville, Georgia and Greensboro, North Carolina.⁸

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The formation of the Congregational Holiness Church (CHC) in 1921 was a direct result of controversy within the IPHC, particularly the Georgia Conference, over the use of physicians. The original ordeal also surfaced deep-seated questions about how denominational polity was to be implemented. Contrast this to a "Joint Meeting of the Study Commissions of the Congregational Holiness Church and the Pentecostal Holiness Church" which met March 14, 1962, September 26, 1962, April 2, 1963, October 8, 1963 and September 23, 1964. An earnest attempt to breach the gap was underway when Bishop J. Floyd Williams was general superintendent of IPHC and openly saying that IPHC got it wrong in the original controversy. Boards from the IPHC and CHC met March 11-12, 1980 in Franklin Springs, Georgia and adopted an "Agreement of Affiliation" that quotes John 17:21. An "Agreement of Affiliation" was signed October 10, 1980 between the IPHC, the CHC and the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptists (PFWB) as a result of a joint session of the executive boards of the churches. When the three executive boards convened November 24, 1980 in Falcon, North Carolina, committees for affiliation were approved. A "Board of Administration for Affiliation" taking in all three groups met March 16, 1981 then February 2, 1982 in Greenville, South Carolina that produced an organizational flow chart. Formal papers were prepared in 1983 for moving toward consolidation of PFWB with the IPHC. Notes from the "Meeting

of Affiliates" which took place March 27, 1984 in Franklin Springs, GA show agreement "not to promote the idea of full amalgamation as such for anytime in the near future." The general boards of all three groups met August 24, 1984 and confirmed affiliation agreements as originally designed. Later that year, CHC rejected the idea of pastoral exchanges.

Executive boards of CHC and IPHC met August 6, 1988 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Bishop Leon Stewart subsequently invited CHC for a joint meeting of the boards in April, 1989. CHC responded that they needed a different date. In 1990 CHC notified IPHC that they were working towards consolidation with PFWB and the International Pentecostal Church of Christ (IPCC). The IPHC-CHC proposal was rejected by the 1991 CHC general conference although a joint conference was held as late as September 24-26, 1997. Unfortunately, no files are available which clarify the status of relationship between the IPHC and CHC during Bishop Underwood's second term (1993-1997). Underwood was no doubt preoccupied at the time with the 1994 launching of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA).

In the late 1990s, the divide was bridged by a series of meetings with the CHC initiated by Bishop James D. Leggett. The initial hope on the IPHC side again was organic union which changed to acceptance of a fraternal relationship. The level of cooperation is indicated

by the 1998 agreement on conferring seconded status to ministers so that one can keep her/his credentials with one group while working with the other. The IPHC connection with the PFWB goes back one hundred years and the friendship remains warm these many years primarily on the IPHC side through the IPHC North Carolina Conference. The PFWB and IPHC North Carolina Conference were among the sponsors of "Azusa East" held December 31, 2006-January 3, 2007 in Falcon, North Carolina.

IPHC USA Affiliations

Not unlike several churches in the now defunct Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA), IPHC forged affiliations with groups outside North America. Principal among them were the Pentecostal Methodist Church of Chile, the Pentecostal Church of Chile, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Brazil. These are worthy of mention because documents from the churches in Chile stipulate liberty in the mode of water baptism. However, when the IPHC General Executive Board (GEB) met March 8, 1968, they decided to sever relations with the Pentecostal Church of Chile. Their complaint was that the Pentecostal Church of Chile was a member of the WCC. Concerns were also expressed at this meeting about the position of the Pentecostal Methodist Church of Chile on infant baptism and initial evidence. After reassurances about the initial-evidence dogma, IPHC was reminded that they initially practiced infant baptism. When this affiliation was reaffirmed by the IPHC GEB on December 17, 1980 one of the documents made specific reference to sprinkling and the baptism of children. The Pentecostal Methodist Church of Chile and the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Brazil participated in the third global IPHC conference held February 13-16, 2003 in Costa Rica.

Some would argue that the oldest Pentecostal Bible school in North America is Holmes Bible College in Greenville, South Carolina. Originally known as Altamont Bible and Missionary Institute, this school traces its start back

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to 1898. The IPHC signed an affiliation agreement with Holmes Bible College on January 22, 2002. This made official a relationship that goes back to the start of the 20th century as this school has provided numerous missionaries and pastors for the IPHC.

Meetings were held at least on March 15, 1962, April 3, 1963 then September 24, 1964 in Franklin Springs, Georgia between designated leaders of the IPHC, the Emmanuel Holiness Church, and the Pentecostal Church of Christ (PCC). The Emmanuel Holiness Church had opened discussions with the PCC in 1958. A joint meeting of the PCC general board and the IPHC GEB on August 21, 1965 in Greensboro, North Carolina discussed the possibility of PCC becoming a 'trial conference' in the IPHC. A lengthy proposal about affiliation was presented by the PCC in the March 21, 1966 joint PCC-IPHC meeting held in London, Ohio. The study commission asked that an evaluation report be presented to the next PCC annual conference.

Bishop J.A. Synan made a presentation on the IPHC to the annual conference of the PCC which convened August 9-12, 1967 in London, Ohio. When the IPHC GEB met August 19, 1968 in Bakersfield, California, J. Floyd Williams reported a negative vote by the PCC of 68 to 62. The GEB meeting December 3-5, 1968 in Franklin Springs, Georgia affirmed the following written by Bishop J.A. Synan to the PCC on September 6, 1968:

In the meantime, may we say that we have always cherished the Christian fellowship which we have enjoyed with the brethren of the Pentecostal Church of Christ; and although merger did not develop we shall have no reason not to continue enjoying the kind of fellowship and brotherly esteem which has prevailed in the past.⁹

In the meantime, the PCC merged with the International Pentecostal Assemblies (IPA) in 1976 to become the International Pentecostal Church of Christ (IPCC). IPA has a historical link to the IPHC in the person of G.B. Cashwell, a Pentecostal Holiness minister who went to the Azusa St. Revival in 1906. One visible sign was that the IPA continued publication of a paper known as *Bridegroom's Messenger*

which was started by Cashwell in 1907. The IPHC and the IPCC continue to enjoy close fellowship as shown by joint efforts at the Beulah Heights Bible School in Atlanta, Georgia.

The IPHC GEB which met March 8, 1968 in Franklin Springs, Georgia adopted the following:

By motion, the General Executive Board of the Pentecostal Holiness Church extends its warm greetings to the Rev. J.L. Sullivent and other members of the General Board of the Apostolic Church of God. We welcome a closer fellowship between the two churches and the establishing of a Study Commission where our leaders can meet periodically and become better acquainted.

At the 1973 IPHC general conference, Bishop J. Floyd Williams reported that affiliation negotiations were underway with the Christ Crusaders of America, Inc. with Elder Jesse Winley as General Superintendent. This predominantly African-American body with headquarters in Harlem, New York City, claimed over 5,000 members. Bishop Williams reported preaching at their general conference and having papers signed by the IPHC GEB.

Now consider the case of the Original United Holy Church of the World, Inc. Springing from one of America's oldest Pentecostal bodies, this predominantly African-American denomination came in close orbit to the IPHC in the 1970s then renewed friendships in the early 1990s. The first time around, papers of affiliation were approved during a process that spanned 1977 through 1979. Bishop J. Floyd Williams, IPHC General Superintendent, said the following to the 1981 IPHC general conference:

The basis of our union is that the United Holy Church and the Pentecostal Holiness Church are one and the same. This reaches further than affiliation. This makes us truly one.¹⁰

Bishop J.A. Forbes took part in the IPHC GEB meeting held September 1-2, 1982 in Greensboro, North Carolina and was present for the IPHC GBA meeting held July 31 - August 1, 1983 in Orlando, Florida, as an affiliate member of the board.

Then there is the story of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas (FBHCGA). This group came into existence in 1908 under the leadership of Bishop W.E. Fuller, Sr. Although racial prejudice south of the Mason-Dixon line was the context, Bishop Fuller remained a lifelong friend of Bishop J.H. King, one of the IPHC pillars. Relations with the FBHCGA improved when overtures were made by Bishop J. Floyd Williams in the 1970s. More extensive exchanges have been evident in the last decade under the leadership of Bishop James D. Leggett and Bishop W.E. Fuller, Jr. Relations were mending with perhaps the possibility of working toward the fraternal level until the sudden death of Bishop Fuller in October 2007. Yet hope abounds that the momentum for mutual fellowship will not be lost.

Shared Pentecostal Mission

An ecumenical impulse was exhibited in the person of Bishop J.H. King, a foundational figure for IPHC, who participated in the 1912 unity conference. While in Europe in 1912, King took part in this historic conference run by Pentecostal legends such as Thomas B. Barrett, Alexander Boddy, Jonathan Paul, B. Gerrit Polman, and Cecil Polhill. This was part of the early stirrings in Europe cut short by World War I that would eventually in the 1947 formation of the PWF.¹¹ More recently, Presiding Bishop James Leggett got IPHC to join the Christian Churches Together (CCT) and plans to attend the Global Forum when it convenes November 2007 in Kenya.

The IPHC was a founding member of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) that took shape in 1948. The PFNA and the more racially inclusive Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) gave rise to a protocol that allows for the transfer of ministers—male and female—from one member body to another.¹² It is also appropriate to mention that Bishop B.E. Underwood, then IPHC General Superintendent, was critical for the transformation of PFNA to PCCNA. The same

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protocol does not work with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) or the World Evangelical Alliance because IPHC would not accept a minister who is not baptized in the Holy Spirit with the sign of initial tongues.¹³

Common Mission

However, it may be possible to lump together PFNA, PCCNA, and PWF as manifestations of common mission. Here there are shared Eucharists and mutual recognition of water baptisms among most member churches. Also likely is the transfer of ministers among PWF churches although no official mechanism is in place for such a process.¹⁴ Although it is unknown how PFNA-type churches other than IPHC would respond to infant baptism and sprinkling by the Pentecostal Methodist Church of Chile, the breadth of recognition here seems greater than that known among magisterial churches. Another obvious divide in this area for Pentecostals is that many Oneness Pentecostals still require rebaptism for candidates coming from PWF-type Pentecostals.¹⁵

The latitude with the Eucharist and water baptism has more to do with doctrinal motifs attached to these 'ordinances' than an implied unity with those who exercise various charisms. A clear distinction would be made between receiving another Pentecostal for 'holy communion' over against a Roman Catholic Charismatic priest. There are commonly held beliefs about scripture and ancient creeds. There are said to be no barriers of race and class but obviously there is no uniformity about women ministers. Allowable diversity includes polity as it relates to the use of bishops, elders, and deacons.

An extension of the shared Pentecostal mission can be seen in the IPHC engagement of ecumenical groups like the North American Renewal Service Committee (NARSC) and the International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelism (ICCOWE). NARSC is perhaps best known for Kansas City '77 and ICCOWE for Brighton '91.¹⁶ Both bodies bring together Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Charismatics, and Pentecostals. Vinson Synan led NARSC for over 15 years

For those Pentecostal churches that are not at the point of joining an organization like the WCC, they may be inclined to take an "Emmaus walk", willing to engage in dialogue, learn and come to a place of understanding as Christ becomes present and the will of God, according to the Scriptures, becomes known.

(1984-2001) and IPHC was always represented on the steering committee. Synan has long been a member of the ICC/ICCOWE executive and Bishop Leggett is a member of the advisory board. Here, alas, there is no shared Eucharist or mutual recognition of water baptism. Nor is there an exchange of ministers. It is also worthy of mention that Dr. Vinson Synan was the driving force behind the 1970 launch of the Society for Pentecostal Studies.

Some Reflections

If Käsemann's point is lost in the chatter of conciliar ecumenical circles, I still find it an anchor. This is true even though such a position is in considerable tension with the magisterial traditions that read their brand of Christianity as normative in the first century. This put me at odds with William Henni when I engaged him during the 1999 International Roman Catholic - Pentecostal Dialogue that met in Venice, Italy. Henni insisted that tensions in the 'New Testament Church' "did not tear the Church apart into distinct communities which were divided from one another."¹⁷

James D.G. Dunn doubtless had it right when he concludes "there was no single normative form of Christianity in the first century."¹⁸ Dunn uses adjectives like Jewish, Hellenistic, early Catholicism, enthusiastic and apocalyptic to categorize the primary forms of earliest Christianity. Dunn is also right to insist that all forms of Christianity function with a canon within the canon. Dunn resorts to his typical quips by tying Roman Catholic

ecclesiology to the Pastoral Epistles, the (early) letters of Paul to Protestant theology, Eastern Orthodoxy to Johannine writings and Pentecostalism to Acts. This reductionist paradigm does have a legitimate point, however, which should challenge ecumenical deliberations predicated on a view that the Roman Catholics and Orthodox have sole ownership of first century Christianity. Those espousing such a monolithic view of earliest Christianity often then wrongly infer that Pentecostals can never rise above the status of a schismatic sect.

While Magisterial churches that belong to the NCCCUSA and the WCC may continue to suffer divisions/schisms, many Pentecostal denominations will continue to seek renewal, restoration and unity. Consider the biblical narrative of the journey on the road to Emmaus as a powerful metaphor for some Pentecostals. For those Pentecostal churches that are not at the point of joining an organization like the WCC, they may be inclined to take an "Emmaus walk", willing to engage in dialogue, learn and come to a place of understanding as Christ becomes present and the will of God, according to the Scriptures, becomes known.

Due to space limitations some pertinent details were left out of the main text, however it should be noted that every undertaking brought to the forefront various forms of Pentecostal prayer. Prayer – or arguably the lack of prayer – played a key role in successful and sometimes

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unsuccessful unions. Perhaps of the examples here it is most obvious in the attempt to merge with Church of God (Cleveland) where both groups hosted a series of joint public worship services. That is where part of the discernment process of the IPHC began to move their leadership away from consolidation.

This short presentation does not provide unassailable proof, but seems to suggest that some Pentecostal bodies are known to engage in various forms of uniting including organic unity. And this started years prior to the launch of the WCC and its Canberra statement. Yet this is not to deny numerous fractions among Pentecostals any more than those visited among churches called Protestant. A question mark should also be placed against the notion found among some magisterial traditions that Christianity was united up until the eleventh century divide between East and West. Thus, perhaps Pentecostalism has been rescued from some stereotypes that circulate freely among conciliar ecumenists while the same group may need to revisit one of their presuppositions. 

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Notes:

1. For an overview of worship during the Azusa St. Revival, see Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission and Revival* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), chapter 4. Also see Daniel Woods, "Spiritual Hunger 'on the Apostolic Faith Line,'" *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, eds. Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2006), 93-109. For an illuminating narrative of early Pentecostal prayer see Daniel Woods, "The Royal Telephone: Early Pentecostalism in the South and the Enthusiastic Practice of Prayer," in *Religion in the American South*, ed. Beth Bartholomew Schweiger and Donald G. Mathews (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 125-152.

2. See: J.H. King, "My Visit to the Rio Grande Valley," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 14:48 (April 2, 1931) 11f; J.H. King, "My Visit to the Rio Grande Valley: No. 3," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 14:49 (April 9, 1931) 6f; A.M. Lopez, "Report," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 14:50 (April 16, 1931) 6; J.H. King, "The South Texas and Mexican Conference," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 15:3 (May 14, 1931) 7; Letter from Esteban Lopez, *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 15:16 (Aug 13,

1931) 10; J.A. Killebrew, "Report of South Texas and Mexico Conference," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 15:29 (Nov 12, 1931) 5f.

3. W. Eddie Morris, *The Vine and Branches* (Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981), 42, say there are no records of the FWB response. However, email from Vinson Synan (8/28/07) cites a conversation with A.H. Butler saying there was an actual vote by the FWB.

4. Doug Beacham, *Azusa East: The Life and Times of G.B. Cashwell* (Franklin Springs: LifeSprings, 2007) chapters 7 and 1. In an email from Beacham on 11/3/06, he concluded that circumstantial evidence suggests Susan Cashwell remained a Methodist and never joined a Holiness or Pentecostal group. More insights on the PFWB resulted from an interview with Bishop James D. Leggett, IPHC General Superintendent, April 7, 2004, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Presiding Bishop Leggett was formerly pastor of the IPHC church in Falcon, North Carolina and conference superintendent of the IPHC North Carolina Conference.

5. Some highlights are nicely summarized by Terry Tramel, in "The Merger of the Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church in 1911", an unpublished paper for Doctor of Ministry degree submitted to the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in April 2006. The standard reference work is Joseph Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church: 1898-1948* (Franklin Springs, GA: The Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1951), 52, 254ff, 282-284. See also Harold D. Hunter, "The International Pentecostal Holiness Church" available at <http://pctii.org/arc/iphc.html>

6. Editorial by G.F. Taylor, *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* 14:5 (May 29, 1930), 8 cited by Beacham in *Azusa East*, p. 196.

7. Campbell, *Pentecostal Holiness Church*, 257. Cf. V. Mayo Bundy, ed., *A History of Falcon, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Herb Eaton Historical Publications, 1986), 88-92.

8. A virtual mountain of original documentation confirms details of the last part of this section and the one that follows. However, the references are so long that there is not enough space to include them in this article. Therefore, let it simply be noted that all pertinent documents may be found in the IPHC Archives & Research Center. Most come from the files of various IPHC general superintendents.

9. Letter in J.A. Synan Files, IPHC Archives & Research Center. The file containing GBA minutes for August 9-10, 1971 in Tulsa Oklahoma includes the original proposal regarding PCC taking up a trial affiliation, but there is no point of discussion recorded about this document.

10. J. Floyd Williams, "The State of the Church," *Minutes of the Nineteenth General Conference of the Pentecostal Holiness Church Convened at Oklahoma City,*

Oklahoma, August 6-11, 1981 (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1982), 124.

11. Cf. Peter D. Hocken, "International Pentecostal Council", ed. by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. Mc Gee, *Dictionary Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Church, 1988), 466; William T. Purinton, "Joseph Hillery King's View and Use of Scripture in the Holiness/Pentecostal Context," Ph.D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, May 2003, p. 108f.

12. The constitution of the Assemblies of God stipulates various requirements on the transfer of ordained ministers even from a PFNA/PCCNA member body.

13. Interview with Dr. Doug Beacham, April 1, 2004 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

14. When the PWF was founded in 1947, Scandinavian churches opposed any apparatus that appeared to threaten the autonomy of the local church. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Theological and Ecumenical Reflections on the Document 'The Nature and Purpose of the Church'", (pp. 11-13) paper presented to the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, criticizes this document for ignoring Free Churches which he describes as having experienced phenomenal growth. This paper was published in *Ecumenical Trends* 33:7 (July/August 2004), 97-103. Cf. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 59-67. Bishop James D. Leggett, General Superintendent of IPHC and now chair of the PWF, has previously said that the PWF Advisory Committee has not talked about an apparatus to transfer ministers.

15. I was chair of the membership committee of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 1982 when Manual Gaxiola Gaxiola became the first Oneness Pentecostal received into the society. I then served on the nominating committee that selected Dr. Gaxiola president of the society for 1990. I also worked to include Oneness Pentecostals in NARSC, but was not successful.

16. For Brighton '91, see *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization* edited by Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

17. William Henn, *One Faith: Biblical and Patristic Contributions Toward Understanding Unity in Faith* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 80.

18. James D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 373. Cf. William G. Rusch, *Ecumenism: A Movement Toward Church Unity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) chapter 1; *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission, 1977-1984: a report*, ed. by John R.W. Stott and Basil Meeking (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1986), 19f; Anton Houtepen, "Toward An Ecumenical Vision of the Church," *One in Christ* 3 (1989), 235.