

Pentecost as Facet of the Church-in-Mission or Culmination of the Missio Dei?

A Pentecostal Renewing of Bosch's (Reformed) Mission Theology

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Abstract

David Bosch's *Transforming Mission* remains a landmark work over a quarter of a century after its initial publication. With only one formal missiological response from the Pentecostal scholarly community to date, this essay seeks further reconsideration perhaps less from a strictly classical Pentecostal perspective than from one that takes the Day of Pentecost as a starting point for mission theology in the present ecclesial dispensation. Hermeneutical, historiographical, and theological contributions are offered, each intended to enrich and perhaps even fulfill the practically inexhaustible potential of our Reformed South African New Testament scholar's legacy.

Keywords: Day of Pentecost, Pentecostalism, Luke-Acts, pentecostal historiography, pentecostal mission theology

David Bosch's *Transforming Mission* remains a landmark work over a quarter of a century after its initial publication. With only one heretofore formal missiological response from the Pentecostal scholarly community to date,² this essay seeks further reconsideration perhaps less from a strictly classical Pentecostal perspective than from one that takes the Day of Pentecost as a starting point for mission theology in the present Christian and ecclesial eon.³ Hermeneutical, historiographical, and theological/missiological contributions are offered (the three sections of this paper, corresponding to the three parts of Bosch's text), each intended to enrich

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² Tizon (2001) centralises the notion of wonder in relationship to mission that links to the biblical theme of signs and wonders for which modern Pentecostalism is renowned; other Pentecostal scholars have certainly cited Bosch's text (what missiologist has not?!) but to my knowledge, only Tizon reviews and engages with *Transforming Mission* explicitly from a pentecostal perspective.

³ I capitalise Pentecostal when referring to nouns – e.g., persons who consider themselves as belonging to the modern movement by that name – or proper names, but do not capitalise when I use the word adjectivally.

and perhaps even fulfill the practically inexhaustible potential of our Reformed Afrikaner *Neutestamentlar* and missiologist's legacy.

It is important to emphasise that while I have ministerial credentials with the North American Assemblies of God denomination and have published what some might consider an apologetic for that church's statement of faith – Statement of Fundamental Truths, as the Assemblies of God calls it (Yong, 2014a) – I present the following not so much as a denominational type of *pentecostal* response to Bosch, as one that while deeply informed by modern pentecostal spirituality primarily seeks to create transformations of both the century-old pentecostal tradition and the missiological imagination as representatively articulated by Bosch. I do both precisely by returning to its primordial sources, not least the Day of Pentecost narrative as itself paradigmatically constitutive for Christian identity. What this means is that I take the Day of Pentecost as symbolically significant not only for modern Pentecostals but for all in the church who seek to be faithful witnesses to Jesus as Spirit-baptising Messiah. The following essay suggests what might be called a pentecostal-and-pneumatological *missio Dei* in dialogue with Bosch's *Transforming Mission*. While there is no suggestion that such an approach ought to displace his groundbreaking contributions, they are presented with the expectation that an understanding of the Spirit's work as permeating all aspects of the mission-theological endeavor – an argument I began elsewhere (Yong, 2014b) and attempt here to extend – will strengthen and empower the church's participation in the *missio Dei* which culmination is heralded by the Day of Pentecost's outpouring of the divine and christic breath.

1. Bosch, Luke-Acts, and Biblical Missiology: A Day of Pentecost Hermeneutical Re-Grounding

As my training is first and foremost neither in New Testament (Bosch's original area of expertise) nor in missiology (the field over which our South African theologian now casts an extensive shadow), I cannot dare to be critical about part I of *Transforming Mission* where Bosch presents four New Testament models of mission. As a pentecostal scholar, however, I have spent a significant amount of time on Luke-Acts, the so-called canon-within-the-canon for Pentecostal theology (e.g., Yong, 2011a), and in that regard, I feel that I might be able to complement our protagonist's achievements. Perhaps more importantly, I would like to propose in this section that the Spirit is less central in Bosch's discussion of the Luke-Acts model than in Luke's own account. I will further suggest that the Lukan perspective has normative theo-missiological implications beyond the important task of reading Luke-Acts exegetically.

Bosch presents Luke's missiology as focused on the practicing of forgiveness and of solidarity with the poor, following the Matthean emphasis on mission as disciple-

making and prior to the Pauline thrust of mission as participation in the eschatological community. The two Lukan themes Bosch accents are surely important aspects of particularly the Third Gospel, although also observable in the Acts sequel. One might say that in terms of mission praxis, Bosch lifts up, particularly for the synoptic authors Matthew and Luke, the concrete dispositions and activities that witness to Christ entails: the making of disciples, the forgiveness of sins, and living in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Interestingly, however, with Paul, Bosch turns from the tangibility of palpable action to a more abstractly formulated theological conceptuality. Instead of characterising the Pauline missionary thrust in terms of the planting or establishing of ecclesial communities, for instance (e.g., Spell, 2006: Ch. 5), Bosch frames the mission in Paul *theologically*, as oriented to and carried by the church as “interim eschatological community” (167).⁴ Surely there are many ways of talking about any of the New Testament authors’ missiological perspectives, and it is impossible to reduce the scope of each of these writers to a single theme. In any case, the question arises: why focus on missiological praxis when considering Matthew and Luke but on missiological theology in the Pauline case?

Surely, theological foci are just as obvious for understanding the missiology of the gospels. For Matthew, the shift for Bosch would have been slight, not at all a divergence, from mission as disciple-making to christic or Christological mission that calls forth discipleship, so that the formulation would be robustly theological without losing the praxis motif. In the Lukan case, of course, the primary theological engine is pneumatology: the practice of forgiveness or of solidarity with the poor, among other practical modalities, are pneumatologically mediated. A more consistent *theological* articulation of New Testament models of mission could then have been Matthean Christological discipleship, Lukan pneumatological praxis, and Pauline eschatological community.

Now Bosch is surely aware of the prominent pneumatological presence in Luke-Acts. Early on in discussing “Luke’s ‘Great Commission’” from the transitional text at the end of the Third Gospel in anticipating of the sequel, it is specifically recognised that “Luke’s entire understanding of the Christian mission” includes, among other themes, the realisation that such “will be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit” (92). Then, at the end of his Lukan chapter, Bosch’s summary of the eight “major ingredients of the Lukan missionary paradigm” (114) leads off pneumatologically, observing: “More than the other evangelists Luke dealt theologically with the fact that history went on and that Christ did not immediately return. . .” and that it was “preeminently through the *Spirit* that the risen Christ was present in the community” (114-115). It is

⁴ Anytime direct quotations are followed only by page numbers, the reference is to Bosch’s *Transforming Mission* (2011).

rightly said that “the Spirit not only *initiates* mission, he also *guides* the missionaries about where they should go and how they should proceed” (115, italics orig.). In short, Bosch clearly discerns the distinctive eminence of pneumatology among the gospel writers – and even vis-à-vis Paul and other New Testament writings, arguably – and surely would have granted that the Lukan missiological model could just as well have been framed theologically, i.e., pneumatologically.

Yet intriguingly, the Spirit is conspicuously absent in much of Chapter 3 of *Transforming Mission*. Yes, Bosch cites the famous Isaianic text through which Jesus’ public ministry is inaugurated (Is. 61:1-2, in Luke 4:18-19), but here he zeroes into the tangibility of mission practice in relation to the poor and oppressed rather than on the divine breath that animates the messianic deliverance. To be sure, the liberation of the oppressed is manifestly present both here and in the rest of the Third Gospel, rightly so if we recognise this so-called “Nazareth manifesto” (Lasetso, 2006) as providing an overarching frame for particularly Luke’s gospel account. At the same time, each of the mission practices of Jesus’ messianic ministry – preaching of the gospel, releasing captives, healing the sick, etc. – are charismatically enabled through the Spirit of Yahweh. The point is that the pneumatic frame includes missionary practices, not the other way around.

Similarly, the richness of the pneumatological vision of the book of Acts, especially but not only related to the Day of Pentecost outpouring of the Spirit and its catalytic role for early Christian mission and witness, is subordinated to the Christological ministry explicated in the prequel. Now, again, Bosch’s focus on the messianic community’s meeting the needs of the poor, a central outcome of the lavishing of the Spirit at Pentecost (2:42-47 is cited more than any other passages in Acts 2, as the indices to both editions of *Transforming Mission* confirm), is not inappropriate. The question is why not situate such forms of practical Christian witness theologically, or as I am asking, pneumatologically and even pentecostally (vis-à-vis the Day of Pentecost narrative).

Bosch’s treatment of Acts 1:8 may be illuminating along this line of inquiry. He clearly recognises, in more than one place in his discussion of Luke-Acts (89 and 95), that this sentence represents, in effect, the table of contents for the second Lukan book, showing progression of the Christian mission beginning in Jerusalem and then moving from there sequentially into Judea, Samaria, and the “ends of the earth”. Bosch does not then draw the obvious theological conclusion: that Acts is thus the book about the Holy Spirit as the one who empowers apostolic witness similarly to so-enabling messianic mission (in the Third Gospel), at least not so that he is led to categorising mission practices in such a theological and pneumatological manner. Now, again, I am not claiming that Bosch does not know how central of a role the Spirit plays in the Luke-Acts narrative. I am simply noting

that while the twin themes of forgiveness of sins and solidarity with the poor are also unmistakable in the Lukan account, they are of derivative theological character, dependent on the eschatological work of Christ empowered by and then sending the Spirit which is foregrounded in these two books. From this perspective, we note that Bosch's reading of Acts 1:8 focuses on the latter geographic outline rather than on the former theological (and pneumatological) substance.

Stepping back from Bosch's interpretation of Luke-Acts, we note that his pneumatology is perhaps also more traditionally situated. According to what tradition, one might ask. Consider the concluding chapter to *Transforming Mission* wherein Bosch presents the many "faces of the church-in-mission", which would be expected after the variety of mission themes and emphasis presented not only in the first part on the New Testament models but also in the subsequent historical and missiological deliberations (on which more momentarily). Interestingly, Bosch here reverts to a specifically theological categorisation of the six faces (524-530): incarnation-cross-resurrection-ascension-Pentecost-Parousia. There is nothing wrong with such a theological framing of the church's mission faces. In fact, when the Reformed and broadly Protestant tradition within which Bosch sits (Livingston, 2013: part I) has often overlooked, obscured, and marginalised the person and work of the Spirit (Bruner & Hordern, 1984), a Pentecostal theologian like myself is at least grateful that Pentecost receives acknowledgment other than being ignored as has historically been the case. One might even celebrate Bosch's frank assertion that these "six Christological events may never be viewed in isolation from one another", and that "each of these events impinges on all the others" (530).

Yet, despite both such honorable mention and insightful theological expression, Bosch's default is that of the historic Christian theological tradition: a paradoxical dual affirmation, both a passing mention of the interdependence and interconnectedness of these Christological events but yet a definitive prioritisation of the Second article over the Third. Thus, does *Transforming Mission* propose "mission from the perspective of Easter" (40-42) rather than consider mission all-inclusively as being "after Pentecost" (Yong, 2019). Again, it is not incorrect to frame the Christian life and ecclesial mission as post-Easter – that is certainly how the dominant tradition has proceeded. It is also equally if not more correct, theologically, to understand the entire sequence of incarnation through Easter as christological, meaning messianic as empowered by the divine wind. Jesus is who he is and does what he does both by the power of the breath of Yahweh (Acts 10:38), including being raised from the dead through and "according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4).⁵ This points to the interrelatedness of the Christological

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations will be from the New Revised Version of the Bible.

and the pneumatological or Pentecostal – here referring to the Day of Pentecost characterisation of the divine wind’s empowering person and work rather than to the modern-day movement – which Bosch grants, but is without the theological instincts and pneumatological capacities to elucidate.

2. Bosch’s Historical Paradigms of Mission: Toward a Pneumatology of (Mission) History

As we now move to the “Historical Paradigms of Mission” in part II of *Transforming Mission*, the preceding argument that we consider mission not only from the perspective of Easter but also that of Pentecost becomes even more obvious. The Acts narrative that Bosch discusses vis-à-vis the Lukan themes of forgiveness of sins and solidarity with the poor initiates both the church and the ecclesial mission simultaneously. There is no church without mission in Acts, nor is there mission without the church, and both are launched on the Day of Pentecost, by the power of the divine wind poured out upon all flesh. Hence, the “history” of the early messianic movement, at least in Luke’s perspective, is both post-Easter and post-Pentecost. In effect, all of Christian history, which is nothing less also than Christian mission history, is a continuation of the Pentecost story, part of the 29th chapter of Acts, as it were (Kovac, 2009).

Bosch shifts from the New Testament to the history of mission because he is convinced that any effort to reconstruct as comprehensively as possible a relevant and appropriate missiology of his time cannot but involve “a thorough look at the vicissitudes of missions and the missionary idea during the past twenty centuries of Christian church history” (2001:8). To do so, then, part II adopts Hans Küng’s six epochs of historic Christian theology, a conceptualisation itself adapted from philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn’s paradigmatic theory of scientific revolutions. This not only allows for Bosch to correlate Christian mission history with Christian historical theology, at least as presented by the Roman Catholic theologian Küng, but also prompts consideration of how we might be in, and therefore also enable navigation of, the transition from the most recent historical period, that of Enlightenment modernity, into what is felt to be a new moment – “a world fundamentally different from that of the nineteenth century” (193) – one that both the theologian and the missiologist discern as appropriately labeled *ecumenical*. The Kuhnian theory, Bosch agrees with Küng, helps us to trace how the old order is giving way to the new, and perhaps facilitates our own anticipation and heralding of the coming and in some respects already-present paradigmatic reality.

Kuhn, Küng, and Bosch are brilliant and original thinkers in their own right and the present proposals are not meant to detract from their accomplishments. From a Pentecost and pneumatological perspective, however, my own response is

that while dialogue with philosophers of science like Kuhn is to be encouraged, theologians ought to develop their own specifically theological modalities of reasoning alongside any interdisciplinary conversation (Yong, 2011b).⁶ This inhibits theology from being subordinated to the other theoretical frame on the one hand even as it empowers theological contribution in the dialogical interaction on the other hand. The point is neither to reassert theology as queen of the sciences in the medieval fashion (which will not make sense in our post-Enlightenment context) on the one hand nor is it to render theology subservient to the *geist* of any age (not least that of our present post-modern era) on the other hand. Thus, the question: how to receive from the Kuhnian paradigm theory while also perhaps contributing theologically to the discussion?

Any response along the latter lines must be brief and preliminary given our space constraints. Bosch himself noted that Kuhn's efforts to ward off the specter of relativism that loomed over his theory of scientific revolutions – since each paradigm works in some fundamental senses according to its own assumptions, norms, and values – involved his own conviction that scientific progress itself warded off the relativistic threat (Bosch, 190). Such “faith”, however, can never be itself sustained by science, not even the philosophy of science. Might theology here be helpful? In pneumatological perspective, I suggest: yes. More expansively, I urge that a Pentecost and pneumatological perspective invites expectations of and underwrites the logic (a *theo-logic*, effectively) for paradigmatic revolutions – now not just in science but also in other areas of thought, including theology – because it presumes an eschatological horizon, posits an alethic arc, and is mediated by a multiplicity of discursive witnesses to truth understood in terms of “God's deeds of power” (Acts 2:11b). A brief explication of each of these elements also aids both the comprehension of how theologians can embrace the Kuhnian theory and appreciation for what the contours of a Pentecost and pneumatological theology of mission history look like.

First, if Kuhn's revolutions argument presumes that each paradigm will be succeeded by another, there is a dynamic historicity that is entailed. The logic of Christian theology is not less historically vibrant, fundamentally grounded in the historical incarnation wherein divinity took up the human condition and then terrestrially in the Spirit's cosmic outpouring upon creaturely flesh. Precisely because these are the central historical manifestations of God's redeeming work – the missions of the Son and the Spirit as the two-hands of the Father, as the

⁶ Küng effectively proceeds in this direction, albeit indicating the Christian message as a second constant in relationship to the world horizon as the first (1988:164-169); Küng sees a hermeneutical circle between what he calls these constants, although prioritising them in this order is a bit less dialectical than if communicated otherwise.

early theologians called it (Yong, 2002:§2.1) – they are also eschatological events, inaugurating salvation history on the one hand while also anticipating in an ongoing and differentiated sense the consummation of that promise on the other hand. As such, given this eschatological dynamic, Christian theology expects the ongoing unfolding of history and of our own self-understanding amid that flux. Periodically, we might expect, analogously, a kind of punctuated equilibrium wherein significant historical events – chiefly incarnation and Pentecost most recently from a Christian perspective, but prior to that, the Noahic flood, the Abrahamic migration, the exodus from Egypt, the Davidic rule, and the Babylonian exile – are disruptive occurrences (revelatory events, theologians would call them) that generate then expansive and dense symbolic interpretations of human self-understanding at the nexus where creaturely historicity meets and interfaces with transcendent spheres (theological paradigms parallel to the sense developed by Küng). Such “progressive revelation”, as identified by the theological tradition, is arguably pneumatically facilitated (according to the Petrine witness: 2 Pet. 1:21), and the eschatological horizon of the Pentecost outpouring that involves the renewal of the divine covenant with the people of God and even all creation (Acts 2:17-21) thereby fosters expectation of such continual paradigmatic (interpretive) progression and transformation.

Second, the Kuhnian theory, which Bosch adapted, posits that the “motor” of paradigm change is “both evolutionary and revolutionary” (375), meaning there are periods of stasis or stability whereby knowledge increases incrementally within an established frame, and then there are disruptive leaps of discovery during which “individuals begin to perceive reality in ways *qualitatively* different from their predecessors and contemporaries” (188, italics orig.). One might approach such epistemological processes and transformations variously, including neurocognitively or socio-psychologically, among other exploratory venues. Even theologically and missiologically, Bosch’s approach posits the foundational grounding of the gospel vis-à-vis contextual reception amid history’s changing situations and realities (191). A Pentecost and pneumatological approach can affirm that the divine breath that leads human creatures into truth (John 16:13) is not only consistent with such a developmental (theological) self-understanding of the Christian (ecclesial) community but also provides the means through which discontinuities of cognitive dissonance catapults leaps of communal realisation amid continuities of organic awareness that marks periods of more mundane self-cultivation. Pneumatological discourse provides various parallels: conversion experiences interrupting the ordinary life (personally); charismatic manifestations erupting amid regular congregational practice (ecclesially); intellectual transformations elevating normal consciousness (e.g., creedal achievements contributing to the emergence of dogmatic traditions), etc. What Kuhnian paradigm theory attributes to processes

of scientific inquiry/discovery, Pentecost perspectives comprehend as the work of the alethic Spirit.

Last but not least, for our purposes, the multiple paradigms – for Küng and Bosch six morphing into a seventh – displays that manifold interpretive frames are involved in human signification, whether scientific or theological. Crucial here is that differences between the Kuhnian theory wherein later paradigms are incommensurable from preceding ones and the Küngian version where paradigmatic transition does not leave the previous epochs completely behind but absorbs and gradually resituates the perceived gains of the prior eras within new frames of reference (Bosch, 190). A pneumatological approach enables appreciation of how a post-Easter and post-Pentecost perspective reconfigures the inherited tradition (in this case, the Old Testament covenant) even while it also recognises that such reception unfolds both synchronically and diachronically in many tongues or polyphonic discursive modalities. Thus, we have the New Testament witness itself developing from Pauline through synoptic to Johannine perspectives, arguably, and perhaps even culminating at the edges where the apostolic and post-apostolic generations meet, and this multiplicity of canonical (Christian) voices itself anticipates the paradigmatic constellations traced by Küng (theologically) and Bosch (missiologically). The latter's magisterial treatment elaborates how even within paradigms there are a diversity of accents (witnesses) and that these combine in a paradoxical discordant-yet-harmonious whole. If the Lukan witness is that the Pentecost outpouring inspires the capacity of the many languages to bear witness through their particularities, the Pauline complement is that the one Spirit bestows many gifts so that the various members of the body each have something to contribute for the overall functioning of the ecclesial whole. By extension, the various missiological paradigms have each contributed their own unique prompts for the purposes of the Christian witness to the world, each involving both reception from the various historical and geographical contexts their own specific contributions and then creative retelling of the gospel deploying these resources in these diverse times and places. Pentecost thereby catalyses paradigmatic transition as the Christian mission proceeds "toward the ends of the world and end of time" (Bosch, 383).

3. Bosch's Ecumenical Missiology: A Pentecost Paradigmatic Reconfiguration

Part III of *Transforming Mission* elaborates thirteen axes of what Bosch calls an emerging postmodern and ecumenical missionary paradigm. There is both too much here for any exhaustive consideration, not to mention that both the strengths and lacunae of the Boschian proposal have been thoroughly assessed over the last

quarter of a century and more since the publication of the book (e.g., Saayman & Kritzinger, 1996; Kritzinger & Saayman, 2011). Building on the preceding trajectory, then, my own contribution will be to highlight how a Pentecost perspective can deepen aspects of our Reformed missiological imagination. To do so, I will suggest one more-or-less overarching adjustment, and then follow out the consequences of that offering for two (or three, depending on how we count) of the elements delineated by Bosch.

We begin by observing that Bosch himself leads off in essence ecclesiology, but specifically linking ecclesiology and missiology vis the image of “mission as the church-with-others” (377). The goal here is to resituate the witness of the church to the world as emerging from out of its interrelational situatedness within the world. Christian mission in the postmodern era, therefore, is not one-directional, as if only from the church to the world, but is a reciprocal interactionality emerging from out of the mutuality of church and world. The rest of the ecumenical missionary paradigm in effect emanates out from this ecclesial vision. The idea of the common witness of the church (468-478) suggests, for Bosch, that the witness of the body of Christ must necessarily flow forth from out of the unity of believers, but this also suggests that there is no ecclesial centre and that there is only the inter-constitutedness of many traditions, churches, and congregations, each of which at every level and modality of functioning engages with the world interactively. Further, to drill down even deeper, mission is carried out by “the whole people of God” (478-485), which means for Bosch that it involves not just the clergy or ecclesial hierarchy but the laity in its differentiated multiplicity. The “church-with-others” in this missional context thus attends to the witnesses not only of the magisterium but of the independent congregation, not only of priests but of every single person devoted to Jesus’ messiahship as each one interrelates *with* friends, neighbours, co-workers, and others in the marketplace and wider communal and public spheres.

My summary of these Boschian elements or motifs, of course, is guided by key themes of the Pentecost narrative (Yong, 2017). The Spirit’s outpouring “upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17-18) already prepares us for the witness of the laity: male and female, son and daughter, younger and older, upper, middle, or lower class, etc. The church’s unity, meanwhile, is not institutionally organised or ordered but spiritually imbued, by the power of the deluged Spirit at Pentecost. It is this inundation that guarantees that every voice counts and ought to be heard, as the apostolic experience documented: “each one heard them speaking in the native language of each ... we hear, each of us, in our own native language” (Acts 2:6, 8). These are those gathered “from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5), even from the ends of the earth, Rome (Acts 2:11), as then understood from a Jerusalem-centred perspective. In each case, the lines between “insiders” and “outsiders” is blurred, in part because the centre and

the periphery are neither formalised nor calcified but in part also because the many voices of all are conduits through which the divine wind blows to declare and make known “God’s deeds of power” (Acts 2:11b).

What are the implications of such a Pentecost view of the church’s mission *with others*? Take Bosch’s treatment of contextualisation and its derivatives or specifications: liberation and inculturation (see also Ahonen, 2003). For focus, I discuss the latter, which rides a tension, Bosch urges, between accommodation and indigenisation (458), seeking to avoid translation of the gospel into local idioms and expressions albeit without losing its critical, prophetic, and transformative power. The key points are both that “a plurality of cultures presupposed a pluralities of theologies and therefore, for Third-World churches, a farewell to a Eurocentric approach” (463), and the realisation that it is local lay agents, rather than Westerners, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (464), who are the purveyors of such contextual theological formulations. A Pentecost approach goes two steps further or deeper than what Bosch himself allowed. Initially, all theological paradigms are both contextual and local, including Western achievements, even if we recognise that contextuality and locality does not mean without broader or ecumenical relevance. Then, while applauding Bosch’s recognition of the Spirit’s role in the inculturation or indigenisation process – whether in the developed or majority world churches, as I have already indicated – the Pentecost principle proposed here underlines that the mutuality and reciprocity of church-and-world means that the efforts of the laity, in effect the church in its various orders, are intertwined with those of local contexts. Bosch rightly calls attention to the *interculturalisation* (466-68) needed between local accomplishments and ecumenical traditions in order to avoid the ghettoisation and parochialisation of indigenous theologies on the one side and to emphasize the dynamic and mutualistic character of established Western theological constructs and rapidly emerging non-Western variations. The Pentecost model further notes that this *interculturalisation* idea illuminates also the interrelationality between ecclesial and indigenous vitalities: local theologies emerge out of the interface of church-in-world so that it is mission-with-others that forges contextual and inculturated theologies that in turn feed back to the broader ecumenical conversations. While Bosch appropriately identifies the contextual and inculturational trajectory as modeled on the incarnation, following the Son’s enfleshment in human history (464-65), the proposal here presumes the dyad of divine economies: the Son’s incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth and the Spirit’s Pentecost outpouring upon all flesh – the latter empowering the various cultural-linguistic voices for both local and transcultural witness for the sake of the gospel.

A further possible extension of the Boschian notion of ecclesial mission *with others* can be discerned in his discussion of the encounter between religious

traditions. Fascinatingly, the section that discusses this element is titled “mission as witness *to* people of other living faiths” (485, italics added), rather than, as might be expected on Bosch’s on leading principle: “mission as witness *with* people of other living faiths”. This is not to say that Bosch does not believe there is a kind of mutuality between Christians and those of other faith traditions since his own insistence that the encounter between religions needs to ride out the tension between what he calls dialogue and mission (494). I am fully supportive of contending both that dialogue and mission are distinctive on the one hand and that they are not contrary but complementary on the other hand. My own Pentecost perspective, however, enables appreciation of the reciprocal testimony at the interfaith nexus so that dialogue and mission are interrelated activities that Christians undertake *with* people of other faiths: we both share of our own religious commitments and are transformed by the witness of others in the process (Richie, 2011). One way to more palpably register this mutuality is to think of Christian witness bubbling up from amidst the guest-host relationship, but to comprehend that such testimony is prompted by the experiences on both sides of this event (e.g., Yong, 2008). This is consistent both with the apostolic sending and going that moves messianists out into the spaces of others – in this case of those in other faiths – with all of the vulnerability entailed when we are guests in their presence, even as it also receives the scriptural mandate to be hospitable to others, even strangers (who are of other religious traditions). The point is that different risks are involved on both sides of this hospitality coin. The church’s mission-with-others includes interchange not just with those without religious affiliation but with those who are religiously committed persons, people of other *living* faiths, as indeed we are discussing (not those of other so-called *dead religions*, as prior formulations might have pejoratively dismissed). As Bosch himself puts it, summarising his understanding of such dialogical mission, “to people of other living faiths”: “that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding” (500).⁷

Bosch is to be thanked for grounding his postmodern missionary paradigm on an ecclesiological foundation: that of the church on mission and witness *with* others. Such theological grounding avoids the seductions of any contemporary *zeitgeist*, in our era that of the postmodern situation. My Pentecost approach, however, seeks to reinforce the theological underpinnings of Bosch’s vision in a pneumatological

⁷ In some respects what I do here is similar to what Kim (2000) does in her essay suggesting a pneumatological-missiological complement to Bosch, especially in relationship to a triad of pneumatic themes: ecological concerns, feminist perspectives, and concerns for spiritual discernment; my emphasis, of course, is on the Day of Pentecost frame and the economy of the Spirit read through a pentecostal lens.

and trinitarian manner: expanding the incarnational vision with that related to the economy of the Spirit. Now the mission of the church with others includes also the other cultural voices and other religious testimonies of such neighbors. Incarnation and Pentecost are hence no longer mere faces of the church's mission but central and generative sites from out of which our witness with others resounds.

4. Conclusion

It is easy to criticise Bosch for what he did not do (e.g., focus on mission in the Old Testament or develop a pneumatological missiology) or to point out what he failed to acknowledge or address (e.g., the rising tide of global Pentecostalism), both of which has happened countless times in the critical analyses of and engagements with this book since its appearance. Yet the work remains a classic precisely because a Reformed and New Testament scholar turned missiologist wrote such an expansive theology of mission text. My goal in this essay has been to be suggestive of how developments in the last almost three decades – since Bosch's passing – particularly in the areas of pentecostal and pneumatological theology can continue to fill out the promise of *Transforming Mission*. I have suggested that a Pentecost approach rightly accentuates the work of the Spirit in bringing into full culmination during the present ecclesial period the redemptive and renewing work of the triune God inaugurated in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son. If the work of the Spirit is never for its own sake but always for the purposes of lifting up the God of Jesus Christ, then a pentecostal and pneumatological approach intends to once again renew Bosch's ecumenical missiological imagination surfaced almost a generation ago and perhaps unleash a fresh missionary impulse in anticipation of the fullness of the here-and-yet-coming reign of God.⁸

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